



Closing out 2020

- ✓ WSU successfully advocated to preserve our role offering 4-year degrees through defeat of legislation which could have allowed Community Colleges to offer 4-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree programs
- ✓ WSU successfully advocated for inclusion of important Women’s Health language in the Federal Omnibus, language that will help build on our work at the Women’s Health Center
- ✓ WSU Leaders continue to be at the forefront of informing local, state, and federal policy objectives

Cheers to the Closing Out of 2020!

2020 was nothing short of incredibly trying for many in Michigan and across the country. We continue to navigate the global pandemic, look for opportunities to combat systemic racism and social injustice, and move closer to laying a combative election season to rest. The Wayne State University Government and Community Affairs team has been active on all fronts, working with leaders across local, state, and federal government to advocate for policies that will benefit our students, faculty, and community. As we close out 2020 and look forward towards 2021, we’ll cover the following items in this issue: state budget update, state legislative wrap up, federal legislative and appropriations update, and news around campus. Here’s to closing out 2020 and onwards to 2021!

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COMMUNITY RELATIONS UPDATE

**A Bittersweet Goodbye:** The WSU Government and Community Affairs team bid our team member, Victor Green, a fond goodbye as he took on a new role with the



*Victor Green, former Community Relations Director, WSU DCCA.*

Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety. Victor spent the last 15 years serving as the Director of Community Relations with Wayne and served in numerous roles throughout the University, including his most recent position as one of the leads on the Social Justice Action Committee. Victor joins the KDPS as the Assistant Chief and with the opportunity to inform the department’s diversity and inclusion initiatives. We’re excited for him as he starts this new chapter, but sad to say goodbye to a valued team member.

**Advocacy for Wayne Pediatrics Continues:** Members of the Detroit Delegation of state legislators, the Detroit City Council, and community leaders around the city have been engaging with the DGCA team as we share the deep concern we have around recent developments impacting access to care at Children’s Hospital of Michigan (CHM). In late 2020, our Wayne Pediatrics practice group was notified that they would no longer have privileges to care for patients at Children’s Hospital of Michigan, denying care to

children across the region. The decision harms the physicians and the Wayne State University School of Medicine, but more importantly, it denies the children and families of Detroit and southeast Michigan access to their own doctors who have practiced in CHM for decades. We continue to work with leaders in Detroit as well as grassroots organizations to ensure our patients can regain access to their physicians and that Detroit can continue to benefit from the outstanding team of providers Wayne Pediatrics offers.

For more information on our Community Relations work, please reach out to [Patrick Lindsey](#), VP, Government and Community Affairs.

## STATE BUDGET UPDATE: YEAR END SUPPLEMENTAL



*State Senator Jim Stamas (R-Midland) sponsor of SB 748 and Senate Appropriations Chair.*

**State Supplemental Budget:** The close of the 100<sup>th</sup> state legislative session was largely marked by political and pandemic related turmoil. Outbreaks of COVID-19 at the state House and Senate shut down planned session days and put many items on hold. Further, ongoing election related political unrest resulted in tense relations between already divided state Government leaders becoming further soured. That division continues to color the outcomes of legislative endeavors, and budget priorities. The last supplemental budget passed before the legislature closed out for the term was not immune from political issues.

The House and Senate passed, and the Governor signed, **Senate Bill 748 (Stamas)** which was set to allocate \$465 million but ended up allocating roughly \$340 million in state and federal funds to programs necessary to support the livelihoods of many Michiganders impacted by COVID-19. Included in the supplemental was funding, that was *vetoed*, to implement the unemployment eligibility extension (20 to 26 weeks until March 2021); funding for testing and vaccine distribution; funding for direct care workers to continue to receive a \$2 an hour wage increase; funding for hospital staffing; economic relief for small businesses and entertainment venues; and funding for individuals hit hardest by the pandemic. Of note, the supplemental also included planning and construction authorizations for a number of higher ed capital outlay projects which had been approved for construction had received planning authorization in 2018, though the projects of Northern Michigan and Saginaw Valley State were line item vetoed.

The legislature and administration will have to reconnect in 2021 to effectuate their goals and find common ground. That has continued to be an elusive space, shared goals, but if the priorities of either entity are to be realized they will need to set aside the ongoing division.

## STATE LEGISLATIVE WRAP UP – 2020

WSU's Division of Government and Community Affairs (DGCA) actively monitors, tracks, and advocates around legislation that could have an impact on our ability to serve our students, on the communities surrounding us, that would further research being done at the university, and that would foster improved educational outcomes. During the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, the state legislature acted on a number of outstanding pieces of legislation, and the Governor signed, vetoed, and pocket vetoed several bills. WSU DGCA advocated on the following pieces of legislation during the 2019-2020 session:

**Senate Bill 241 (Chang)** putting a moratorium on water shut offs without proper notice until March 31, 2021. WSU monitored this legislation with positive input and support from Sci-Pol Detroit. Sci-Pol Detroit, led by Wayne students and faculty, aims to bridge the gap between policy makers, scientists, and the public at large. SB 241 was signed by Governor Whitmer and assigned PA 252'20.

**Senate Bill 657 (Theis)** allowing an interim teaching certificate (ITC), therefore abbreviating training for teachers. WSU opposed this legislation, with concern that abbreviated training would not provide teachers with the knowledge, understanding, and skills to support special needs students that a full educational program offers. Despite the opposition of

WSU, EMU, CMU and others, the Governor signed the legislation assigning it PA 316'20. Of note, the legislation includes sunset language meaning the law will expire in 7 years unless there is further discussion by elected leaders.

**Senate Bill 758 (MacGregor)** creating the interjurisdictional psychology compact which allows individuals to practice and provide psychological care across state lines in certain circumstances. WSU monitored this legislation, as it could broaden access to care and impact our student trainees' ability to extend their reach. However, the Governor vetoed this legislation citing concerns around administration of the compact.

**Senate Bill 826 (VanderWall)** expanding the definition of eligible provider in the Mental Health Code to include physician assistant, certified nurse practitioner, and clinical nurse specialist – certified. WSU monitored this legislation with the College of Nursing being in support. Unfortunately the legislation stalled in House Committee after a number of mental health advocates and stakeholders testified in opposition. It will need to be reintroduced for further contemplation.

**Senate Bill 945 (Irwin) and House Bill 5837 (Peterson):** requiring the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards to include de-escalation training as a mandatory aspect of continuing education. WSU supported both of these pieces of legislation. As the headquarters for the National De-Escalation Training Center, we are especially well situated to support this legislation and to share our best practices with other law enforcement entities. Both the House and Senate versions passed their respective chambers, but support fizzled out and ultimately the issue was not moved on to the Governor's desk. The bills will need to be reintroduced this session for a renewed discussion.

**Senate Bill 971 (MacGregor)** prohibiting public institutions from performing research on animals that would result in pain or discomfort. This controversial legislation was granted a hearing, but did not see additional discussion beyond its initial testimony. WSU monitored this legislation, and does not support bills that could negatively impact research universities.

**Senate Bill 1052 (Bumstead)** modifying allowable expenses for educational promise zones to include fees, books, supplies, and equipment required for courses. WSU monitored this legislation, it was signed by the Governor and assigned PA 330'20.

**Senate Bill 1055 (Nesbitt):** allowing a community college to offer a four-year bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) degree, a serious departure from their current authority to offer an associate degree in nursing (ADN). WSU, along with our public and private university counterparts, opposed this legislation. The legislation did pass committee, but never saw a floor vote. It is likely that it will be reintroduced in the 2021-2022 legislative session.

**HR 234 (Wakeman)** encouraging the Federal government to repeal the ban on Pell Grant eligibility for prison based education. WSU supported this resolution, which was adopted by the state House and transmitted to members of Congress.

**House Bill 4042 (Whiteford)** creating the interstate nurse licensure compact, which would allow nurses to practice over state lines under certain circumstances. WSU supported this legislation, but unfortunately it was vetoed by the Governor - citing similar administrative concerns which resulted in her veto of the interjurisdictional psychology compact as well.

**House Bills 4186-4187 (Farrington)** creating new requirements when a data breach occurs. WSU shared concerns regarding the vague language included in the bills, and along with other stakeholders the concerns shared resulted in the Governor exercising her pocket veto authority. The legislation will not go into effect.

**House Bill 4288 (Hoitenga)** prohibiting Universities from accessing broadband grant funding. WSU monitored this legislation and expressed concern that it sets a dangerous precedent of blocking universities from participating in a necessary function for education – internet access. This legislation, heavily supported by large broadband industry participants, was signed by the Governor becoming PA 224'20.

**House Bill 4437 (Wakeman)** creating new continuing education requirements for funeral directors and funeral service educators, was signed by the Governor and assigned PA 265'20. WSU supported this legislative update to ensure that our

graduates have access to the newest and best information available and that they are able to serve the public to the highest degree. Further, the legislation includes a number of updates and technical revisions that will serve and protect public health, ensure proper oversight, and ultimately support best practices that will benefit Michiganders.

**House Bill 4700 (Whiteford)** requiring mental health discharge planning for individuals leaving the criminal justice system. WSU supported this legislation, however it failed to garner Senate support. It will need to be reintroduced for further discussion.

**House Bills 5217-5218 (Iden and Tate)** allowing student athletes to be compensated for the use of their name, image, or likeness. WSU monitored this legislation, and continues to monitor the national discussion around student athlete compensation. Governor Whitmer signed these bills assigning them PA's 366 and 367'20.

**House Bills 5412-5416 (Vaupel et al)** expanding reimbursement policies for telemedicine under Medicaid and the Healthy Michigan Plan. WSU supported this legislation and it was signed by the Governor creating PA's 97-101'20.

**House Bill 5603 (Reilly)** creating a higher education ombudsman. WSU monitored this legislation, with our association MASU opposing the bill. This legislation received a committee hearing but never moved beyond initial discussion. It would need to be reintroduced to further the discussion.

**House Bills 5844, 5846-52, 5854-57, HCR 29, and Senate Bills 1046-1051:** The Joint Task Force on Jail and Pretrial Incarceration released its recommendations earlier this year, a number of which are encompassed in this bicameral and bipartisan legislative bill package. The Task Force legislation, which aims to decriminalize low level traffic misdemeanors, eliminate mandatory minimum jail sentences in favor of increased judicial discretion, reform driver's license suspensions to ensure they are reserved for unsafe drivers, increase the use of arrest alternatives, prioritize alternatives to jail sentences, reduce jail admissions for people on supervision, and train corrections officers on behavioral health, was the result of many months of work and informed by diverse stakeholders. WSU has had a voice in the creation of this legislation throughout its journey from inception to full-fledged legislation. Our University voice, through leadership on the task force and now support of the legislation, is making meaningful change to our state's criminal justice system. Governor Whitmer signed the bill package into law at the close of 2020.

**House Bills 6030-6032 (Albert, Brann, Filler)** limiting liability associated with COVID-19 activities for businesses and universities. WSU, along with our state association MASU, and many other stakeholders supported this legislation. Governor Whitmer signed it in October, creating PA's 236-238'20.

**House Bills 6171-6172 (VanSingel and Anthony)** extending student access to tuition grants from 10 terms to 12 during the pandemic impacted academic years. WSU supported this legislation, but it lost steam on the House Floor. It will need to be reintroduced to effectuate the intent of the sponsors.

For more information regarding legislation the university has weighed in on or is actively monitoring, please reach out to [Elizabeth Kutter](#), Director of State Relations.

## FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AND APPROPRIATIONS UPDATE

**Supreme Court** The Senate Judiciary Committee approved the Supreme Court nomination of Amy Coney Barrett on Friday, October 23, 2020 (Senate Democratic members of the committee boycotted the vote in protest of the consideration of the nomination before the election. Formality – not an official rule -- of the Senate, in the past, required at least two members of the minority be present before any business can be considered by a Committee in the Senate.). Final approval was done by party-line vote, just in time for the current session of the Supreme Court.



The issue with the Supreme Court had everything to do with the election year. Under President Obama, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) held up the then-nominee for the seat over 290 days. Merrick Garland never had as much as a hearing in the Senate and met with very few Republican offices. His nomination died when President Trump was elected, Majority Leader McConnell opened the door, and three Supreme Court Justices – Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett – have been confirmed. Under President Trump, 54 federal appeals judges and 174 federal district court judges – almost 25% of all federal judges – have been nominated and confirmed for life.



*Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, Amy Coney Barrett.*

**Budget:** The FY 21 budget, and COVID-19 relief, failed on several occasions. The Senate specifically voted against legislation to extend the Paycheck Protection Program and against a \$500 billion COVID-19 relief package similar to one voted down earlier this summer (the bill needed sixty votes for passage). House Democratic Leadership and the White House continued to negotiate details of a new relief bill, but with a looming election, simply was no way any legislation dealing with COVID-19 would have been considered. A key sticking point? If money would be given to cities, counties and states – the Republican talking point was much of this money has been wasted by local and state governments, and bailing out these entities should not be the job of the federal government. Speaker Pelosi stood firm on the inclusion of local entities as well as higher overall funding.

The annual \$1.3 trillion budget, which under ideal circumstances would have been approved via the 12 annual Appropriations bills, ultimately needed three continuing resolutions (a temporary measure to ensure the federal government would not run out of money in lieu of a permanent measure) before a budget was finally signed into law over the President’s veto in January 2021. The House passed ten of the 12 annual measures in the summer; the Senate completed only four by September (the deadline is September 30 annually).

## NEW ADMINISTRATION PREVIEW



*President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris*

**Higher Education Preview:** President Biden’s \$750 billion legislative plan for higher education would send money to states to make community college free for all students and eliminate tuition at four-year public colleges for families earning \$125,000 or less. The proposal also calls for setting aside \$70 billion to help cover tuition for some students who enroll at historically black colleges and universities and other minority-serving institutions. It would also double the maximum value of the Pell grant, which is now \$6,345.

More immediately, the Biden administration is expected to undo the current Administration’s regulatory rollbacks at the Education Department that benefited for-profit colleges. Democrats were livid at the Administration’s decision to hire so many top Education Department officials who had ties to the for-profit education industry, including key policymakers who reversed policies implemented by President Barack Obama designed to crack down on those schools.

President Biden has said he will require for-profit colleges to “prove their value” to the Education Department before they can receive federal aid. Many in the industry expect that a Biden administration’s hostility toward for-profit colleges will pose a threat, even as for-profit colleges see booming enrollment during the coronavirus pandemic compared to plummeting enrollment at other types of institutions. Progressive and consumer groups are also urging the Biden administration to go further than the Obama-era policies on for-profit colleges, including calling for the Education Department to hold company executives personally liable for misconduct. Finally, the Biden Administration will reverse the current Administration’s Title IX regulations.

**Student Loan Forgiveness:** The Biden administration will have to immediately contend with the looming expiration of pandemic relief for roughly 40 million federal student loan borrowers. Fortunately, the Budget contained language that put those issues temporarily on hold. Before the Budget was approved, those benefits would have ended on December 31, 2020, setting up a scenario in which tens of millions of loan payments will come due in the New Year — even before Inauguration Day on January 20, 2021.

President Biden earlier this year committed to canceling \$10,000 in student loan debt for each borrower, as a pandemic relief measure. But he has not yet said whether he would pursue that loan forgiveness through legislation or more immediately cancel debt through executive action, as a group of Senate Democrats, led by Senator Warren and Senate Leader Chuck Schumer have advocated.

If Biden doesn't pursue loan forgiveness through executive action, advocates for student loan forgiveness are eyeing budget reconciliation as a possible tool in the Senate to cancel student loan debt with a simple majority vote.

**Selecting a New Education Secretary:** Few Cabinet secretaries were singled out on the campaign trail like Betsy DeVos, who Democrats have targeted as a top GOP enemy since her contentious confirmation process in 2017. President-elect Biden accused DeVos of working to undermine public education and repeatedly boasted that he would “fire” DeVos if elected. Biden has promised he will pick an education secretary who has been a public-school teacher, though his campaign has not made clear how broad or narrow that criteria will be.

Many education policy experts also expect Biden's wife Dr. Jill Biden to play an influential role on education issues. During the Obama administration, Dr. Biden helped lead the Obama administration's outreach to community colleges and its effort to persuade states and cities to make it free. In 2020, Dr. Biden was sharply critical of the Administration's education policies on the campaign trail. She has said education will be one of her top priorities as First Lady and plans to return to her job as an English instructor at Northern Virginia Community College.

For more information on WSU's Federal Advocacy please contact [James Williams](#), Director of Federal Affairs.

## NEWS AROUND CAMPUS

**Wayne State Joins COVID-19 Wastewater Surveillance and Testing Project** WSU joins numerous local health departments and labs, as well as 125 university and municipal partners, in investigating early detection of COVID-19 through wastewater. WSU received over \$300,000 in grant funding to research this approach and joins a statewide coalition to better understand detection in this manner.

**COVID-19 Testing Access on Campus** The Campus Health Center (CHC) offers COVID-19 testing on Wayne State's campus. You must wear a face covering to your appointment. Wayne State students, faculty and staff are eligible for COVID-19 testing for no out-of-pocket charge. COVID-19 testing appointments will be held at the Mort Harris Recreation and Fitness Center on Mondays-Thursdays, from 9am-4pm. For more information, please visit the [CHC website](#).

