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Capitol: Lobbyists discuss importance of school funds

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priorities...that you have to be engaged in a continual effort to remind people about this priority."

According to pamphlets distributed at the event, the University is supporting Gov. Ted Kulongoski's proposed budget, which provides a small increase for higher education. The University is also supporting the Oregon University System Legal Services and Legal Sufficiency bill, which would allow the State Board of Higher Education, OUS Chancellor and university presidents to hire attorneys outside the Department of Justice.

"The overall level of the budget support for the University's general operations is almost always the key," Frohnmayer said, adding that state support of capital construction proposals is also important.

"It won't solve (the University's problems)," Frohnmayer said of the governor's budget. "But, it's more than a hold-the-line budget. It would represent a net increase in our ability to cope, but obviously we hope in some things...that we can do modestly better than the governor's budget."

It's tough to tell whether the University will have enough support in the legislature before the votes are counted, Frohnmayer said. "It's not that we don't have support, it's a question of whether competing priorities will be seen as stronger."

William Swindells represented the University Foundation in the lobbying efforts.

It's important to have people other than University administrator speak to legislators, Swindells said.

"The value is not to say something smarter or better than the administration, it's to have an elected official hear it from a non-administration person," he said.

Representatives from the College of Education and ONAMI attended, hoping to improve their chances of receiving state funding.

"We're here to tell the story of our need for the building and the national impact of the work of our faculty," College of Education Communications Director Linda Mears said.

Mears added that the education program is at the maximum in terms of who it can serve and desperately needs the \$48 million addition.

If the governor's budget proposal is passed, the College of Education will need to raise only \$24 million in private donations to fund the project. The rest would be funded with state bonds.

ONAMI hopes to receive the \$7 million allocated to it in the governor's proposal.

Sen. Vicki Walker, D-Eugene, a 1978 University graduate who attended the reception, said she felt the event was beneficial.

"It's a good reminder of the value of the University of Oregon and what it contributes to our community and our state," Walker said. "There's a lot of U of O grads in this building, and on Beaver day you'll see a lot of OUS grads here as well, it's all great fun. I think it's really important to see (this event)."

Education has been a theme in much of the statehouse's recent politics. Earlier this week, Rep. Bob Ackerman, D-Eugene, pitched a bill that would freeze much of the income that state colleges receive at current levels, much to the alarm of some OUS and Community College officials. On Wednesday, House Speaker Karen Minnis, R-Wood Village, announced the House Republicans' "Stable Schools" plan to fund K-12 public school. The House Democratic Office criticized the bill in internal documents released to Democrats.

Sources shared sentiments that funding is among the most important issues facing higher education in Oregon.

"Of course, everything comes to money," said Rep. Sal Esquivel, R-Medford. "I think that higher ed, universities and community colleges will say we need to support them more. We can't continue on raising tuition for people to go to school, and we need to look at education as a whole."

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Senate: Legislators discuss importance of school funds

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one method to reduce spending after the PFC initially overspent its budget.

Yet Senators were reluctant to pass a budget containing the current pay cuts, citing vehement opposition by student leaders.

Nontraditional Student Union member David Watson asked the Senate not to "take our leadership away," saying groups may not survive on the current PFC budget.

"They betrayed you, and they betrayed us," he said to the senators.

PFC Chairwoman Persis Pohowalla asked the Senate to "consider all of the obstacles (the PFC) had to battle" while creating the budget.

"The reality of my budget is that it's not pretty; I'm not going to sugar coat it," she said, adding that the committee "exhausted, I think, every possibility there was."

ASUO Vice President Mena Ravasipour presented the Executive's recommendation that roughly \$7,000 in additional funds be allocated to provide stipends to groups allocated none for this year, bringing the budget to the 7 percent cap allowed by the Green Tape Notebook. The recommendation also included the creation of a committee to administer a relief fund on an individual basis to

groups whose stipends were cut.

The relief fund may have been created with Senate surplus funds or nonrealized funds.

Senators, PFC members and group representatives debated the feasibility of making additional changes and merits of several options to reduce the budget further.

Former PFC member Mason Quiroz, who was removed in early March after the Constitution Court found he violated neutrality standards, said groups have worked for years to earn stipend positions.

Quiroz suggested analyzing contract groups. Unlike other student groups, contract groups such as Lane Transit District receive lump-sums of money instead of itemized budgets.

Senator Rona Yang suggested looking at Sexual Assault Support Services, a contract group she said gained funds this year without money from the PFC.

Several group members insisted they would be willing to help the PFC with calculations, but ASUO President Adam Petkun pointed out that anyone working on the budget needs proper training in viewpoint neutrality and accounting, which he said may not be possible.

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