



Legislative Notes March 14, 2008

State Update

Legislators hear technology is here to stay

Committee members from the Senate and House Higher Education committees met jointly earlier this week and heard from Dr. Mark David Milliron, an author and consultant who explores leadership development and the human side of technology change. Milliron's presentation, entitled, *Catalytic Conversations; Making the Most of Education on the Road Ahead*, focused on the rise in the need for higher education. Milliron said that more people than ever are turning to some type of post-secondary education, and these students learn differently. Milliron argued that we have moved, and will continue to move, to a hybrid model of instruction; a combination of face-to-face learning and on-line learning to meet the needs of students. He went on to say that technology is at the table to stay and should be a basic part of an institution's infrastructure, similar to maintaining the buildings on campus. To learn more about Mark Milliron, you may view his Web site at www.markmilliron.com.

House committee hears how proposed budget cuts would affect higher education

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system and the University of Minnesota spoke to the House Higher Education and Work Force Development Policy and Finance Division this week about the impact of Gov. Tim Pawlenty's suggested cuts of approximately \$26 million for each system. University of Minnesota President Bob Bruininks talked about three strategies; cutting costs, deferring investments, or raising tuition. If the University solved the budget cuts by cutting costs, Bruininks told committee members it would mean laying off nearly 400 people. While raising tuition would be the last resort, Bruininks did say it would be difficult to avoid tuition increases completely.

Vice Chancellor Laura King testified on behalf of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. King reminded committee members that the system is barely ahead of where they were in 2003 with prior budget cuts of nearly \$240 million. She said this cut of \$26.6 million proposed by the governor would put the system back in the hole. King told committee members that the system could also solve the budget cuts with similar solutions; roll back new investments, make budget cuts across the system, or increase tuition. She told members that the system worked hard to keep tuition increases low at 2 percent for colleges and 3 percent for universities, as well as provide higher

salaries to recruit and retain high-quality faculty and expand programs and services for underrepresented students. She also pointed out the need for the system to renovate an aging system-wide technology network long past its useful life. King said that the proposed budget cuts would put all of this progress at risk.

Both the Minnesota State University Student Association and the Minnesota State College Student Association testified and asked legislators to spare higher education from cuts, or to minimize the size of cuts on the public higher education systems in order to ensure that higher education remains an option for students.

First committee deadline today

The first month of the 2008 legislative session brought with it a flurry of bill activity. While there is no yearly deadline for the introduction of bills, each year the Legislature establishes deadlines for committee action on bills, which means we may start to see bill introductions and committee hearings on bills slow down after today. Today, March 14, is the first committee deadline, which means all policy bills must pass out of committee in either the House or Senate.

The Legislature has set the second committee deadline for Wednesday, March 19. This deadline means all policy bills must pass out of committees in the other chamber. The third deadline, which this year has been set for March 28, is for committees to act favorably on major appropriation and finance bills.

Senate Higher Education committee sends policy bill to the floor

The Senate Higher Education Budget and Policy Division heard multiple bills this week for possible inclusion in the committee's omnibus policy bill. SF3099, Sen. Linda Berglin's, DFL-Minneapolis, health care reform bill, was before the committee to address Section 8 of the bill. This section appropriates funds to the Mayo Medical Foundation, the University of Minnesota to increase the number of graduates of residency programs who practice primary care, the Office of Higher Education to provide grants to schools of nursing to increase the number of graduates of advanced practice registered nurse programs, and the Dept. of Human Services for the health professional education loan forgiveness program. The bill was re-referred to the Finance Committee.

Committee members heard from Sen. Tarryl Clark, DFL-St. Cloud, on SF3485, the bill that amends the 60/120 credit cap language from the 2007 legislative session. This bill exempts all AAS degrees from the credit cap of 60 credits. A delete-all amendment passed that requires the Board of Trustees to report annually to the legislature the waivers granted for programs that do not meet the 60 or 120 credit cap. The bill, as amended, was included in the omnibus policy bill.

Sen. David Hann, R-Eden Prairie, presented SF3623, a bill that aligns the Minnesota Data Privacy Act with the federal law, Family Educational Rights and Privacy

Act, or FERPA, to provide post-secondary institutions the ability to notify parents of concerns related to underage drinking of students. Representatives from the Minnesota State College Student Association and the Minnesota State University Student Association acknowledged the problem of college-age binge drinking, however said they are not able to support the legislation because it is a data privacy issue for students. Student leaders encouraged legislators and others to continue to find workable solutions. Legislators supporting the bill said that passing the bill does not mean an institution has to notify parents, it is a matter of aligning the state and federal data privacy laws so that an institution is able to notify parents if there is a problem. The bill was referred to the Judiciary Committee without recommendation.

Chair Sandy Pappas, DFL-St. Paul, said once the policy bill is finished, the committee will look next at putting together a higher education omnibus finance bill. Next week, the Senate Higher Education committee will hear from Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and the University of Minnesota about the impact of the governor's proposed budget cuts of \$26 million each.

Bonding bill movement slows down

After an intense week of bonding activity at the Capitol last week, this week was fairly quiet. Conferees have not yet met to iron out the differences in the House and Senate bonding bills, and the total price of the bill seems to be the big question. However, lawmakers have said they would like to be able to pass a bill for Gov. Tim Pawlenty's consideration before the legislative spring break next week.

The governor has insisted the total cost of the bonding bill be kept to \$825 million, which would keep principal and interest payments to no more than 3 percent of the state's general fund. Bonding chairman, Sen. Keith Langseth, DFL-Glyndon, brought the Senate's total to \$925 million down from \$965 million this week. Putting a \$925 million proposal out is intended to establish a Senate position on a slightly smaller bill for conference committee purposes, Langseth said. Lead House negotiator, Rep. Alice Hausman, DFL-St. Paul, said she is trying to scale back the final bill even more to avoid a gubernatorial veto. As a reminder, the governor has the authority to line-item veto, which means he can veto specific projects, but he can also veto the entire bill. Lawmakers head back to their districts for spring break starting Thursday. We will continue to keep you updated on any bonding activity.

Legislative Coordinating Commission approves contracts

The Legislative Coordinating Commission Subcommittee on Employee Relations met today, March 14, to review and recommend approval of state collective bargaining agreements, including the Inter Faculty Organization (IFO) contract and the personnel plan for Minnesota State Colleges and Universities administrators. Both the IFO contract and the administrator's plan were approved by the committee. Both will need approval by the full Senate and House. Stay tuned as we continue to monitor the progress.

Federal Update

Clinton and Obama join McCain in support of banning earmarks for one year – proposal voted down

Earlier this week, Senators Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama joined Sen. John McCain and other fiscal conservatives in support of a proposal to ban spending earmarked for home-state projects for one year. On Thursday, the U.S. Senate voted down the proposal by a vote of 71-29.

The vote Thursday was part of the consideration of a budget blueprint for the 2009 fiscal year. The Senate approved amendments that would allow Congressional appropriators to provide \$2.1 billion more for the National Institutes of Health and clear the way for Congress to increase the amount of federal loan funds that a student can borrow at a later date if the credit crunch worsens. The budget resolution sets overall spending levels that Congressional appropriators must stay under, but its figures for individual programs are not binding. Congress has adjourned until March 31 for district work.

Here's What's Happening at the Capitol:

This schedule shows all meetings that we are aware of at the time of publication that MAY have an impact on the system. This schedule may change. Please watch the House and Senate schedules posted on the Legislature Web site (www.leg.state.mn.us).

Monday, March 17

8:00 AM

House Finance (televised)

Room: 200 State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Lyndon Carlson

Agenda: HF3138 (Bigham) State labor contracts ratified.

HF3868 (Lieder) Compressed natural gas excise tax transitional rate corrected.

HF2783 (Swails) P-20 education partnership established.

HF3090 (Morrow) Department of Transportation position provisions modified.

HF3312 (Olin) Drainage system repair fund modified to maximum amount allowed.

HF2941 (Hausman) University of Minnesota funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3569 (Rukavina) University of Minnesota directed to study workers' health including lung health, and money appropriated.

HF2877 (Paymar) Disarming a peace officer crime established.

HF1625 (Hosch) Order of protection and restraining order durations extended after multiple violations or continued threats.

HF3876 (Atkins) Public defender law school loan repayment program authorized, and money appropriated. (pending division passage)

HF2906 (Paymar) Dangerous dogs regulating provisions changed. (pending division passage)

HF3132 (Mullery) Animal fighting provisions changed. (pending division passage)

12:30 PM

House Meets in Session

12:30 PM

Senate State Government Budget Division

Room: 112 Capitol

Chair: Sen. Don Betzold

Agenda:

Governor's budget recommendations for the Department of Administration, Office of Enterprise Technology, Department of Finance, Department of Employee Relations, Department of Revenue, and the Amateur Sports Commission.

4:00 PM

House Education Finance and Economic Competitiveness Finance Division

Room: 5 State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Mary Murphy

Agenda: A preview of the governor's supplemental budget on Education Finance and Economic Competitiveness

Steve Nelson, Department of Human Services

Minnesota Department of Education

Tricia Grimes, Office of Higher Education

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

University of Minnesota

Department of Employment and Economic Development

Tuesday, March 18

8:30 AM

Senate E-12 Education Budget Division

Room: 112 Capitol

Chair: Sen. LeRoy A. Stumpf

Agenda:

S.F. 1976-Latz: Healthy development of children and youth within the community grant program.

S.F. 2409-Carlson, J.: Intermediate school districts borrowing authority in anticipation of revenue payments; school district or intermediate school district aid reduction for repayment provision.

S.F. 3076-Bakk: Lake Vermillion state park establishment.

S.F. 3708-Olson, G.: Teachers licensure via portfolio.

12:30 PM

Senate Higher Education Budget and Policy Division

Room: 123 Capitol

Chair: Sen. Sandra L. Pappas

Agenda:

Governor's budget recommendations

S.F. 786-Skoe: Higher education student grant program modifications.

S.F. 3001-Wiger: Education Omnibus Bill: provisions related to Higher Education only.

12:30 PM

House Higher Education and Workforce Development Policy and Finance Division

Room: 5 State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Tom Rukavina

Agenda:

HF 2524 (Ward) including the spouse and children of a resident veteran in the definition of "resident student"

HF 3999 (Davnie) providing direction to conform the state's economic development policies with the state's environmental policy

HF 1780 (Marquart) providing for disclosure of certain information

2:15 PM

House K-12 Education Finance Division

Room: 10 State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Mindy Greiling

Agenda: Governor's supplemental budget recommendations

HF3958 (Swails) Teacher licensure via portfolio established.

6:00 PM

House Higher Education and Workforce Development Policy and Finance Division

Room: 10 State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Tom Rukavina

Agenda: TBA

Wednesday, March 19

8:30 AM

Senate E-12 Education Budget Division

Room: 112 Capitol

Chair: Sen. LeRoy A. Stumpf

Agenda: S.F. 3001-Wiger: Miscellaneous education provisions modifications.

12:30 PM

House Higher Education and Workforce Development Policy and Finance Division

Room: 5 State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Tom Rukavina

Agenda: TBA