

Legislative Review

A Look at Higher Education in Week 10: March 14-18, 2011



*Committee Work
Continues on
HB 1003, the
NDUS Budget Bill*

Committee Hears Department of Commerce Budget Bill, Including COEs

HB 1018, the Department of Commerce budget bill, was heard in Senate Appropriations March 15.

Chancellor Bill Goetz asked the committee to restore the \$20 million investment in Centers of Excellence included in the original version of the bill. He discussed the importance of research to the future of the state and the University System. Goetz also described the alignment of North Dakota's Economic Development Strategic Plan and the University System Strategic Plan as they relate to business and workforce needs and accelerating innovation and entrepreneurship.

The committee did not take action.

HB 1106 Fails in the Senate

HB 1106 was heard in Senate Education March 14, received a 7-0 "do not pass" committee recommendation March 16 and failed in the Senate on a vote of 0-46 March 17.

Proposed by the SBHE and supported by the Department of Public Instruction, HB 1106 dealt with rule-making authority related to the North Dakota Academic and Career and Technical Education Scholarships. The bill would have provided clarification on the funding amounts available to students who attend eligible postsecondary institutions operating on academic quarters rather than semesters.

It is anticipated that some of the provisions proposed in HB 1106 will be addressed in **SB 2150**, which also is related to the scholarship program.

DPI Budget Bill Heard, Includes Funding for Interpreters & Adult Learners

SB 2013, the Department of Public Instruction budget bill, was heard March 16 in House Appropriations, Education and Environmental Division. The bill also includes funding for the State Library, School for the Deaf and the School for the Blind.

Chancellor Bill Goetz provided written testimony in support of DPI funding to serve adult learners. Goetz said North Dakota's future depends on the availability of an educated workforce. With the number of North Dakota high school graduates continuing to decline, to a greater extent this educated workforce must come from the adult population.

In his written testimony, Goetz also expressed support for the \$200,000 in general funds included in SB 2013 for University System interpreters and real-time captioning.

Goetz said the establishment of a pool of funds for these services at the School for the Deaf is an efficient way to address the needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing students who attend University System institutions, providing more seamless services to students.

The committee did not take action on the bill.

Failed Bills

- HB 1106:** Related to academic & CTE scholarships; would have provided SBHE and DPI rule making authority; and would have set 2.75 GPA to maintain scholarship (SBHE bill)
- HB 1129:** Would have assigned responsibility for regulation of private postsecondary schools to both SBHE (associate level and higher) and CTE (below associate level)
- HB 1385:** Would have provided tuition and fee waivers for people 55 and older

Passed Bills

- HB 1105:** Repeals outdated requirement that NDSU send publications to county auditors (SBHE bill)
- HB 1119:** Authorizes insurance coverage for student drivers in instructional programs (OMB bill requested by SBHE)
- HB 1263:** Prohibits discontinuing the UND Fighting Sioux nickname and logo

Week 11 Agenda

- SCR 4017 Mon., March 21, 2:45 p.m., H-JUD:** Allows school officials, including higher education officials, access to juvenile court records
- SB 2300 Tues., March 22, 10 a.m., H-EDU:** Creates a Commission on Higher Education Funding; NDUS representation and funded from NDUS budget
- SCR 4026 Tues., March 22, 11:30 a.m., H-EDU:** Studies the state higher education institution contracts with companies offering student aid refund financial services
- HCR 3046 Wed., March 23, 2:15 p.m. H-CONREV:** Eliminates the SBHE, chancellor, DPI superintendent and creates a new department of education with director to administer and oversee all state public education