

Board requests \$360.9M

Trustees ask for 2010-2011 appropriations

By Megan Rogers
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

The Penn State Board of Trustees submitted the lowest increased appropriation request in almost 50 years last month, hoping to avoid a repeat of this year's appropriations battle with the state.

Gov. Ed Rendell released \$334 million in state appropriations to Penn State on Dec. 17 — about two months after the delayed state budget was passed. The Penn State Board of Trustees submitted a "very austere budget and prudent" request Dec. 18, asking the state to cover only increasing costs for the following academic year, university spokeswoman Jill Shockey said.

The board asked for \$360.9 million in appropriations — a 3.9 percent increase from this year's appropriation and the smallest increase request since 1964.

Citing rising retirement and health care costs, the university is asking only for funding that will allow programs to remain at their current level, Shockey said.

The board's request comes after an intense political battle in Harrisburg on the legalization of table games.

Rendell had said he would not release appropriations for Pennsylvania's four state-related schools until table gaming legislation was legalized, arguing the legislation was needed to balance the budget. But he disbursed the funds Dec. 17 after realizing that not doing so could keep Pennsylvania from qualifying for federal stimulus education funding.

Student leaders were pleased

that Rendell broke the link between appropriations and gambling.

"Public welfare and education should be the first priority of any government," said DJ Ryan, Council of Commonwealth Student Governments (CCSG) governmental affairs director. "For them to put such a large contingent of college students and their families in that position is unacceptable."

Because Penn State and the three other state-related schools are considered "non-preferred," funding was not released with the state budget and needed approval from both the Pennsylvania Senate and House of Representatives.

The first of the 12 appropriation

checks — six of them overdue — has not yet arrived, but Shockey said this was not unexpected and cited normal paperwork issues as the reason for the delay.

Penn State was forced to take several risks while appropriation funding was up in the air, including delaying construction projects. Operating costs were reduced, salaries frozen and reserve funding was used, university spokeswoman Lisa Powers said. For Michaels, chief of staff for Rep. Scott Conklin, said it was "embarrassing" that appropriations were released so late and said Conklin was "very frustrated with the process that [was] holding our schools hostage."

Appropriations timeline

- October 2009:** State budget passes, but Penn State needs Pennsylvania House and Senate to approve appropriation
- Dec. 11, 2009:** The House votes 95-97 not to release appropriations for the four state-related schools
- Dec. 14, 2009:** Appropriation passes through the House with a vote of 184-6
- Dec. 15, 2009:** The House votes in favor of table games legislation, which will legalize blackjack, roulette and other games in Pennsylvania casinos
- Dec. 16, 2009:** The Senate passes an amended version of the House's table games bill
- Dec. 17, 2009:** Gov. Rendell announces that he will release appropriations for state-related schools, even though table games legislation has yet to pass
- Dec. 18, 2009:** Penn State's Board of Trustees submits next year's appropriation request, with the lowest increase since 1964
- Jan. 5:** Senate passes table game legislation
- Jan. 6:** House passes table games legislation, sending it to Gov. Rendell's desk
- Jan. 7:** Gov. Rendell signs table games legislation

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Matt Savies/Associated Press

Jay Leno speaks during the panel for "The Jay Leno Show" at the NBC Universal Television Critics Association summer press tour in Pasadena, Calif. Leno has had the show since Sept. 2009.

NBC to end Leno's prime-time show

By Lynn Elber
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

PASADENA, Calif. — NBC said Sunday it decided to pull the plug on the Jay Leno experiment when some affiliate stations considered dropping the nightly prime-time show, and the network is waiting to hear if Leno and "Tonight" host Conan O'Brien accept its new late-night TV plans.

"The Jay Leno Show," which airs at 10 p.m. EST, will end with the Feb. 12 beginning of the Winter Olympics, said NBC Universal Television Entertainment Chairman Jeff Gaspin. Leno would return to his former 11:35 p.m. slot after the Olympics ended under the network's new plan, which also calls for O'Brien to retain his job with "Tonight" but at the later hour of 12:05 a.m. EST.

Jimmy Fallon and his "Late Night" would be pushed a half-hour later as well, to 1:05 a.m. EST.

"My goal is to keep Jay, Conan and Jimmy as our late-night lineup," Gaspin said, adding later that they "have the weekend to think about it" and discussions with them will resume today.

NBC had moved Leno to prime-time last year in order to keep him from leaving the company and keep a promise it had made to give O'Brien the "Tonight" show. The change was one of the most dramatic in prime-time television in a generation. It was also a roll of the dice at a time NBC was suffering in prime-time. It didn't even last six months.

Gaspin said the new proposal gives Leno what's important to him — telling jokes at a later hour — and O'Brien his top priority, retaining "Tonight."

"I hope and expect that before the Olympics begin, we'll have everything set. I can't imagine we won't have everything in place before then," Gaspin told a meeting of the Television Critics Association.

Gaspin said that despite lower ratings for NBC at 10 p.m. compared to last year, the network was making money off the show.

"My goal is to keep Jay, Conan and Jimmy as our late-night lineup."

Jeff Gaspin

NBC Universal Television
Entertainment Chairman

But affiliates were upset that it was leading fewer viewers into their late news programs, costing them significant advertising revenue. Some affiliates told NBC in December they would go public soon about their complaints if a change wasn't made, or even take Leno's show off the air.

Gaspin said about one-third of the affiliates were really hurt by the Leno show, although he wasn't clear on how many said they might pre-empt his show.

"I asked them [the affiliates] how many are they talking about, because I could have lived with one or two. But I got the sense that it was more than one or two," he said.

Michael Fiorile, chairman of the NBC Affiliate Board, said it was a great move for NBC stations, the networks and viewers.

"We admire their willingness to innovate, and their willingness to change course when it didn't work for us," Fiorile said.

Gaspin said he pondered combinations of possible schedule changes before the holidays and then called his boss, NBC Universal Chairman Jeff Zucker, for approval to act.

"I don't want to wait anymore. Now is the time," Gaspin recounted telling Zucker.

Both Leno and O'Brien made comedic hay out of the issue last week. Leno joked in his monologue that NBC was working on a solution in which all parties would be treated unfairly, while O'Brien wisecracked that he and Leno would be thrown by the network into a pit to fight and "the one that crawls out gets to leave NBC."

Gaspin said he's "perfectly fine" with their on-air remarks "if that's how they blow off steam and that's how they're comfortable."

Table games to help schools

By Megan Rogers
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Local representatives said they hope the state budget debate is put to rest, now that controversial table games legislation has passed after much debate.

Gov. Ed Rendell signed legislation Jan. 7 allowing casinos to add table games such as blackjack, poker and roulette.

Gaming legislation was passed by a 28-22 vote in the Senate and 103-89 in the House — meaning the 1,000 state jobs Rendell said would be cut if table games were not passed by Jan. 9 are now safe.

The expansion of table games will create jobs and could produce more than \$200 million in tax revenue this year, Tor Michaels, chief of staff for Rep. Scott Conklin, said.

While Conklin, D-Centre, and state Sen. Jake Corman, R-

Centre, voted differently on the legislation, both expressed optimism that the bill will add much-needed revenue to the state budget.

Though he doesn't support gambling, Conklin voted in favor of the legislation, Michaels said. The table games legislation was the only revenue source the Republican-controlled Senate would pass, he said.

"Hopefully it will do what it is intended to do, which is supplement our budget during these terrible economic times," Michaels said.

Corman, who voted against the bill, said he was wary to legalize more gambling. Though he said history has shown an increase in social issues stemming from gambling, he feels it is time to move forward.

"Budgetary-wise, I suppose it's a good thing," he said. "But as far as expanding gambling, I had concerns."

The legislation will require casinos implementing table games to pay a one-time licensing fee of \$16.5 million for larger casin-

os and \$7.5 million for smaller. Revenue from the table games will be taxed at 16 percent. Fourteen percent of the tax will go to the state, and the other 2 percent will go to the county and municipality of the casino.

Corman said revenue tax for the state will go into the general fund and will not be used to fund state appropriations for state-related schools as implied by proponents of the bill.

Rendell had said he would not pass state appropriation legislation for state-related schools without the approval of table gaming legislation as well, that it was needed to balance the budget.

The money from table games was not needed to fund the appropriation, Corman said, and the money was released in December, when table games legislation was still in the House and Senate. The Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board said it will take six to nine months to install the table games in casinos, according to a press release.

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