

Legislative News



March 2, 2012

New Higher Education Legislation

[HB 1855 - Wallingford \(R-Cape Girardeau\)](#)

The bill would create the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Initiative within the MDHE to allow certain taxpayers to remove \$5,000 of tax liability from the general fund to be placed in the STEM fund established in the bill. Monies in the fund could be appropriated to match public higher education institution funds supporting programs aimed at increasing interest in STEM fields.

[HB 1876 -Long \(R-Battlefield\)](#)

The bill would establish a process by which students in an unaccredited district who are attending a non-A+ school could qualify for an A+ award.

[SB 865 - Pearce \(R-Warrensburg\)](#)

The bill would allow University of Missouri Extension Councils to form Extension Districts. The governing body of those districts could seek voter approval to levy a property tax increase, not to exceed \$0.30 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation, to provide funding for Extension programs in the Extension District.

House budget introduces recommendations

This week, the House Budget Committee released its House Committee Substitute (HCS) for House Bill 2003 (HB 3), the higher education appropriation bill. The House committee substitute contains some significant changes from the governor's recommended budget released at the State of the State Address in January.

One of the most notable changes is the restoration of an additional \$66 million to higher education institutions. House Budget Committee Chairman Ryan Silvey (R-Kansas City) has proposed that \$28 million of this additional funding be taken from the Supplemental Aid to the Blind program. The proposed \$66 million coupled with the additional \$40 million the Governor restored to higher education as a result of the national mortgage settlement would maintain FY 12 spending levels and reverse the cut Governor Nixon originally recommended for higher education. House committee recommendations also include an additional \$2 million for Southeast Missouri State University.

Funding for six scholarship programs were combined into one line item in the house bill. These programs include: Advanced Placement grants for Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program and A+ Schools Program recipients, the Public Service Officer or Employee Survivor Grant Program, the Vietnam Veterans Survivors Scholarship Program, the Veteran's Survivors Grant Program, minority teaching student scholarships, and the Marguerite Ross Barnett Scholarship Program. The same level of funding was maintained, and the intent is to provide full funding to all eligible

recipients for each program with any residual amounts used towards fulfillment of other scholarship program needs.

The House Budget Committee has also recommended a \$1.3 million dollar appropriation to the University of Missouri for the Missouri Federal and State Technology Partnership Program. This was not included in the Governor's recommendations or the House Education Appropriations Committee recommendations. The HCS includes \$1.5 million for the Spinal Cord Injury Fund, which is an additional \$875,000 beyond Gov. Nixon's recommendation.

The House Budget Committee is scheduled to conduct a hearing on appropriation bills 2001-2013 on March 5 starting at 10 a.m. in House Hearing Room 3 of the Capitol.

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Senate takes action on several higher education bills

The Missouri Senate saw several higher education bills come to the floor during what was a busy week in the legislature for higher education. Three bills passed the chamber and were reported to the House, a week ahead of legislative spring break.

Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 655, sponsored by Sen. Tim Green (D-Spanish lake), would create the Higher Education Capital Fund in the State Treasury for the purpose of providing matching funds for public college and university capital projects. To qualify for funds, institutions would have to raise a 50% match for the project in private funds not coming from tuition, fees or bonding of any kind. The committee substitute adds a provision to the introduced version prohibiting the use of funds for any athletic facilities or other revenue-generating facilities. During perfection on Tuesday, Sen. Kurt Schaefer (R-Columbia) amended the bill to stipulate that no monies would be distributed from the fund without a line-item appropriation from the General Assembly, alleviating some members' concerns that the bill may limit General Assembly influence in the capital appropriations process for colleges and universities. The bill passed the Senate Thursday by a vote of 31-2 and was first read in the House on the same day.

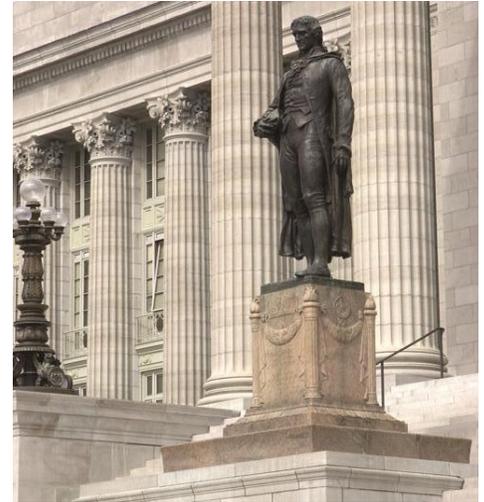
The Senate also perfected SCS for SB 562. The bill, sponsored by Sen. Bob Dixon (R-Springfield) would restore authority of certain universities to enter into lease agreements of university property without General Assembly approval. The same provisions sunset last year and were extended only for Missouri Western State University. The bill passed the chamber Thursday by a 31-2 vote and crossed chambers to the House where it was first read the same day. House Bill 1041, sponsored by Rep. Mike Thomson (R-Maryville),

contains similar language. That bill crossed chambers on February 20, but has received no action since that time. The Senate version of the proposal excludes Southeast Missouri State University.

Before adjourning for the week, the Senate also passed SCS for SB 563 by a vote of 32-0. Sponsored by Sen. Dixon, the bill would stagger the terms of the Missouri State University Board of Governor's such that three terms expired every second year. Sen. Brad Lager (R-Savannah) amended the bill before it left the Senate to include the language of his SB 681. That bill would limit the Northwest Missouri State University Board of Governors to be comprised of no more than two members from the same county.

In the House, HB 1042 remained on the House perfection calendar and received no floor time for a second week. The bill would modify the duties of the Coordinating Board for Higher Education. Specifically, HB 1042 would require the creation of a state-wide core transfer library of at least 25 lower division courses which could be transferable across all Missouri public institutions. The CBHE would be charged with developing a policy to foster reverse transfer of students from four-year to two-year institutions for students completing coursework which would satisfy the requirements for the awarding of an associate's degree. Institutions would also be required to replicate best practices in remediation and identify and eliminate methods shown to be ineffective in preparing or retaining students or which delay students' enrollment in college-level courses.

Both chambers are scheduled to adjourn March 8 for legislative spring break before returning March 19 to carry-on with the 2012 session.



The Capitol steps.

Proprietary schools legislation on the move

During its Tuesday meeting, the House Committee on Higher Education held an executive session on HB 1722, sponsored by Chairman Mike Thomson (R-Maryville). The bill would modify several provisions relating to proprietary institutions. Those changes include providing for a two-year certification option for certain schools, modifying the fee structure associated with certification and provide for specified time frames for the review of new or amended programs.

A committee substitute was offered during the executive session which added a cap to the fee language and modified statutory references within the provisions to reflect current statute. The substitute was adopted and voted do-pass by the committee.

The bill was reported do-pass to the floor of the House and was referred to House Rules on Thursday. The bill will await action from the committee before returning to the floor where it would undergo consideration of the full body.

Student curator issue gets committee time

A voting student member is again the subject of several pieces of legislation before the General Assembly in 2012. The House Committee on Higher Education heard public testimony on two bills Tuesday which would make the student curator of the University of Missouri Board of Curators a voting member of the board.

House Bill 1257, sponsored by Rep. Chris Kelly (D-Columbia), would change the composition of the University of Missouri Board of Curators to include one member from each of Missouri's eight congressional districts with the ninth voting member to be the student curator. The student curator would be appointed under the same provisions as in current statute, serving a two year term and rotating among the four University of Missouri System campuses.

House Bill 1587, sponsored by Rep. Zachary Wyatt (R-Green Castle), would make a similar change to the composition of the Board of Curators to make the student curator a voting member. Rep. Wyatt's bill, however, would add a requirement that the student curator be a student studying at the graduate or professional level.

Abigail Thomas testified in favor of the bills on behalf of the Associated Students of the University of Missouri, as a voting student curator continues to be a priority of the organization. She emphasized that students were in a unique position to inform and influence the decisions governing the university. Ms. Thomas' testimony also focused on the fact that student tuition and fee revenue now amounts to the largest single revenue source for the university. Laura Confer, a former University of Missouri student curator, also



The Senate Lounge on the third floor of the Capitol.

testified in support of the bills.

There was no testimony offered in opposition to the bills or for informational purposes, though a letter was provided to members of the committee from the current Board of Curators.

Committee members had mixed reactions to the proposals. While some lauded the professionalism and effectiveness of past student curators, others emphasized the fact that students currently have a voice on the board and that student members may not bring the same experience and expertise as current voting members of the board.

Two other bills have been introduced which address the issue of a voting student curator. Senate Bill 747, sponsored by Sen. Kurt Schaefer (R-Columbia), contains similar language

as that in House Bill 1587. It is currently scheduled to be heard before the Senate Committee on Financial and Governmental Organizations and Elections at 2:00 p.m. in the Senate Lounge on March 5. House Bill 1353, sponsored by Rep. Jill Schupp (D-Creve Coeur), would stipulate that the governor may appoint a student as a voting member of the University of Missouri Board of Curators. That bill is scheduled to receive both a public hearing and an executive session in the House Committee on Higher Education at 8:00 a.m. in House Hearing Room 6 on March 6.

Both chambers approved a measure which would have granted voting rights to the student curator in 2008. The bill, however, was vetoed by then Gov. Matt Blunt.

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