STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

March 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.)

Students Visit Legislature; General Appropriations and Concealed Handguns Bills Move Forward



As you can see from the photo above, UH was well represented at the Capitol this week. Student Government Association President Prince Wilson and about twenty UH students used Spring Break to meet with legislators including Representative Alma Allen (pictured), a UH alumnus. Chancellor Renu Khator met with the students and with a number of legislators in Austin on Tuesday and Wednesday. On Monday, Regent Jarvis Hollingsworth also visited with several legislative leaders.

UH Clear Lake President Bill Staples testified before the House Higher Education Committee on Wednesday on the bill authorizing UHCL to offer freshman and sophomore courses. The bill was left pending.

SB 528 by Sen. Huffman, which removes the requirement for the UH System Board of Regents to meet in April, passed the Senate on the consent calendar this week.

The House Appropriations Committee wrapped up work on the General Appropriations Bill (HB 1) this week. We won't have a complete assessment until it is printed next week.

The House Committee on Homeland Security and Public Safety held a long meeting on Wednesday on several bills to allow concealed handguns on campuses. HB 750 by Driver was reported favorably on a five to three vote. Well over half of the House members have signed on as cosponsors of the bill.

The following bills will be heard in the Senate Higher Education Committee next Wednesday:

SB 419 West Relating to prohibiting state funding to public junior colleges for physical education courses offered for joint high school and junior college credit.

SB 1009 Huffman Relating to requiring public institutions of higher education to notify the federal Student Exchange and Visitor Information System (SEVIS) regarding the withdrawal or nonattendance of certain foreign students.

SB 1020 Rodriguez Relating to a feasibility study regarding the establishment of a dental school at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center at El Paso.

SB 1067 Ellis Relating to funding the TEXAS grant program at public institutions of higher education.

SB 1107 Davis et al. Relating to the vaccination against bacterial meningitis of first-time students at public and private or independent institutions of higher education.

SB 1121 Estes Relating to the student fees for the university center at Midwestern State University.

Pending bills:
SB 28 Zaffirini et al. Relating to eligibility for a TEXAS grant and to administration of the TEXAS grant program

Please see the weekly bill report for the status of tracked legislation. You can now link directly from the report to http://www.capitol.state.tx.us for more information.