

# CityRegion

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FRIDAY, JUNE 10, 2011

**SECTION B**

## UO lobbyists push for legislative changes

*Advocates meet with the governor and dozens of lawmakers to seek governance and funding revisions*

By SAUL HUBBARD  
The Register-Guard

SALEM — University of Oregon Day came and went Thursday at the state Capitol, accompanied by many to-be-expected trappings: the UO's world-famous Duck — both in full feathers and in cardboard cutout form — as well as lawmakers adorned with green ties and scarves, and performances in both chambers by On The Rocks, the university's acclaimed all-male a capella group.

The day also was marked by a heavy dose of lobbying on behalf of some of the universi-

ty's top legislative priorities by UO President Richard Lariviere and UO students, alumni and friends.

UO advocates met with Gov. John Kitzhaber as well as with dozens of lawmakers, primarily pushing for big changes to the governance and funding systems for Oregon's seven public universities.

High on their list of priorities is Senate Bill 909, which would create a single umbrella board to oversee all public education, from prekindergarten to graduate school, and which is the centerpiece of Kitzhaber's plan to create a more streamlined

### UNIVERSITY OF OREGON'S 2011 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

**SB 559:** Would allow the UO to be governed largely by its own board of directors and funded primarily through an endowment secured through state bonds. Status: Deferred after an agreement between UO President Richard Lariviere and Gov. John Kitzhaber. Expected to be discussed during the interim legislative session in February.

**SB 909:** Would create a single umbrella board to oversee all public education from prekindergarten to graduate school. Status: Before the Joint Ways and Means Committee's education subcommittee.

**SB 242:** Would allow the Oregon University System to no longer be classified as a state agency, thereby freeing Oregon universities from countless state agency regulations. Status: Due for a floor vote in the Senate.

**SB 405:** Would allow public universities to establish their own police forces with comparable powers to any other sworn police department. Status: Approved by the Senate, set for a floor vote in the House today.

and cost-effective public education system.

UO lobbyist Courtney White said SB 909 meshes well with Lariviere's stated long-term goal of making the university more autonomous with its own governing board and more fi-

nancially secure with an endowment fund secured through state bonds.

In late March, Lariviere agreed in a letter to Kitzhaber to wait until 2012 before moving for-

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## UO: Hopeful of bill establishing comparable police force

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ward with the more radical portions of his vision, which the UO calls "the New Partnership," while the governor worked on moving SB 909 forward.

That decision, White said, was fueled "partly because of the state's budgetary position and partly because of a recognition that higher education reform needs to be done incrementally."

SB 909 is parked in the state's primary budget-crafting committee after some legislators raised concerns. Its fate this session is uncertain.

Another UO priority is Senate Bill 242, which would allow the Oregon

University System to no longer be classified as a state agency, thereby freeing public universities from countless state agency regulations and giving them more control over their funds and operations. That bill appears to have more traction in the Legislature and will soon be scheduled for a Senate floor vote.

University lobbyists, backed by many law enforcement agencies, have also been championing Senate Bill 405 this session, to allow public universities to establish their own police forces with comparable powers to any other sworn police department. SB 405 was approved on an 18-11 vote in the Senate in

April and is scheduled to be voted on by the House today.

"We're hopeful of its passage," White said.

Though the 2011 legislative session is approaching its close, White said he felt the timing of the UO's Capitol Day worked out well, providing a bit of extra late-session support for Senate Bills 909 and 242.

Jared Mason-Gere, another UO lobbyist, agreed.

"Every time we do one of these, I feel like we pick up a little more traction — because you have people who don't fully understand the proposals and we get a chance to explain it to them," he said.