The University Senate and Board of Trustees renamed the Government Affairs Committee (formerly Legislative Affairs Committee) and redefined its duties and responsibilities in 2004. The Committee entered 2004 with the University Senate passing two resolutions drafted by the Committee. One resolution supported HB290; the other opposed key provisions in legislation affecting Ohio public retirements systems. Both resolutions are attached.

During Spring 2004, the Committee continued to build upon a synergy with the Office of Government Relations. The Committee defined its goals for academic year 2004-2005:

Recommend to the Senate resolutions of support or criticism of legislation affecting higher education and the Ohio State University.

Work closely with the Office of Government Relations to advance issues of collective benefit.

Facilitate effective communication of legislative issues to or from faculty, staff and students.

Throughout 2004 the Government Affairs Committee met with staff of the Office of Government Relations. Vice President of Government Relations R. Ellyn Perrone joined the Committee as an ex-officio member. In October 2004, the Committee convened to be briefed by the Office of Government Relations on the likely 2005-2006 state and federal budgets. The Committee met again in January 2005 to discuss updates on the new leadership in the Ohio General Assembly and the budget likely to be submitted by Governor Taft following his State of the State Address in February 2005.

The Committee and Office of Government Relations remain optimistic that federal, state, and local leaders will support higher education with at least current funding levels as part of a larger effort to improve Ohio’s standing in the new knowledge-based economy.

In each of its meetings, the Committee has discussed issues of interest to faculty, students, and staff. Our discussions have included the report issued by the Governor’s Commission on Higher Education and the Economy and the balance in University funding between state support and student tuition.

The Committee anticipates an active agenda once the Governor issues the State of the State Address and the General Assembly begins deliberation of issues vital to the University.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dean P. Lacy, Chair
3335-5-4813 Government affairs committee.

(A) Membership.

The government affairs committee shall consist of twelve members.

(1) Five regular faculty selected by the faculty council. The term of service is three years.

(2) Three students.

   (a) One graduate student selected by the council of graduate students. The term of service is one year.

   (b) One professional student selected by the inter-professional council. The term of service is one year.

   (c) One undergraduate student selected by the undergraduate student government. The term of service is one year.

(3) One staff member, appointed annually by the president.

(4) Three administrators, ex-officio, non-voting.

   (a) The assistant vice president for state relations.

   (b) The assistant vice president for federal relations.

   (c) The vice president for government relations or designee.

(B) Duties and responsibilities.

Provide insight and advice to the office of government relations and to the university senate on specific issues. Facilitate communication among the university governance institutions and the office of government relations regarding local, state, and federal issues affecting the university. In consultation with the office of government relations, build relationships with various organizations and constituencies.

(C) Organization.

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING HOUSE BILL 290

Author: Ryan T. Clark (clark.625@osu.edu)

WHEREAS Representative Larry Wolpert from Ohio's 23rd district has introduced House Bill 290; and

WHEREAS Ohio's economy is in dire need of increased tax revenues from businesses focused on innovative technologies; and

WHEREAS this bill, if enacted, would grant select graduate students in Ohio $8,000 per year in forgivable loan monies; and

WHEREAS the bill only permits debt forgiveness if the individual finds employment in Ohio or starts a business in Ohio after graduation; and

WHEREAS the bill provides new resources for education in Ohio and thus does not lessen existing higher education funds; and

WHEREAS the bill has support from the Inter-University Council, The Ohio State University, Case Western Reserve University, Omeris, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, and the Ohio Business Roundtable;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate of The Ohio State University supports and encourages enactment of House Bill 290 for the benefit of higher education and economic growth in the State of Ohio

Respectfully submitted,

OSU Legislative Affairs Committee; Ken Lee (chr), Jane Case-Smith, Dean Lacy, Bunny Clark, Gwen H. Wolford, Kara Silverman, Ryan Clark, Cybele Smith, Colleen O'Brien, Richard Stoddard, Ellyn Perrone, Kendra Davitt
Resolution On Proposed Law that Impacts Ohio’s Public Retirement Systems

by the Legislative Affairs Committee; Senate approved on January 15, 2004

WHEREAS the intended purpose of House Bill 227 and Senate Bill 133 is to bring greater accountability to Ohio’s five public retirement systems;

WHEREAS the state’s retirement systems must conduct business in the best interests of the public servants of our state;

WHEREAS the current practice of retirement system members electing the majority of their boards’ trustees to share equal fiduciary responsibility and liability is appropriate and balanced;

WHEREAS we disagree with the proposal to empower one elected official with the authority to hire and fire the executive directors of the five retirement systems;

WHEREAS mandated quotas for investment of contributions runs counter to the free market practice of managing in a financially prudent manner;

WHEREAS the investment mandate will cost the Ohio Public Employee Retirement System (OPERS) $40-$100 million per year and the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) $60-$100 million per year, leading to a $1.5 billion reduction in asset growth in one decade for OPERS alone;

WHEREAS it is in the best interest of Ohio State and the more than 23,000 university employees who currently participate in these public retirement programs to ensure that the retirement systems operate in a fiscally sound and ethical manner;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the University Senate of The Ohio State University respectfully requests that the General Assembly of Ohio remove any language from legislation under consideration that vests authority with one public official to hire and fire the executive directors of the five public retirement systems; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the University Senate respectfully requests that the Ohio General Assembly eliminate any use of thresholds or quotas that would limit Ohio’s retirement systems from making investments consistent with the best interests of the participants.

Respectfully submitted,
OSU Legislative Affairs Committee; Ken Lee (chr), Jane Case-Smith, Dean Lacy, Bunny Clark, Gwen H. Wolford, Kara Silverman, Ryan Clark, Cybele Smith, Colleen O’Brien, Richard Stoddard, Ellyn Perrone, Kendra Davitt