

UNDER the DOME



FEBRUARY 2, 2015

Welcome

Under the Dome is a weekly update on actions and activities of the West Virginia Legislature, provided for West Virginia University faculty and staff by WVU's Office of State, Corporate and Local Relations.

WVU at the Legislature

WVU joined other West Virginia colleges and universities for Higher Education Day at the Legislature on Jan. 27. West Virginia University President E. Gordon Gee and other institution presidents participated in ceremonial events with the Governor, the Senate and the House of Delegates. Wildlife Biologist Ann Anderson, from the Environmental Research Center of the Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design, was on hand to demonstrate and explain a watershed model.

On Jan. 28, WVU participated in Innovation and Entrepreneurship Day, sponsored by TechConnect West Virginia and TransTech/Industries of the Future.

Focus on Education Reform

Education reform was a hot topic this week in the area of charter schools and alternative teacher certification.

Charter Schools (HB 2014 and SB 14) — two meetings and a public hearing were held this week on the charter schools issue. Forty states and the District of Columbia allow public charter schools.

Alternative teacher certification (HB 2005) — this bill passed House Education this week after several hours of discussion. A 2014 State Department of Education study found 700 vacant teacher positions in the State of West Virginia. Proponents of the bill cite that alternative certification would assist in providing teachers in areas of state with critical needs and shortages.

Other Legislative Activity

Legal reform is moving this week with joint and several liability (HB 2002) and open and obvious legislation (SB 13) are both moving through the process.

Coming Up

The first WVU Lunch and Learn will take place on Feb. 4. Dr. Gene Cilento, dean of the Benjamin M. Statler College of Engineering and Mineral Resources, and Dr. Brian Anderson, director of the WVU Energy Institute and associate professor of chemical engineering for the Statler College, will speak to legislators on ongoing programs and initiatives in their respective departments. The Lunch and Learns are designed to provide legislators with educational information and demonstrate ways that WVU is a wise investment for the State of West Virginia.