STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

February 18, 2011

(This update is produced by the UH System Office of Governmental Relations and the UH Division of University Advancement as a service to our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends.)

Appropriations Testimony and NRUF Distribution Bill Filed

It was a demanding week for University of Houston System officials at the Texas Capitol. Chancellor Renu Khator and Presidents Bill Staples, Bill Flores and Don Smith testified on the appropriations bill before the Senate Finance Committee and the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education. Both were lengthy appearances with wide ranging questions. UHS Board Chair Carroll Robertson Ray and member Mica Mosbacher attended the hearings. While they were in Austin, they met with Lt. Governor David Dewhurst, Rep. Jim Pitts (Chairman of House Appropriations), Rep. Dan Branch (Chairman of House Higher Education) and other legislative leaders. You can watch a broadcast of the House hearing here: http://www.house.state.tx.us/video-audio/committee-broadcasts/committee-archives/player/?session=82&committee=012&ram=11021707012

Regents Nandita Berry, Tilman Fertitta and Jarvis Hollingsworth were confirmed by the Senate on Wednesday. Regent Berry appeared before the Nominations Committee on Monday.

This week, Representative Garnet Coleman (D-Houston) filed HB 1318 which removes the requirement that the UHS board meet every April. The companion, SB 528 was filed by Senator Joan Huffman (R-Southside Place), and has been referred to the Senate Higher Education Committee.

Five bills have been filed authorizing concealed handguns on college campuses: HB 86 by Simpson, HB 750 by Driver, HB 1167 by Van Taylor, HB 1356 by Gooden and SB 354 by Wentworth.

Senator Robert Duncan (R-Lubbock) has filed SB 557 which authorizes the distribution of the National Research University Fund. The bill is joint authored by Senator Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo) and has been referred to the Senate Higher Education Committee which she chairs.

Representative Dan Branch (R-Dallas), who chairs the House Higher Education Committee, has filed several bills of interest this week:

HB 9 relating to student success-based funding for public institutions of higher education

HB 10 relating to eligibility for a TEXAS grant and to administration of the TEXAS grant program

HB 1460 relating to measures to increase cost efficiency at public institutions of higher education and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, including the elimination of certain reporting and other requirements imposed.

Please see the weekly bill report for the status of all legislation we are tracking and go to http://www.capitol.state.tx.us for more information on the legislature.