

Olympia Update No. 18 • April 22, 2007
Legislature Adjourns Sine Die

Washington Legislature adjourns “sine die”

It was the session that the governor told legislators intended to go to school on education, from early learning to graduate school.

It ended tonight as a productive session for WSU and higher education, largely following the agenda set by Gov. Christine Gregoire. The largest WSU capital construction budget in history, a 17.9 percent increase in operating funds for the university, and a constitutional amendment proposed to voters to increase trust earnings are among the impacts the 2007 Legislature had on Washington State University before it adjourned the 105-day session tonight.

A Fifth Branch Campus? Perhaps the most potentially controversial higher education issue of the session was the proposal for a new four-year institution at Everett. Separate legislation was unsuccessful amidst divided legislators from the Everett area. The alternatives ranged from campus centers, to a subsidiary of UW Bothell, to a new free-standing institution or technological institute. With little fanfare, the Legislature’s decision is apparently buried in the final capital budget that provides \$4 million to begin an effort that, “the University of Washington shall govern and operate” as “an additional branch campus.” OFM and UW are to report on the issue Nov. 15.

But issues for P-12 education were more visible and contentious, right down to the end. The standard math and science test requirements for high school graduation were delayed for up to five years (Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6023.) The final version of ESSB 6023 was the 37th draft of that legislation.

“Mr Speaker, say sine die!” The plea for the legislative motion to end the session was put to the melody of “Mr. Sandman” by state legislative staff singing to the the House of Representatives just before 5 p.m. Staff average 13-hour work days for the past 105 days and were as anxious as anyone to see the session end. It was one of the lighter moments of a final day in which lawmakers wrestled with school testing legislation and family leave policy.

Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1092, will appropriate \$58 million to complete the Pullman Life Sciences Building. It is the highlight of a record \$180.6 million WSU construction budget contained in the capital budget bill. A \$29 million classroom building for WSU Vancouver, and \$59 million in critical dollars to improve and preserve existing facilities are in the conference committee version of the 2007-2009 construction budget. The measure passed the state House of Representatives Sunday evening after clearing the Senate the previous day.

[For more details on the capital budget, see Olympia Update No. 16](#)

The operating budget bill, Substitute House Bill 1128, boosts Washington State University's state funding 17.9 percent in the next two years. The bill cleared the state Senate 31-17 for the last time just before 6 p.m. Sunday. The House approved the budget 60-36 along party lines at about 9:15 p.m. "This year it is a good higher education budget, in past years it has not been," said House Appropriations Chair Helen Sommers, D-Seattle. Sommers, who remains critical of some specific WSU programs, nevertheless remains as the champion for all of higher education in the Washington Legislature. Student enrollments will increase at all campuses, agricultural research funding will be boosted by \$5.3 million, and salaries will increase by an average of 3.2 percent Sept. 1 through the new \$508.6 million compromise operating budget for WSU. The first state appropriations for medical education programs in Spokane, a WSU PhD program in nursing, a new Spokane Applied Sciences Laboratory, a new engineering program at WSU Vancouver, and WSU Small Business Development Centers are just some of the items contained in the final resolution of House-Senate budget differences.

[For more details on operating budget, see Olympia Update No. 17](#)

Both the bills now head to Gov. Christine Gregoire's desk for a signature. However, the third most important bill impacting WSU this session head instead to the state's voters in November.

Substitute House Joint Resolution 4215, the WSU-sponsored constitutional amendment that allows for equity investment in trust land permanent funds, passed the state Senate earlier this month without opposition 45-0 and will be on the November ballot. The measure sponsored by Rep. Phyllis Kenney, D-Seattle, passed the House 92-2 on March 8. Constitutional amendments require a two-thirds vote in each house, something this proposal easily achieved. The companion bill to implement the change, Substitute House Bill 1784, passed the Senate 47-0 and is headed for the governor's desk. It is contingent on voter approval of SHJR 4215.

[For more details on the constitutional amendment, see Olympia Update No. 15](#)

More than two-thirds of the bills impacting higher education and WSU died during the session.

[A complete list is available on the WSU bill status page](#)

Among the more significant bills:

Tuition increases are capped at at 7 percent in the governor's Washington Learns bill, Second Substitute Senate Bill 5806 sponsored by the Republican senator representing the Pullman campus, Sen. Mark Schoesler, R-Ritzville. Perhaps more importantly, a state goal is adopted in the measure that total per-student funding levels are comparable to competing state institutions. The measure was signed into law by the governor Friday.

Innovation Partnership Zones, Substitute House Bill 1091, has passed the Legislature in a form supporting the original request by the governor.

An Institute for Systems Medicine Bill (Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1705) has been sent to the governor. The measure creates authority for a local state sales tax credit that will fund the health sciences research and services program envisioned for Spokane. It is expected to generate about \$1 million per year.

A staff collective bargaining bill, (Substitute House Bill 2361.) extending rights to managers and administrators who were previously exempt was signed into law by the governor on April 19.

A bill that creates a space-available high-demand waivers for teachers and certificated instructional staff at common schools has been delivered to the governor (Substitute Senate Bill 5101.)

Resolutions honoring WSU President V Lane Rawlins (HR 4658) and WSU Basketball Coach Tony Bennett (HR 4661) were adopted by the House of Representatives.

Olympia Update is produced for persons interested in state government developments affecting Washington State University. For more information, go to www.olympia.wsu.edu. Contacts: Larry Ganders, Assistant to the President, 360-956-2165. From WSU campuses, dial 8-2165. If you wish to subscribe to Olympia Update directly by email, send a completely blank message from your e-mail account (no signatures or footers please) to: subscribe-olympia_update@listserv.energy.wsu.edu