2020 LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

Prepared by Emily Wanous
OSA Legislative Director
emily@orstudents.org
In November 2018, Oregonians elected a Democrat-supermajority in both chambers: 18 Democrat seats in the Senate and 38 seats in the House. The Oregon Republicans had 8 senate seats and 22 house representative seats. According to the Statesman Journal, the last time that Oregon had a supermajority in both chambers was 2009. Toward the end of the 2019 Legislative session, Senate Republicans led an organized “walk out” that resulted in Democratic leadership striking a deal with the absent members in exchange for their return. This unprecedented move denied quorum, which allowed for the opportunity for Republicans to kill bills they did not want passed--namely HB 2020 or Cap and Trade.

Fast forward to the 2020 session and Oregon witnessed another Republican walkout that included not only Senate Republicans, but House Republicans as well. Republican members widely opposed The Cap and Trade legislation, or SB1530, introduced this session and decided that another walk out was the only way for their voice to be heard in the process. With Republican members absent from the Capitol and Democratic leadership unable to strike another deal, no bills were voted on—including the bills OSA worked on--in the House or the Senate and the session ended three days earlier than the constitutional deadline or Sine Die.

While the session did not go as planned, students across the State permeated the Capitol every week lobbying, testifying and advocating for Oregon students. The efforts of our students secured a strong foundation for higher education in 2021. We will use the momentum to prepare for larger policy and budgetary wins in 2021 and beyond.

With that being said, The Oregon Student Association worked on a number of issues important to our students, including campus food and housing insecurity, clear pathways for transfer credits, non-discrimination policies, and the creation of an underrepresented student taskforce.

The following report highlights the different bills the Oregon Student Association worked on this session. The hope is that this report will help students and staff learn about the 2020 legislative session and help to identify priorities for the new cycle.
OSA Lobby Days

Central Oregon Community College (COCC) Students

Lane Community College (LCC) Students with Sen. Manning
Linn Benton Community College (LBCC) Students

Southern Oregon University (SOU) Students
Oregon State University Cascades Students

Portland State University (PSU) Students
I want to extend a huge thank you to all our participants. The 2020 legislative session made it clear to legislators that the State can no longer dismiss the voice of students and the need for increased investment into higher education. This would not have happened if it was not for all of you advocating for students across Oregon!!

- Emily Wanous, OSA LD
Why We Lobby

The Oregon Student Association is known to be one of the most powerful organizations in Oregon. Over the years, OSA has been successful in passing legislation and a higher education budget that benefits all students in Oregon. Students have been able to uphold this power because we have been highly engaged in the electoral process by registering thousands of students to vote through our Vote OR Vote program.

The Oregon Student Association is one of a kind. There is no other organized group that lobbies the state legislature on the interest of higher education for students in Oregon and at the direction of students in Oregon. OSA is invited to be present at various policy development or workgroup meetings because decision makers want us to be present. As an example of how important OSA is, some legislators would only work on the introduction of new policies and changes in policies IF the Oregon Student Association was on board and involved in the policy development process. Don’t underestimate the power you have - we can create a great change in Oregon’s postsecondary institutions and to accomplish this, we need to continue having a strong base.

The Oregon Student Association has a history of creating meaningful impact but the key to be able to create this impact is to be invested in the issues and build a strong base by empowering students. Therefore, OSA board members and staff need to be present on campus, to be able to talk to students, learn their stories and offer opportunities to get involved thus helping with leadership development.

Member campuses of OSA have always believed that organizing is the best way to engage people impacted by our priority issues. When students recognize their power and ability, they are unstoppable! Lobbying is just one tool for students to use their voice to better the lives of themselves, communities and students across the State.

If you would like to know more about the Vote OR Vote Program or about how to build student power at the state level, please contact one of your field or campus organizers to ask for a training on this topic.
Summary: Requires Higher Education Coordinating Commission to conduct study and develop recommendations on how Oregon’s community colleges and public universities can best combat food and housing insecurity among their students.

Chief Sponsors: at the request of House Interim Committee on Education for Oregon Council of Presidents and Oregon Student Association

Path of Bill through Legislative process:
- This bill was pre-session filed and first read on the House Chamber on February 3rd.
- House Hearing: The bill was referred to the House Committee on Education with a subsequent referral to Ways and Means.
- House Hearing: The bill was read in the House Committee on Education on February 5th. OSA turned out three students for testimony, including Rachel Bayly (WOU), Mauri Law (LCC) and Daniel Murphy (LCC).
- House Worksession: The bill successfully passed the House Committee on Education with 7 votes in favor of the bill on February 12th. The bill was referred to the Ways and Means Sub Committee on Capitol Construction.
- Ways and Means Hearing: The Sub Committee on Capitol Construction referred the bill to the full Ways and Means Committee on February 14th with a do pass recommendation.
- In Ways and Means upon adjournment of session

Coalition: We worked on this bill in collaboration with Partners for a Hunger Free Oregon, Stand for Children, Higher Education Coordinating Committee, Oregon Food Bank, Oregon Council of Presidents, the House Committee on Education, OEA.

Challenges: Due to the absent members in both the House and Senate, HB 4055 was stalled in Ways and Means until the end of the session.

Recommendations: OSA should continue working in collaboration with the coalition partners to find alternative avenues to gather data around the growing food and housing crisis students face on their campuses and research potential policy ideas for 2021.
HB 4107: The Non-Discrimination Act of 2020

Summary: Addresses discrimination based on cash payment and hair type or style. Declares refusal to accept U.S. coins or currency, or discrimination or distinction for offering coins or currency, by a place of public accommodation an unlawful practice.

Chief Sponsors: Representative Bynum, Senator Frederick, Representative Alonso Leon, Lawrence Spence, Piluso, Senator Manning Jr


Path of Bill through Legislative Process:
- This bill was pre-session filed and first read on the House Chamber on January 14th.
- House Hearing: The bill was first heard on the House Committee on Judiciary on March 13th. OSA Legislative Director provided a letter of support to the committee.
- House Work Session: The bill successfully passed the House Committee on Judiciary with 7 votes in favor of the bill
- House Floor Vote: Carried by Bynum, Noble. Passed. Ayes, 45; Excused, 3-Clem, Gorsek, Greenlick.
- Senate Labor and Business Work Session: The bill was scheduled for a work session on the Senate Committee on Labor and Business on February 25th. Action: Request referral to Senate Committee on Rules. Referred to Rules by order of the President.
- Senate Rules Work Session: The bill successfully passed the Senate Committee on Rules with 3 votes in favor of the bill on February 28th. Two members were absent this day.
- At Desk upon adjournment: March 8th.


Challenges: Due to the absent members in both the House and Senate, HB 4055 was stalled in Ways and Means until the end of the session.

Recommendations: OSA should continue working in collaboration with the coalition partners to ensure this bill is introduced and passed in 2021.
Summary: The measure directs the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to develop standards for minimizing complexity of unified statewide transfer agreements and to develop processes for resolving requests for variances to unified statewide transfer agreements or disputes over what courses are included in unified statewide transfer agreements. In addition, the measure requires HECC to establish an advisory committee to design standards and implement a Transfer Bill of Rights and Responsibilities.

Chief Sponsors: By order of the President of the Senate in conformance with pre-session filing rules, indicating neither advocacy nor opposition on the part of the President (at the request of Senate Interim Committee on Education)

Path of Bill in Legislative Process:
- This bill was pre-session filed and first read on the Senate Chamber on February 3rd.
- House Hearing: The bill was first heard in the Senate Committee on Education February 4th.
- House Work Session: The bill successfully passed the Senate Committee on Education with 5 votes in favor of the bill on February 6th. Two members were excused this day. Bill referred to Ways and Means Full Committee.
- Ways and Means Full: The bill successfully passed out of the full committee on February 28th with 13 votes in favor, with 8 members absent.
- Senate Rules Work Session: The bill successfully passed the Senate Committee on Rules with 3 votes in favor of the bill on February 28th. Two members were absent this day.
- At Desk upon adjournment: March 8th.

Coalition Partners: Stand for Children, Oregon Student Association, Office of Senator Rob Wagner, Oregon Council of Presidents, and more.

Challenges: Similar to the fate of other bills, this bill was in queue to be voted on up until the end of the session.

Recommendations: OSA should continue working with the Higher Education Coordinating Committee (OTAC), Oregon Council of Presidents, and OCCA to ensure transfer students are taking the necessary courses that can count toward a four-year degree in the State of Oregon. In addition, OSA should work with coalition partners and legislators for this bill to be introduced in 2021.
**HB 4160- Taskforce on Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education (Student Voice Bill)**

**Summary:** Establishes Task Force on Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education. Directs task force to develop student success policy proposals focusing on increasing likelihood of student success in higher education for students from populations that are underrepresented in higher education enrollment.

**Chief Sponsors:** Representative Alonso Leon, Senator Manning Jr, Representative Bynum, Meek, Senator Dembrow, Wagner

**Regular sponsors:** Representative Helm, Hernandez, Holvey, Keny-Guyer, Lawrence Spence, Lively, Mitchell, Neron, Nosse, Piluso, Power, Prusak, Reardon, Salinas, Sollman, Wilde, Williams, Senator Frederick, Gelser, Golden, Hass, Monnes Anderson, Roblan, ...

**Path of Bill in Legislative Process:**
- This bill was pre-session filed and first read on the House floor on February 3\(^{rd}\).
- **House Hearing:** The bill was first heard in House Committee on Education on February 3\(^{rd}\). OSA Legislative Director provided a letter of support to the committee.
- **Work Session:** The bill successfully passed the House Committee on Education with 8 votes in favor and 1 opposed on February 5\(^{th}\). Recommendation: Do pass with amendments, be printed A-Engrossed, and be referred to Ways and Means by prior reference.
- **Ways and Means Sub Work session:** The bill was assigned to the Ways and Means Sub Committee on Capitol Construction and was referred back to the full committee on February 26\(^{th}\).
- **Ways and Means Work session:** The bill passed out of full Ways and Means with 13 votes in favor. 8 legislators were absent this day.
- **At Desk upon adjournment of session:** March 8\(^{th}\).

**Coalition:** This bill had a broad coalition. Some included: APANO, SEIU, OEA, OSA, ACLU-Oregon, and more.

**Challenges:** While the coalition had strong support in the house, there was difficulty garnering support on the Senate side before the Walk Out. Similar to the fate of other bills, this bill was in queue to be voted on up until the end of the session.

**Recommendations:** OSA should continue working with Representative Teresa Alonso Leon, Leadership, and coalition partners to find alternative routes of creating an interim committee that is equivalent to the taskforce.
STUDENTS FROM PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY AND WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY TESTIFYING IN FAVOR OF HB 4160
(STUDENT VOICE BILL)
Recommendations: The Oregon Legislature needs to prioritize higher education funding and investments in 2021. Looking toward the 2021 session, we have an opportunity to advocate for a similar process for higher education to what the two-year process for k-12 funding was. Because of the collaborative work students, administration, legislators, and coalition partners have been doing together, this goal has the potential to be reached the next legislative session. Students and staff should work together to capture the momentum we have created to demand state investment in higher education, such as increased funding for the Oregon Opportunity Grant, increased funds to the Public University Support Fund and the Community College Support Fund, and specified funding to ensure student success for all students in our institutions. Students should also work on campus to identify strategies to engage as many students as possible on campus and during the legislative session. With the State’s de-prioritization of higher education and the public mistrust in our institutions due to administration’s spending, we must work together to help rewrite the narrative and put the focus back on students. In truth, legislators are far removed from the student experience on our campuses, which is why student engagement and advocacy is more important than ever. We witnessed the power of student voice in changing this narrative this past session with OSA’s lobby days. With our lobby days and institution’s lobby days, students were in the building almost every day. This is no small feat and legislators took note. I feel confident the work we put in this session has set us up for an incredible 2021 and continued organized pressure from students in the next year will yield huge opportunities in this area.
Dear students,

The 2020 legislative session was a difficult landscape to navigate. The unprecedented actions that led to the abrupt adjournment of the session left many students feeling like all our hard work was for nothing. I am here to assure each one of you that though bills were not passed, we succeeded in building student power for all students in Oregon. Over the span of 8 lobby days, we had over 50 students who attended 40 lobby meetings advocating on issues, including food and housing insecurity, creation of a taskforce for underrepresented student success, and clear transfer credit pathways. A united student voice cannot and will not be ignored and OSA reinstated that fact with the strong engagement from students throughout the entire session.

On a more personal note, I am so grateful to be in a position where I can be inspired by you all daily. Over the course of the session, I was able to get to know so many of you and see the innate power in every one of you. I encourage you all to share your experience with students back on your campuses and empower them to find their voice. Let’s continue building our legacy and bettering the lives of Oregonians.

Special thank you to the students who were engaged throughout the legislative session, testifying, speaking with legislators, and recruiting participants. For those of you who were not able to make it, we got you. Your student representatives did a great job representing your interests.

Lastly, shout out to those students who went to the Capitol to help other campuses have a successful lobby day. The additional support ensured all students received the necessary support and guidance. Thank you to Melinie Shatto, Jordan Shofner, Mauri Law, William Tongsiri, and Daniel Murphy from LCC and N.J. Johnson and Kevin Figueroa from WOU. We could not have accomplished what we did without cross-campus collaboration and unity, so THANK YOU!

Sincerely,

Emily Wanous
OSA Legislative Director