

State Legislation ^[1]

May 16, 2016 by [Natalie Barry](#) ^[2]

May 11, 2016 marked “sine die,” the final day of the 2016 state legislative session.

The legislature was split this year with the Republicans in control of the Senate and Democrats in control of the House. We saw a decrease in the number of bills introduced this year, especially in the Senate. However, many of the bills introduced had major state-wide policy implications which generated complex, passionate and at times politically charged discussions. The State Relations team actively worked on and tracked many bills of interest to CU and University of Colorado Health stakeholders. Major legislative topics this year included higher education funding, tuition classification, capital construction, cybersecurity, and health care. We also worked closely with Vice President Todd Saliman on higher education funding and budget priorities.

Higher Ed Funding Highlights:

We worked closely with Vice President Todd Saliman on budget priorities. The final budget (and the budget companion bills) included the following changes for CU:

- \$1.8 million additional funding for CU through the higher education allocation model.
- \$1.4 million additional funding for financial aid based on the CCHE allocation model.
- \$1.7 million new tobacco master settlement agreement funds for cancer research at CU Anschutz Medical Campus.
- \$1.2 million additional tobacco master settlement agreement funds for CU Anschutz Medical Campus.
- \$3.0 million new controlled maintenance projects on our campuses.
- \$8.0 million new funding for building renovations to house the state’s new cyber security effort in Colorado Springs established by HB 1459.

CU also initiated several bills which have either been signed by or are on their way to the Governor for signature. They are highlighted below.

Key Legislation:

HB 16-1420: CO Healthcare Affordability & Sustainability Enterprise and HB 16-1450:

Allocate Additional Available State Revenues

House Bill 1420 would have turned the Hospital Provider Fee into an enterprise freeing up money for critical state funding needs; and the accompanying spending allocation bill, House Bill 1450, would have extended the funding from one year to five years for transportation, K-12 and public higher education. The bills passed the House but were killed in the Senate Finance Committee. This conversation is so critical to the budget that they will continue to discuss it in the future.

HB 16-1453 Colorado Cybersecurity Initiative (Hamner/Lambert):

The bill establishes the framework for the creation of a National Cyber Intelligence Center in Southern Colorado. As part of the initiative, the University of Colorado Colorado Springs will head the Cyber Research, Education and Training Center (CRETC). CRETC will house significant integrated education and training programs to develop a robust, high-level cyber workforce and enhance capabilities to minimize the impact of cyber-attacks. The bill appropriates \$8M to the Cyber Initiative which was set aside in the Governor's budget. Special thanks to Senator Kent Lambert and Representative Millie Hamner for sponsoring this bill. The Governor signed the bill at the UCCS campus on May 20.

CU Initiated Legislation:

SB 16-121 Higher Education Tuition Pledged for Bonding (Tate/Garnett):

When Colorado's institutions of higher education issue debt for capital construction projects, they are not able to realize the lowest possible interest rates due to an artificial statutory tuition revenue pledge limit of 10%. Without increasing tuition or debt, this bill allows institutions not using the state intercept program to pledge up to 100% of their tuition revenue in a bond financing to realize lower interest rates, better bond ratings and millions in capital cost savings. In 2014 and 2015 alone, this bill would have saved CU an estimated \$3.7M. This was a CU initiated bill and it was signed into law by the Governor.

HB 16-1459 Submission Threshold for Higher Ed Cash Projects (Becker/Sonnenberg):

HB 1459 increases the dollar threshold requirement for legislative review of two-year cash funded capital projects from \$2M to \$10M. The threshold increase does not apply to new construction or projects financed using the state's intercept credit program. The bill will help CU campuses efficiently bundle small capital projects to realize significant cost savings and project delivery efficiencies. This was a CU Initiated bill and it has been sent to the Governor for signature.

While we have highlighted our CU initiated bills and additional key bills, we also played a critical role in lobbying for and against numerous other legislative items impacting the University. Please visit our [website](#) ^[3] for a comprehensive report.



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Gov Relations 2016 Legislative Session

Jon Arnold

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