

Warm weather has finally arrived, the state's revenues are up and post-secondary education supporters are working together to ensure this session ends on a positive note for all segments of the education continuum. What's not to like?

When the revenue estimates were released Tuesday morning by the State they revealed that the funds available to the legislature have increased by \$96.6 million since the last forecast in March. This was fabulous news for community colleges because it means that the legislature now has the funds available to realistically meet the State Board of Education's request for \$529 million for the community college support fund without tying such an appropriation to a new revenue source. There is still interest from some legislators in raising the corporate minimum tax above its \$10 level but that conversation can now go forward as a policy consideration without necessarily being tied to an appropriation need.

There are, of course, other interests clamoring for a share of the new revenues but community colleges and higher education have been assured that their needs will come first in legislative discussions. That is exactly what we requested they do when we took part in the coalition efforts this month with OUS and student organizations to say "Fund post-secondary first." Big thanks to all of you who made calls and sent letters as we requested. Your voices are being heard.

While the increased revenue estimates don't directly impact the conversation about our capital projects since the co-chairs' reluctance to fund them all has more to do with the overall State debt load than any general fund appropriation this session, it is easier to move those requests forward knowing that the operating funds to put programs in new buildings are likely. Also on the capital construction front, we are all pleased for Tillamook Bay that their bond not only won voter's favor but also generated enough interest to call out enough voters to push the question above the double majority limit. Sadly, the much needed bond at Clatsop Community College did not pass so leadership at that fine institution is grappling with the "what next" questions about how to serve their region with a facility that is unsuitable for modern education.

Also on Tuesday, nineteen new community college board members were elected across the state. OCCA will be hosting a new board member training on July 20 at the Inn at Otter Crest just north of Newport. Materials about that meeting should go out in the next week or two.

Hearing coming up this week include:

- A. SB 951 (Student Vote Registration Plans), House Education, Monday, May 21, 1 pm, HR D <http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/sb0900.dir/sb0951.a.pdf>, and
- B. SB 365 (Textbooks), House Education, Monday, May 21, 1pm, HR D <http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/sb0300.dir/sb0365.a.pdf>

Enjoy your weekend. Don't forget the sunscreen!