

## **SOU in Salem - Notes from the Capitol, Week 7**

### Big News:

- SOU Lobby Day on Tuesday, March 4 was a big success! We had over 40 students and close to 20 administrators, staff, faculty, trustees and alumni participate. Collectively, we visited 53 legislative offices; and SOU students gave performances in both the House and Senate Chambers to open their floor sessions that day. We are organizing the next phase of our campaign—letting writing to the budget makers, and will send out links early next week. A BIG shout out to our Trustees and students especially for making the trip! Special appreciation to Dr. Derek Keller for quickly organizing a new performance for the Oregon Senate after many SOU chamber choir students contracted the flu and their appearance had to be canceled on Monday.
- Workforce, workforce, workforce - SOU submitted written testimony this week in support of workforce development programs, such as Prosperity 10,000—organized by the HECC and local workforce boards. And, made a case for public universities to be included in the membership of Oregon's nine local workforce boards. Currently, none of the boards include public universities.
- HB 3129, the higher education behavioral health workforce expansion bill, will have a second hearing and likely work session on March 18 to move the bill from the policy committee over to Ways and Means—the next step in our journey to secure funding for public universities to help Oregon expand its bachelor and masters-level provider pool
- Rep. Paul Evans (D-Monmouth) spoke in support of the TRUs before the House Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee on Thursday. The three bills he has sponsored may not provide the best solutions to the funding challenges of Oregon's Technical and Regional Universities, but we greatly appreciate his advocacy and calling attention to the structural inequities that TRUs face.

### The Little Things:

- Several legislators have commented on how much they enjoyed meeting with SOU students this week. House HHEWD Committee Vice-Chair Darin Harbick said "I probably got more value than the students did" and that meetings like that "help me be a better legislator."
- Among the participants at Lobby Day were Brian Delashmutt, Class of 1974 and Michael Smith, who was the ASSOC president in 1969-70!

### Bills of Interest:

- HB 2458, requiring the HECC to study reporting mandates on universities and work to reduce duplication and unnecessary reporting will have a public hearing in the House Higher Education and Workforce Development on

Tuesday, March 18.

- SB 786, a bill that requires universities to accept some non-academic credits from high school toward completing degree requirements, will have a hearing Monday; Provost Casey Shillam will testify on behalf of the State Provost Council to express concerns about the bill.

Things to consider:

- We are in the final stages of recruitment for a permanent director of the Oregon Council of Presidents. Casey, Rob and Marc have all participated in interviews with three finalists; the decision will be in the hands of the seven university presidents, who meet in Salem on Wednesday, March 12.