STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

March 11, 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.)

Legislature Reaches Deadline for Free Introduction of Bills

Today is the 60th day of the 140 day session and the deadline for free introduction of legislation. After today a member will need a two-thirds vote for introduction, unless it is a local bill. As of yesterday evening, there were over 3200 house bills and 1500 senate bills.

Senator Rodney Ellis filed SB 1365 to distribute the National Research University Fund (NRUF) this week. It is cosponsored by Senators Mario Gallegos, Glen Hegar, Juan Hinojosa, Joan Huffman, Robert Nichols, Dan Patrick, Kirk Watson, John Whitmire and Tommy Williams. The bill, which is the companion to Representative Garnet Coleman's HB 2115, would distribute 4.5 percent of the available fund to eligible institutions based on research expenditures.

Representative Dan Branch of Dallas, chairman of the Higher Education Committee, has also filed NRUF legislation. For some reason he filed two bills that are identical: HB 1000 and HB 2626. Both bills also distribute 4.5 percent but use a different allocation methodology. Each eligible institution would receive the same amount as follows:

(1) one-half of the total amount appropriated if only one institution has established eligibility;
(2) two-thirds of the total amount appropriated if two institutions have established eligibility;
(3) three-fourths of the total amount appropriated if three institutions have established eligibility;
(4) four-fifths of the total amount appropriated if four institutions have established eligibility;
(5) five-sixths of the total amount appropriated if five institutions have established eligibility; and
(6) six-sevenths of the total amount appropriated if six institutions have established eligibility.

Representative Geanie Morrison filed HB 2556 on Tuesday which would transfer the University of Houston Victoria to the Texas A&M System.

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education met very early and very late often this week. They finished their deliberations late last night. The full Appropriations Committee plans to complete work on the bill next week, have the bill printed and take a final vote the following week.

Please see the weekly bill report on the legislation we are tracking. You can now link directly to the legislation from the report or go to http://www.capitol.state.tx.us