

Legislative News



Senate Appropriations takes first pass at budget bills

The Senate Committee on Appropriations began mark-up on fiscal year 2013 budget bills Wednesday. The day brought several positive developments for higher education as the appropriations process moves into its second stage.

The Senate committee closed institution core operating appropriation line-items, maintaining the restored funding contained in the House version of the budget. The committee did remove \$2 million added in the House for Southeast Missouri State University to address per FTE funding disparities and added back \$300,000 for the University of Missouri System cut in the House over an issue at the University of Missouri – Kansas City School of Medicine. The line-item for Missouri Western State University was left open and will be returned to next week.

Funding for scholarship programs was left the same as in the current year. One million dollars was also included for the Nursing Education Incentive Grant program to continue the program established in 2011. Both are consistent with the governor's recommendation and the House position.

The biggest change offered in the Senate committee Wednesday was the addition of \$5 million for the state's public two-year institutions from Department of Economic Development job training dollars for use in community college programs geared toward training students for employment in high demand fields.

The committee also offered a new decision item of \$183,000 for the University of Missouri to provide economic modeling utilized for tax credit

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purposes. That modeling is currently performed by the Department of Economic Development. Two hundred thousand dollars was also added for the University of Missouri-related item the State Historical Society for manuscript collection.

Senate Appropriations will return to open items next week before approving a committee substitute of HCS for HB 2003 and sending its version of the FY13 budget to the Senate floor for consideration of the body. Differences between the versions passed by the House and Senate will be worked out in a conference committee. A final budget for FY13 must be passed by Friday, May 11.

Capital appropriations bill contains higher education project

The House Committee on Budget went over House Bill 2019 Wednesday, which contains appropriations for capital improvements. In yet another difficult budget year the bill remains small, but good news came for one higher education institution in the committee meeting this week.

The University of Missouri – Columbia saw \$2.5 million added to the bill

Wednesday for design and construction of the Meats Education and Training Center to be built in Columbia. The center will be a turn-key harvest and processing plant to serve as an industry model for education, training, technical support and research in meat animal discovery, production and information transfer. Expected to accommodate the research and devel-

opment of small and very small meat processors, the project is said to bridge the gap between the institution's Land Grant Mission and small business.

The entire \$2.5 million appropriation for the facility is taken from the Agriculture

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Legislative committees move on several bills

Bills continue to move through committee, as the 2012 legislative session pushes on. The House Committee on Higher Education and Senate Committee on Education both met this week to hear higher education bills referred to the committees.

House Higher Education met Tuesday and heard SCS for SB 655. The bill, sponsored by Sen. Tim Green (D-Spanish Lake), was presented by Rep. Chris Kelly (D-Columbia) and would establish the Higher Education Capital Fund to provide matching funds for capital improvement projects at public institutions. The bill is similar to HB 1502, sponsored by Rep. Caleb Jones (R-California), and requires institutions to provide 50% of project costs from private sources, excluding institution operating budgets, tuition, fees or bonding proceeds, to qualify for monies from the fund. Money would still be appropriated from the fund for projects through the regular appropriations process.

A House committee substitute was adopted by the committee and voted do-pass during the meeting. The committee substitute limits appropriations to the fund to state general revenue and prohibits using funds for parking structures and student housing, replac-

ing "other revenue generating facilities" language included in the version which passed the Senate. Athletic facilities are also excluded from facilities qualifying for appropriations from the fund under the bill. The substitute was reported to the floor on Wednesday and was referred to House Rules the same day.

The committee also held an executive session on SCS for SB 562 sponsored by Sen. Bob Dixon (R-Springfield). The bill restores the ability of certain four-year institutions to lease university property without approval from the General Assembly. Provisions allowing for such sunset in 2011 for all institutions without that ability elsewhere in statute, except for Missouri Western State University. Rep. Wayne Wallingford offered an amendment to add Southeast Missouri State University back to the list of institutions on the bill. The institution had been removed in the Senate after opposition to their inclusion in the bill, but that opposition has been resolved according to several members of the committee. The amendment was adopted and a committee substitute was voted do-pass Tuesday. The bill, similar to HB 1041 sponsored by Rep. Mike Thomson (R-Maryville), has been reported out of committee and has

also been referred to House Rules.

The Senate Committee on Education heard Rep. Thomson's HCS for HB 1042 at its meeting on Wednesday. The bill is similar to SB 455 sponsored by Sen. David Pearce (R-Warrensburg), which modifies several duties of the Coordinating Board for Higher Education relating to the implementation of best practices in remediation, the creation of a statewide core transfer library and the establishment of a reverse transfer policy. The committee did not vote on the bill Wednesday, but is expected to hold an executive session on HCS for HB 1042 on April 11.

House Higher Education convened again briefly Thursday morning to vote on Sen. Dixon's SCS for SB 563. The bill modifies the Missouri State University Board of Governors so that three governor's terms expire every two years and modifies the Northwest Missouri State University Board of Regents such that no more than two regents are appointed from one county. The bill was voted do-pass by the committee.

The deadline to introduce new bills has passed in both chambers. The Second Regular Session of the 96th General Assembly will conclude on Friday, May 18th.



The Great Seal of Missouri inside the Capitol.

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Protection Fund. The fund is a fee-supported fund in the treasury currently with a balance. Appropriations are also included from the fund in the FY13 capital bill for the construction of storm shelters at the Missouri State Fairgrounds.

A committee substitute of the bill including the Meats Education and Training Center was voted do-pass by the committee on Wednesday and reported to the floor. It was since referred to House Rules where it currently sits.

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