The House Education Budget Committee presented their recommendations to the House Appropriations Committee on February 18, 2015. The Education Committee’s recommendations were the same as the Governor’s recommendations for Fiscal Years 15, 16 and 17. The only change for Kansas State University was to add bonding authority for the renovations at K-State Student Union. The Committee also reviewed and discussed the Kansas State College of Architecture, Planning & Design’s request for state funding for the construction and renovation of Seaton Hall. The Committee members requested more information on how the state could provide the funding for the project and will return to the discussion at a later time. All state budget recommendations will be included in legislation to be sent to the full House of Representatives and Senate next month.

Last week the House Judiciary Committee sent the 911 Lifelines Bill to the House floor debate and final action this week. The Kansas Senate honored the Kansas State University Crops Judging Team on the Senate floor on Tuesday, February 17, 2015. The team captured the Collegiate Crops Contest Championship for the sixth year in a row this year.

Finally, last week on February 18, 2015 the first floor rotunda of the Kansas Capitol was all purple. The reason was “Cats in the Capitol”. This included a student recruitment event where fifty students and parents heard about all the opportunities and programs available to students who attend Kansas State. In addition, booths representing the University’s colleges, K-State Athletics, Alumni Association and Foundation were visited by members of the Kansas Legislature, state elected officials, staff and lobbyists throughout the day. The highlight of the day was Call Hall ice cream served in the afternoon. Over 1000 cups of Purple Pride and other flavors were served by students, faculty and staff of K-State. Willie the Wildcat was also on hand to mingle with guests and pose for pictures with legislators.

This week the House and Senate Committees will be on an abbreviated schedule. After noon on Wednesday the House and Senate will spend full time debating bills sent out of the Committees to reach the point of “Turnaround Day”. This term means that all bills need to be out of their house of origin (Senate or House) and debated by their chamber in order to move on. There are certain bills that may remain in the House or Senate because they are exempt. If a bill is not exempt and has not advanced out of the committee it was referred to, the bill is unavailable for debate this session.

The Senate Ways and Means Education Subcommittee re-scheduled higher education committee deliberations to Wednesday, February 25, 2015. The Joint Committee on State Building Construction will review the building projects for Kansas State and all higher education institutions at noon on Tuesday, February 24, 2015.

For information on these issues or to sign-up for bill tracking on bills impacting higher education and state government please send a request to kstategr@ksu.edu.