STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

February 25, 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.)

Bills Filed to Eliminate Nonresident Tuition Waiver and Increase Cost Efficiencies at Public Universities

Board Chair Carroll Robertson Ray and Chancellor Renu Khator were accompanied by Regents Welcome Wilson Sr., Nelda Luce Blair and Mica Mosbacher in Austin this week. They met with the Harris County House delegation on the UH System legislative agenda and then met individually with key senators and representatives. Collectively they met with over 30 legislators in one very busy day.

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education has been meeting long hours and has begun to mark-up the appropriations bill for Article III (Education). They have divided the special items among the subcommittee members to determine if some should be eliminated, be cut by more than 25 percent or be otherwise funded. They have not yet posted schedules for next week.

On Wednesday, the House Higher Education Committee held an organizational meeting. They have posted two bills for next Wednesday:

- HB 9 by Branch: relating to student success-based funding for public institutions of higher education
- HB 10 by Branch: relation to eligibility for a TEXAS grant and to administration of the TEXAS grant program.

The Senate Higher Education Committee will hear legislation next Wednesday at 8:00 a.m. but has not yet posted.

LEGISLATION OF PARTICULAR INTEREST

Several bills have been filed to eliminate the nonresident tuition waiver for graduates from Texas high schools without proof of citizenship (known as 1403 waivers). They are HB 464 by Kleinschmidt, HB 1238 by Zedler and HB 1387 by Cain.

HB 1460 by Rep. Branch relates to measures to increase cost efficiencies at public institutions of higher education and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, including the elimination of certain reporting and other requirements. Among other things, it requires that at least ten percent of the courses taken by a student must by conducted by alternative methods including dual credit and online courses. It also requires that students file a degree plan as soon as they have completed 30 hours.

SB 200 by Sen. Zaffirini requires the Coordinating Board to review all required reports in an effort to eliminate administrative burdens at universities.

Rep. Ron Reynolds has filed legislation requiring bacterial meningitis inoculations for all entering students. Current law requires it for all students living on campus.

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.