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State Legislation Update [1]

March 19, 2015 by Natalie Barry [2]

With a month left in the legislative session, over 500 bills have been introduced and many more are still being drafted. Several of the bills impact CU and we have been working hard to protect and support CU's interests. There are many other bills we are working on that impact our campus endeavors. Please visit our website [3] for more information and tracking.

In addition to working on legislation, our main priorities this year include:

- Support the Governor's budget request for higher education.
- Support the FY2015-16 funding model developed through HB 14-1319 implementation. The model, unanimously agreed upon by the Department of Higher Education, CCHE and higher education institutions, aims to fund based on enrollment, honor each institutions unique role and mission and reward for performance.
- Support capital construction funding for CU projects recommended in the Governor and CDC prioritization lists. The projects include CU-Boulder CU Systems Biotech Building and UCCS Visual and Performing Arts Building.

The Joint Budget Committee (JBC) closed the Long Bill – the state's budget for the operations of government, including public higher education. The JBC took into consideration the Governor's budget request as well as the Capital Development Committee's prioritization of capital construction projects. The bill, SB 15-234, was officially introduced on Friday, March 26. It is being heard this week in the Senate and will move over to the House next week. Throughout the bill's hearing process, legislators will offer several amendments and we will work hard to protect the funding for higher education and our capital projects.

Statewide higher education funding included in the introduced version of the Long Bill is:

- $66.6 million for operating in FY 2015-16 (11% increase)
    1. With the $66.6 million, each CU campus will receive a 10 percent increase in FY2015-16 and CU Anschutz Medical Campus will receive an 11 percent increase
    2. The 10 percent increase was proposed in the agreed upon funding formula per HB 1319
- $15.2 million for need based financial aid (11% increase)

- $5 million for Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative
- $250,000 for Alzheimer's Disease Center, University of Colorado School of Medicine, CU Anschutz Medical Campus.

Capital construction funding:

- $15 million for CU-Boulder's Systems Biotech Building
- $9.6 million for UCCS' Visual and Performing Arts Center

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