



UC DAVIS FEDERAL RELATIONS UPDATE

January 31, 2012

Gina Banks, Director, Federal Government Relations

Executive Summary

President Obama laid out his agenda for this year during his **State of the Union address** on January 24th. He discussed a number of policies to lower the cost of college, urged a strong investment in research and development and supported immigration relief for undocumented students (for more information see p. 2).

UC Davis is pursuing a potential funding opportunity with the Department of Defense to open a **renewable energy University Affiliated Research Center**. Secretary Panetta will deliver a report soon about the feasibility of a center as well as potential locations (p. 2).

UC Davis joined with regional business leaders and our Congressional delegation to support a regional **US Patent and Trademark Office** in Sacramento (p. 2).

Two bills introduced by Congressman Issa, the **GRANT Act and the Research Works Act**, raised serious concerns amongst the university research community (p. 3).

The Institute for Transportation Studies is closely monitoring developments on the reauthorization of the Transportation bill. We currently operate a Tier II University Transportation Center and are part of a regional **University Transportation Center** (p. 3).

Congressman Garamendi and staff from Congressman Thompson's office visited campus on January 30, 2012 (p. 3).

President Obama's State of the Union Address

President Obama discussed three issues of particular interest to research universities in his State of the Union Address on January 24: college tuition increases and student aid; basic research; and immigration.

College Costs and Student Aid

In his address, President Obama placed colleges and universities "on notice" that the government could not continue to "subsidize skyrocketing tuition." In a follow up speech at the University of Michigan, the President laid out a plan to use the federal campus-based aid programs (College Work Study, Perkins Loans and Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants) and new competitive funding programs to reward institutions that keep net prices low and provide good value, punish those who do not, and motivate state governments to ramp up their investments in higher education. The Administration would also require institutions to provide students and families with additional information on campus costs, graduation rates, student post-graduate earnings, and financial aid packages.

President Obama also asked Congress to double the number of work-study jobs over five years, permanently extend the American Opportunity Tax Credit (which provides up to \$10,000 over four years of college), and prevent interest rates on subsidized federal student loans from rising from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent on July 1, as scheduled.

UC supports the President's proposals on preventing higher interest rates, doubling the number of work study jobs and making the American Opportunity Tax Credit permanent. UC also supports providing clear and understandable information to students, parents and policymakers about their higher education options. The UC DC office will closely monitor any developments on these issues.

Basic research

President Obama said that we must sustain the federal investment in basic research because "innovation demands basic research." He told Congress not to "gut these investments in our budget." The President's Budget will be released on February 13th, and we will report back on its investments in research and innovation.

Immigration

The President also called for immigration reform in his speech. He said that we must stop expelling talented young people, whether they were brought here by their parents as children or came from other countries to pursue college or advanced degrees.

Energy and Power University Affiliated Research Center with Department of Defense

Earlier this month, we learned that House Armed Services Committee report language requires the Secretary of Defense to provide recommendations on the possibility of a renewable energy University Affiliated Research Center (UARC), including potential locations. UARCs are long-term collaborations between universities, industry, and DoD research laboratories hosted at universities and they receive substantial federal funding. Congressman Garamendi, along with Congressman Thompson, Congressman Lungren, Congressman Miller, Congresswoman Matsui, Congresswoman Speier and Congresswoman Napolitano sent a letter of support to Secretary Panetta asking that he consider UC Davis as a potential location for the UARC. The report is due on February 29th, but we understand that it may be delayed. We will continue to compete for this opportunity.

US Patent and Trademark Office

Along with business and higher education leaders, we arranged letters of support for an effort for the Sacramento region to be designated as one of the potential regional offices of the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). USPTO will be opening three regional offices across the country, in addition to the recent opening in Detroit. McClintock, Thompson, Matsui, Lungren, and Garamendi sent letters of support for this effort.

Policy Update

GRANT Act

Congressman Issa introduced the Grant Reform and New Transparency Act (GRANT Act), which passed the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee on November 17th. The legislation aims to create greater transparency in the federal grants process, but the academic community has serious concerns about intellectual property. One major concern with the bill is a provision requiring publication of full research grant proposals, making an applicant's ideas and data publicly available to all. We are also concerned about the potential harm of public disclosure of the names of peer reviewers.

Representatives Holt and Price sent a letter to House leadership, along with many California members, urging these changes in the bill before it is considered on the House floor.

Research Works Act

The Research Works Act (HR 3699) was introduced on December 16th by Congressman Issa and Congresswoman Maloney. This bill also raises concerns from the university research community because it would make NIH's PubMed Central illegal. PubMed Central makes journal articles available for free to the public after an embargo period. This would mean that NIH grant recipients who later publish scientific articles about the research results generated from grants would no longer be required to provide copies of their articles to PubMed Central. In addition, under the bill, Federal agencies aside from the NIH would also be prevented from pursuing similar public access programs to the NIH's PubMed Central. Vice Chancellor Lewin and Interim Librarian Randy Siverson are providing comments to the UCDC staff about UC Davis's concerns. We are keeping a close watch on any developments.

University Transportation Centers

The House and Senate are currently considering reauthorizations of the Transportation bill, which includes authorization and funding for University Transportation Centers (UTC). UC Davis currently has a Tier II UTC and is part of a consortium led by UC Berkeley for a regional UTC, which recently received a \$3.5 million grant.

The Senate bill, which passed unanimously out of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee last fall, would eliminate regional UTCs and authorizes 15 Tier I UTCs and 20 Tier II UTCs. The House bill, which is being marked up this week, would maintain ten regional UTCs, but carve out two of the sites for specific topics. The bill would also authorize 20 Standard Centers (Tier I and Tier II).

UC Davis's Institute of Transportation Studies is working with our UC colleagues and Congressional delegation to support funding of UTCs and are closely monitoring legislative developments.

Congressman Garamendi visits campus

On January 30, Congressman Garamendi and staff from Congressman Thompson's office visited campus. They participated in a Financial Aid Awareness Workshop, received a briefing at the Veterinary School and met with representatives of the USUCD.

UC Davis faculty and leadership in Washington, DC

On January 24, Susan Handy was in Washington, DC to attend the Transportation Research Board meeting.

On January 25, Dean Emeritus Bennie Osburn met with staff for Congressman Hal Rogers, Congressman Lungren and Senator Feinstein to discuss funding for the Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium.

If you have upcoming meetings in Washington, DC, please let me know how I and/or the UC DC staff can be of assistance.

Questions or need assistance

If you have questions, need additional information about any of the above items, or would like assistance in connecting with senior federal officials, please let me know. I can be reached at gabanks@ucdavis.edu or at 530-752-9795.