

September 30, 2014

Texas A&M Government Relations Update

Texas A&M University, Office of Government Relations

State Legislative Appropriations Request

On September 11, 2014, Interim President Mark Hussey presented the Texas A&M University Legislative Appropriations Request to the staff of the Governor's Budget and Planning Office and the Legislative Budget Board (LBB). During the presentation Dr. Hussey cited the Land-Grant mission of Texas A&M and provided examples of how the university fulfills these ideals.

The official request is to first fund new students in the general academic formula and increases the rate per weighted semester credit hour (SCH). Last session, the rate was set at \$54.86 per SCH. In FY 2010-2011 it was \$62.19 SCH. Texas A&M relies heavily on formula funding with over 70% of state general revenue funding coming from that source. For Texas A&M to progress as a major research university that is committed to student success, a robust formula is needed.

Another request relates to the performance-based Competitive Knowledge Fund (CKF) which is vitally important to Texas A&M. This fund supports research universities like Texas A&M and UT-Austin to compete nationally in recruiting and retaining faculty. The request is that the CKF be restored, at a minimum, to the original rate of \$1M for every \$10M in total research expenditures. To better position the State's future our preference would be to significantly increase that rate to \$1.5M per every \$10M.

Dr. Hussey also presented a request for capital construction. One project is for a Large Animal Biosafety Laboratory Level 3 facility (BSL-3). The BSL-3 project will cost \$95M; the university is requesting \$85M. A second capital project request is for a 21st Century Classroom Building and Renewal. This is a \$100M project of which A&M requests \$90M.

After all public universities and state agencies make their formal oral requests; the LBB staff will work with legislators in drafting an appropriations bill that will be the starting point for the upcoming session in January. Dr. Hussey will be engaging with members of the legislature throughout the fall regarding the request.

House Passes Manufacturing Bill

Last week the U.S. House of Representatives passed by voice vote the bipartisan Revitalize American Manufacturing and Innovation Act of 2014 ([H.R. 2996](#)), introduced by Rep. Tom Reed (R-NY) in partnership with Rep. Joseph Kennedy (D-MA). The legislation would establish a Network for Manufacturing Innovation Program within the National Institute of Standards and Technology with the goal of improving U.S. manufacturing competitiveness.

M. Katherine Banks, Vice Chancellor and Dean of Engineering, Director of Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station,

- was inducted into the National Academy of Engineering on September 28, 2014

Ryan Crocker, Dean and Executive Professor at the George Bush School of Government & Public Service

- testified September 18, 2014, before the House Intelligence Committee on "Threat Posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), al-Qa'ida and other Islamic Extremists"

Tracy Hammond, Associate Professor Computer Science & Engineering,

- on September 22, 2014, highlighted her research at the Task Force on American Innovation briefing on 100 Years of Warfighter Technology

Congressman Michael McCaul

Chairman of the
Homeland Security Committee

will present an address on foreign policy
and homeland security

Tuesday, October 7, 2014
5:30 p.m.
(reception immediately following)

George Bush Presidential Library and
Museum's Orientation Theater
1000 George Bush Drive West
College Station, Texas 77845

CLICK HERE TO [RSVP](#)

White House Initiatives on Antibiotic Resistance

On September 18, 2014, the White House [released](#) a National Strategy on Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria that outlines five goals for combating the spread of resistant bacteria. The goals of the strategy are to: 1) slow the emergence and prevention of their spread; 2) strengthen efforts to identify cases of antibiotic resistance; 3) advance the development and use of rapid diagnostic tests; 4) accelerate basic and applied research of new antibiotics, therapeutics, and vaccines; and 5) improve international collaboration. President Obama signed an [Executive Order](#) directing the enactment of the strategy as well as creating a new Task Force for Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria to be co-chaired by the Secretaries of Defense, Agriculture, and Health and Human Services. As part of the overall strategy, the Administration is directing the National Institutes of Health and the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority to co-sponsor a \$20M prize for the development of a rapid, point-of-care diagnostic test to assist health-care workers.

PCAST Report on Antibiotic Resistance

Timed to coincide with the release of the White House strategy, the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) issued its [report](#) on Combating Antibiotic Resistance. The report outlines a series of recommendations for the federal government which parallel many of the actions outlined in the White House national strategy. The PCAST report assesses antibiotic resistance within human health care, including prescription overuse; animal agriculture, including promoting animal growth; drug development; and surveillance and response.

Continuing Resolution Signed Into Law

On Friday, September 19, 2014, President Obama signed into law the continuing resolution passed by Congress earlier in the week. The resolution extends federal expenditures at FY 2014 levels through December 11, thereby avoiding a shutdown and giving appropriators time to work out a full-year deal. The resolution also allots an additional \$58M to the Biomedical Advanced R&D Authority (BARDA) for development of an Ebola vaccine, and \$30M to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for additional Ebola responses. To pay for these and a handful of other spending increases in the resolution, funding over the ten-week period for which the resolution is in effect will be reduced by less than one-tenth of one percent. Negotiations on an omnibus spending bill to cover the rest of the fiscal year are underway.

Congressman William
H. "Bill" Flores, U.S.
House of
Representatives,
17th District of Texas

- spoke on August 13, 2014, to the Texas A&M Council of Principal Investigators

American Academy of Arts & Sciences Releases Report on Science and Engineering Research

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences [released](#) a report that offers actionable recommendations for the long-term sustainability of the U.S. science and engineering research system to ensure that the American people receive the maximum benefit from federal investments in research. The report, Restoring the Foundation: The Vital Role of Research in Preserving the American Dream, argues "scientific and technological advances are fundamental to the prosperity, health, and security of America." Innovation and rapid integration of new knowledge and technologies emerge from investments in research and development, and rely on the partnership among universities, federal and state governments, and industry. Staying globally competitive will require a stronger partnership and a greater focus on long-term planning in scientific and engineering research.

Department of Education Announces Three Year Federal Student Loan Cohort Default Rates

The Department of Education [announced](#) this week that the three-year federal student loan cohort default rate declined from 14.7% in FY 2010 to 13.7% for students who began repayment in FY 2011. The default rates for students at public institutions were overall 12.9% (8.9% at four-year institutions) as compared to 7.2% for students at private, nonprofit institutions, and 19.1% at for-profit institutions.

Golden Goose Awards Ceremony Held

Eight researchers whose work might have sounded odd or impractical at the time it was conducted, but led to major human and economic benefits, were honored at the third annual [Golden Goose Award](#) ceremony held on September 18, 2014, at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

Veteran journalist Miles O'Brien served as master of ceremonies for the standing-room-only event, at which four Members of the House and Senate spoke and the award winners participated in a roundtable discussion about their work. The program included a [video](#) explaining the nature and importance of the awardees' research; a video of the award ceremony can be viewed [here](#).

During the roundtable discussion, the awardees stressed their concern that tight federal research funding has made university researchers and agency program staff risk-averse, and is prompting many bright young scientists and engineers to forego the difficulties of academic research careers. They questioned whether their own research would have been funded if the current environment had prevailed at that time.

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Content for updates obtained working with the TAMUS Office of Federal Relations and from various sources including updates from: Association of American Universities (www.aau.edu), Association of Public and Land Grant Universities (www.aplu.org), and American Association for the Advancement of Science (www.aaas.org)

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