



OLYMPIA UPDATE

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Governor's Supplemental Budget

Governor funds security upgrades

About \$1.8 million in campus security improvements will be made at Washington State University by a 2008 supplemental budget proposal announced this week by Gov. Christine Gregoire.

Feeling the pressure on the state budget created by sputtering Christmas gift & home sales, the governor's supplemental request for higher education contained no significant infusion of state funds for students or faculty. Instead, she poured available state funding into a "rainy day" reserve. She squeezed higher education requests down to one-time investment in security equipment like key card security access for WSU buildings and alarm upgrades. She funded no new major higher education initiatives that require ongoing state funding.

A major disappointment for the university is that the governor did not provide one-time funding for a \$1 million feasibility study that would ultimately lead to replacing aging administrative and student core computer support systems. That could create delays in a project that is expected to take four years and \$45 million to complete. Part of the project would have been to create more redundancy and backup to WSU information technology system. WSU narrowly averted a major outage Wednesday night at 10 p.m. when rainwater flooded the room that housed university data and telephone switches. Emergency action by WSU officials prevented the water from rising high enough to cause widespread outages.

Veterinary Medical Research Building Delayed. The governor funded no major new buildings. WSU had sought \$7.4 million for design of a new Veterinary Medical Research Building. If the Legislature follows the governor's lead, that building may be delayed for two years.

The governor also did not fund a \$3.85 million operating request for Global Animal Health and Agriculture issues. That request is intended to create a new School of Global Animal Health to provide practical, innovative solutions to pressing infectious disease challenges in animals that impact humans. The request targeted disease problems in agriculture. The package specifically focused on timely issues like avian flu, e-coli, sudden oak death, honey bee colony collapse, grape leaf roller virus, etc. Agriculture and veterinary organizations have strongly endorsed the package, which is expected to be considered when the 2008 Legislature reacts to the governor's budget next month.

Requests by WSU and other universities for graduate program cut restoration, salary equity for administrative professionals, and recruitment and retention of faculty were also not recommended by the governor for the supplemental budget.

Alarm Upgrades and Key Card Access

The \$1.8 million in the governor's supplemental capital budget for WSU will focus on three areas:

- **\$579,000 for Key card access.** The budget states the funding is “solely for key-card access control technology on the doors of classroom and research facilities on the Pullman campus.”
- **\$1.021 million for alarm upgrades** that would allow students and staff to hear warnings in the event of an emergency by adding voice capability to the existing system installed this year on the Pullman campus.
- **\$200,000 for branch campus outdoor public alert systems.**

Similar security requests by other universities and community colleges were also funded by the governor budget which totaled \$14.2 million.

The security upgrades were part of a \$3 million campus safety request by WSU. The remaining \$1.2 million that was not funded by the governor included some of the university's highest priorities for safety that grew out of lessons learned from the 2007 tragedy at Virginia Tech.

The university had requested a full-time threat assessment coordinator that would lead efforts to identify students or employees that could pose a safety risk. Once identified, the university would provide counseling or mental health support. Threat assessment coordinators are already used in the K-12 education system. Additional police officers and up-to-date police equipment and training were also requested but not funded by the governor.

Governor supports Ruckelshaus Center funding. The governor did recommend one-time funding to the William Ruckelshaus Center “to explore practical and effective ways to resolve or reduce conflict associated with land use requirements and property rights.” The joint center with UW and WSU received about \$300,000 from the governor; about \$175,000 of the funding was allocated directly to WSU with the balance to UW.

Technical corrections funded. The governor did provide \$1.9 million in additional funding to address a substantial error in the current biennial budget that resulted in WSU being underfunded for state-mandated salary increases for its employees. WSU would have to make reductions to unrelated portions of its budget if these corrections are not made.

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