
FEDERAL RELATIONS

Department of Energy

We met with officials at the U.S. Department of Energy about opportunities above and beyond our shared appointment to the Light Metal Manufacturing Institute (LMMI) in Michigan. These officials alerted us to other future opportunities in the Department of Energy, and how we should focus on Wayne State University's strength regarding non-aerospace applications, crash dynamics and bio manufacturing. President Obama wants more institutes, and as we apply for opportunities under the auspices of the Department of Energy, we should mention Wayne State's diversity as strength.

Department of Agriculture

Officials at the Department of Agriculture alerted us to opportunities for Wayne State University under their National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). Despite the recent budget cuts affecting other branches, NIFA's budget has increased. While Wayne State University does not fit the traditional categories of funding under NIFA – land grant universities, HBCUs, Latino/Hispanic serving universities or Native American serving universities, there's half a billion dollars that's competitively offered for grant opportunities. NIFA's particularly interested in food security, obesity, nutrition, bioenergy and food safety issues.

Department of Justice

In March, the Division of Government and Community Affairs arranged for Wayne State University Police Chief Anthony Holt to travel to Washington, DC, to meet with several individuals at the Department of Justice. One goal of this meeting was to make the Department of Justice aware of the success, outreach and vision of our police department. Another goal was to find out what federal funds, if any, our police department would be eligible for to help offset an estimated annual \$2 million in unfunded mandates.

Chief Holt gave an excellent description of how Wayne State University's police department is unique in the nation with their city-wide jurisdiction, how he is actively engaged in preventive means to deter crime, how our force has increased the retail, rental, property values and security of mid-town Detroit, his involvement of the community as stakeholders and how all of this is done with no federal funds. Department of Justice officials urged us to stay in contact with both the Community Office of Policing (COPS) and the Bureau of Justice Affairs (BJA) offices for funding. While funds for the past fiscal year just became available in January, there are no funds for programs this year. However, we should stay in touch with their office as we need to build relationships with other police departments and agencies for collaborative opportunities.

Possible Political Agenda for the Rest of the Year

Because this is an election year, the general sentiment is that if any bill is not considered before the Memorial Day recess and is not an appropriation bill, it is dead for all intents and purposes. Senate Democrats have unveiled a legislative agenda they plan to take up in the coming weeks that will focus on minimum wage, income disparity, student loan affordability and other pocketbook issues.

Democrats already have filed a number of bills that deal with the party's high-priority issues:

MINIMUM WAGE: The minimum wage would be raised to \$10.10 within two years under [S. 1737](#). The increase would occur in steps, with the current rate of \$7.25 an hour being boosted to \$8.25 an hour on the first day of the sixth month after the bill's enactment and a second raise to \$9.15 an hour occurring after one year.

DOMESTIC JOBS: Businesses would receive a tax break for bringing jobs and investment to the U.S. and would be denied a tax deduction for moving jobs out of the country under [S. 337](#). Of note is that this bill was introduced by Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow.

STUDENT LOANS: Colleges would be required to send students annual updates on their student loans, under [S. 546](#), including the balance and interest rates on their loans, repayment options and the advantages of federal student loans over private borrowing. The bill was introduced by Harkin on March 2013 and referred to the HELP Committee.

STATE RELATIONS

House/Senate Appropriations Subcommittee Budget Action

The House and Senate Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittees reported their versions of the Higher Education budget to their respective Appropriations Committees.

The House version of the budget, which was reported unanimously, recommends \$70.4 million for university operations instead of the \$76.9 million the Governor proposed. The metrics and tuition restraint level remain at the Governor's recommendation. The cut in funding would provide WSU with \$6.7 million compared to \$7.3 million in the Governor's budget.

The Senate Subcommittee reported its version of the Higher Education budget to the full Appropriations Committee on a 2-1 vote. Sen. Morris Hood (D-Detroit) voted no because he felt there should be more new funding allocated to universities.

The Senate version of the budget included the Governor's 6.1 percent increase as well as the tuition restraint level of 3.2 percent. This would mean that if WSU kept tuition at or below the 3.2 percent threshold, we would receive \$7.3 million next fiscal year – just as the Governor recommended.

Other changes in the House and Senate versions of the budget from the Governor's budget include the boilerplate language dealing with social issues that have arisen in the past. As is contained in the current year's budget, boilerplate language reporting requirements on stem cell

research; adult coresident benefits; and student religious beliefs are included in the House and Senate budgets. This language was not in the Governor's budget.

Democrats on the House Subcommittee attempted, by amendment, to restore the funding to the Governor's level but it failed by party-line vote. They also tried to remove the boilerplate language mentioned above but that was also unsuccessful.

Another provision of the Senate budget, which targeted Michigan State University, might affect several universities financially. Section 271A of the bill prohibits any instructional activity that encourages or discourages union organizing of employees. Any violation of these terms would result in a \$500,000 penalty – for each occurrence. At this time, we are still reviewing the language to see what affect, if any, it might have on Wayne State.

The House and Senate Appropriations Committees are scheduled to begin taking up budget bills upon return from the legislative "spring break."

President's Note to Alumni

Recently, as a part of the University's legislative advocacy plan, President Wilson sent an e-mail to WSU alumni urging them to contact their local lawmaker in support of the Governor's Higher Education budget. The letter informs our alumni about the concerns we have and directs them to the Business Leaders for Michigan webpage and Facebook page.

The letter can be viewed at the following link:

[http://i.wayne.edu/view/5327469c5428d?utm_source=link&utm_medium=email-5327469c5428d&utm_campaign=Support+increased+funding+for+higher+education&utm_content=.](http://i.wayne.edu/view/5327469c5428d?utm_source=link&utm_medium=email-5327469c5428d&utm_campaign=Support+increased+funding+for+higher+education&utm_content=)

FOIA Legislation Passes House

On March 20th, the House of Representatives passed legislation that would make certain changes to the state's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) by a vote of 102-8.

The Presidents Council and the universities have been working with the sponsor of the legislation, Rep. Mike Shirkey (R-Jackson), on possible amendments to the legislation. The universities' legal officers have discussed the legislation and suggested several changes to House Bill 4001.

While some changes have been made during the process that are favorable, there are still some concerns we have with the legislation.

At this time, the future of the legislation in the Senate is unknown.

Legislative Lunch

Seven state lawmakers, two members of the Detroit City Council, two members of our Board and several staff attended Wayne State's Annual Legislative Lunch on March 24th.

Kelsey Skinner, a student at WSU, gave a great speech about her experience at the University. Governor Gary Pollard provided a welcome, and President M. Roy Wilson talked to the group of public officials, university administration and alumni about what makes WSU unique and how the Governor's proposed budget would benefit the institution.

Joint House Higher Education/Commerce Hearing

Recently, a joint hearing was held between the House Commerce Committee and the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee. Patrick Doyle, CEO of Domino's Pizza and Doug Rothwell from the Business Leaders of Michigan (BLM) both testified in favor of the Governor's budget for Higher Education.

There was good dialogue between members and Doyle and Rothwell on the metrics; cost of higher education and the amount of funding needed for Higher Education in Michigan. Doyle made a terrific case for the Governor's budget – and even the inclusion of the Pell Grant metric.

Presentation to the President's Community Advisory Group

The Office of Government and Community Affairs recently presented a legislative update to the members of the President's Community Advisory Group. The presentation included a briefing on the Governor's proposed budget and why it was good for Wayne State University. Also discussed were the metrics and what advocacy steps were being taken by the University to help ensure passage of the Governor's budget. We also asked the members of the Group to get engaged by contacting their legislator and asking them to recommend www.MakeOpportunityAffordable.com to others.

Dr. Schenk Testimony

In March, Dr. Maryjean Schenk, Vice Dean for Medical Education at the School of Medicine, testified before the Senate Community Health Appropriations Subcommittee. Her testimony focused on her support for Graduate Medical Education (GME) and why increased funding is vital to the future of health care in the state.

Capital Outlay Subcommittee

The State Budget Office (SBO) outlined the Governor's 2015 Capital Outlay budget to the Joint Capital Outlay Subcommittee recently. They discussed the Capital Outlay "reforms" and their new process of scoring for university, community college and state building projects. The Governor's proposed Capital Outlay budget includes only four projects – one university (Ferris State); two community college (West Shore and Lake Michigan); and one state project (Cotton Correctional Facility).

Under the new scoring process, WSU's submitted project (Science and Engineering Lab Classroom Building) scored 5 out of the 12 university projects.

Also, the Chair of the Committee asked the SBO several questions regarding the Governor's proposed \$100 million Engineering "Capital Outlay" initiative. It was clear through the line of questioning that he did not approve of the way the projects were being approved. It is becoming clear that the Chairman and members of the subcommittee would like the projects to be approved by their subcommittee rather than through the Michigan Strategic Fund as the Governor proposed.

PCSUM Legislative Reception

There was yet another good turnout for the PCSUM Legislative Reception at Dykema on February 26th. Among the many members of the legislature to attend were the subcommittee chairs of the Higher Education Subcommittees in both the House and Senate. Also, members of the Governor's staff were in attendance.

Veteran Education Initiative

In a recent budget supplemental signed into law by the Governor, there is \$2.5 million for an initiative that will help veterans make the transition to college life.

As a part of the initiative, veteran "coaches" will be easily accessible and have a focus of helping veterans on campus resolve problems that could interfere with the educational and employment goals. The coaches will be trained to help connect veterans with appropriate institutional, local, state and federal resources that address veteran challenges and provide opportunities.

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) asked colleges and universities to contact lawmakers and let them know of our support for the provision in the supplemental.

According to DMVA, universities would receive the funding through a competitive process. Proposals will probably be due in 90-120 days with the intent of having the coaches trained this summer on various campuses. While there is no formal proposal process at this point, the DMVA said that the Michigan College Access Network will probably serve as a model.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

President's Community Advisory Group (PCAG)

On March 11, Government and Community Affairs convened a President's Community Advisory Group (PCAG) meeting. Created in 2008, the President's Community Advisory Group (PCAG) was formed so that community leaders could provide feedback, comments, advice and insight to Wayne State University's president and the office of Government and Community Affairs regarding the university's current strategic plan, mission and other university priorities, and to assist with their implementation. PCAG consists of more than 30 members from different areas of metropolitan Detroit.

The March 11 meeting agenda included a presentation by WSU's director of State Affairs, Greg Bird, on higher education and WSU's advocacy plan in Lansing, and a presentation from Associate Provost for Student Success, Dr. Monica Brockmeyer on WSU's Greater Retention and Diversity (GRAD) Initiative and posting for the position on Associate Provost for Diversity and Inclusion.

Wayne Cares Events

Wayne Cares is a university outreach initiative that brings together the university community for the purpose of charitable giving and outreach. Its primary goal is to help university units work together and collaborate with each other for the good of the community.

- "W" Week Community Service Initiatives is scheduled for April 8-18, 2014. Wayne Cares has partnered with WSU Athletics, the Marriott Hotel and Covenant House for the annual Basic Needs Drive to collect toiletry items for area homeless youth and adults. This year our goal is for WSU student athletes, WSU students and volunteers to distribute 1,000 basic needs kits to the homeless in Cass Park and nearby areas. Last year, we passed out more than 850 bags.
- March of Dimes Walk on WSU campus, Sunday, April 27, 2014.
- Wayne Cares and Midtown Inc. annual Midtown makeover, Saturday, May 3, 2014