

SOU in Salem: Notes from the Capitol, Week 18

The Big News:

- The end is near! Policy committees are wrapping up their work – the House Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee has completed its activity for the session; the Senate Education Committee is scheduled to hold a meeting Wednesday, but does not plan to move bills out at that time.
- Public universities received the sobering news this week from the Legislative Fiscal Office (LFO) that with the Revenue Forecast anticipating \$756 million less in revenue to allocate, that higher education should expect a “Current Service Level” or reduced budget of around \$1 Billion for 2025-27. This is far less than the \$1.275 Billion requested, and less also than the recently requested University Base Funding level of \$1.14 Billion.
- The Government Relations’ Team’s Chloe Fiveash had a letter to the editor published this week in the RV Times, and was interviewed Friday by The Oregonian for an article around state funding for student financial aid.

Other Items:

- HB 2251, which would have banned cell phones in K-12 schools, which passed the House on a bipartisan vote (but with opposition from most of the Southern Oregon delegation), failed to advance Wednesday in Senate Education, leaving it effectively dead for this session.
- HB 3731, related to reporting of sexual misconduct, passed out of the Senate Education Committee this week, and is expected to be approved by the Senate and signed by the Governor. University Title IX coordinators did substantial work to modify the original terms of the bill.

What’s Ahead

- HB 3026, which includes a provision requested by SOU requiring the HECC to review reporting mandates, is expected to be approved by the Oregon Senate on Tuesday, May 27. This will be the first of SOU’s priorities to be adopted this session.

What we are especially focused on:

- SOU’s Creative Industries Project getting funded this session
- Following up on all the parts of our agenda to bring the session home.