

If you missed the capitol hubbub about community college funding this week, you must have been out of the state. The co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means released their version of the next biennium's budget and it was none too positive for the good guys from community colleges. To recap, the community colleges have asked for an investment of \$529 million in the support fund. The Governor, in his recommended budget, proposed appropriating \$483 million to the CCSF. But the co-chairs proposed funding the colleges at only \$458 million. There were enough boos and hisses coming from community college advocates across the state that some legislators must have thought they'd stumbled into an old-fashioned melodrama. "Oh, Miss Polly, if you are tied to those train tracks you can't possibly enroll in a professional technical program."

The other dastardly thing in the co-chairs' budget is that they provided only \$6.2 million for capital construction projects. That's \$6.2 million out of a requested \$103 million. Community college folk are rallying around this issue and so are our business partners. Can you imagine the mess regional hospitals and clinics will be in if none of the allied health training facilities in the capital package get built? Have you told your legislators what will become of your students if the facility you are counting on isn't on the funded list?

But never fear – this is only one stage in the political buildup to an adopted budget and, if the calls and emails supporting full funding continue at the pace they've been coming in to legislative offices this week, community colleges will fare far better than this week's proposal. Our colleges have already proved they are flexible and efficient. Now they must prove they are the squeakiest wheel in the state. If you don't know your legislators' phone numbers, you can find them at <http://www.leg.state.or.us/senate/> and <http://www.leg.state.or.us/house/>. If you've already called and emailed your legislators then use the same link to find the contact information for the members of the Ways and Means Committees and let them know how you feel.

On a positive note, the co-chairs budget did include funding for the new Shared Responsibility Financial Aid Model. Of course, if there aren't enough class sections or buildings to hold classes in, offering financial aid for college is an empty promise. We must have all three funding mechanisms (support fund, capital, and financial aid) to meet the demand of Oregon's future workforce needs.

The Ways and Means Committee will be hitting the road for hearings around the state. The first hearing will be this coming Thursday, March 29 from 4:50 – 7 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center, Portland Community College- Sylvania Campus, 12000 SW 49<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Portland. The subject for this hearing is Community Colleges, Community College/K12 partnerships, and other Education issues. It is extremely important that community college advocates are well represented at this and the other remote hearings. If you can attend, please do and wear something that clearly identifies you as a community college advocate.

One of the bills calling for the repeal of the Double Majority had a hearing this week. There is a similar bill up for consideration next week in the House Elections and Rules Committee. Either bill, if passed, would be referred to the ballot for a vote of the people.

Other hearings scheduled for the coming week include:

A. HCR 7 (memorializing Doreen Margolin), House Elections and Rules, March 26, 8:30 am, HR E

B. HB 2578 (PT/FT Faculty Ratios), House Higher Ed Subcommittee, March 28, 1:00 pm, HR D

C. SB 671 (Records Created by Attorney), Senate Judiciary, March 28, 1:00 pm, Room 343

There were no new bills for this week.