

**PCOL – The Public Institution Committee  
Recommendation for Proposals in Committee**

<p><b>Public Access</b> It has been stated that the Oregon has a well-deserved reputation for openness to the legislative process. Although the public has access to the process, the committee heard there are concerns and possible solutions to increasing or improving public access.</p>		
	Proposal	Possible Recommendation
	<p><i>The following proposals are covered by this recommendation:</i></p>	
6	Public Access to the process	<p>The committee commends the Legislative Assembly in their dedication to public access to the legislative process. Testimony was heard that the legislature has a well deserved reputation of being open to the public.</p> <p>Several of the following items are already required by the Legislative Assembly, but the committee heard on several occasions from different people that reiterating the need for some of the following items and encouraging development of others could help keep the process open and make it more so:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At least 48-hour notice for committee meetings for as long as possible.</li> <li>2. Move to one-hour notice as close to Sine Die as possible.</li> <li>3. Establish one page on the legislative website to request any legislative agenda including those from Legislative Fiscal and Legislative Revenue.</li> <li>4. Give as much notice for hearing amendments as possible and provide an explanation of the effect of amendments to the public.</li> <li>5. Clearly indicate on agendas when testimony from the general public will be heard as opposed to introductory, invited or organized testimony.</li> <li>6. During “public testimony,” first hear from people who have traveled the farthest distance.</li> <li>7. Train chairs to be more attentive to the needs of the audio/video audience including stating names on the record and explaining procedures or describing visual aids.</li> <li>8. Use teleconference or videoconference technology more often.</li> <li>9. Consider additional methods to provide access to the legislative process for the public living longer distances from Salem.</li> <li>10. Hold more hearings away from the capitol.</li> <li>11. Take final action on bills in the capitol, not on the road.</li> <li>12. Ensure that workgroup representation reflects the diversity of the issue being discussed.</li> <li>13. Hold public hearings on recommendations from workgroups before approving them.</li> <li>14. Make the legislative website more useable to the general public – use accessible language.</li> <li>15. Display the Citizens’ Guide more prominently on the legislative website.</li> <li>16. Provide summary or overview documents on complicated budget and policy issues to the press and public.</li> </ol>
65	Public Notice for Meetings	
66	Availability of amendments	
71	Legislative Website	
129	Video Conference Opportunities	
	Accessibility/Readability of the Oregon Revised Statutes	<p>The committee recommends that bills and amendments and subsequently the Oregon Revised Statutes be drafted in such a manner that they are simple and understandable to read and follow logically. Article IV, section 21 of the Oregon Constitution states</p>

		“Every act and joint resolution shall be plainly worded, avoiding as far as practicable the use of technical terms.”
10	In-district offices	Take no further action – This issue may be tied to legislator compensation and staffing allowing legislators to decide how to best use their office funds.
61	Open Caucus Meetings	Motion failed 2-2-2 to urge the House and Senate, Republican and Democratic caucuses to open their caucus meetings and to strongly encourage that public business be conducted in public. In 1978, citizens approved a legislatively referred ballot measure to adopt rules to implement open meetings in the legislature and committees. House and Senate Republican and Democratic Caucuses generally meet together in behind closed doors to discuss issues of importance to the caucus. Recently, over several years, Senate Democrats held caucus meetings that were open to the press, but now their caucuses are closed.
67	Effective Distribution of Paperwork	Take no further action – As the capitol goes wireless and the chambers move towards paperless sessions, paperwork will be distributed faster and more efficiently for legislators, staff and the public. The legislature should embrace the use of technology.

**Training** Various PCOL committees have discussed the importance of members having a strong base of knowledge on issues that they make decisions about. It is equally important for legislators and everyone supporting the legislature whether staff, lobby or public to understand the basics of the legislative process and the nuances that can take a bill or policy in one direction or another.

	Proposal	Possible Recommendation
11	Training for Legislative Assistants and Caucus Staff	The committee was impressed with the variety of training opportunities available to legislators and staff. The committee urges that training opportunities continue to be available in the future and that trainers continue to refine and improve the options available. No specific action is recommended at this time.
15	Training for Legislators	
64	Training for lobbyists and agency staff	

**Members and “The Institution”** Early in commission work, members suggested that a reason for the growth in “partisanship” is that members are not as likely to have the collegial relationships they had 30 years ago. Committees have also discussed the concept of citizen legislatures vs. professional legislature and where the balance is.

	Proposal	Possible Recommendation
1	Member relationships	Take no further action – The committee recognizes that collegial relationships are important to the legislative process.
5	Accountability and Ethical Standards	The committee finds that a conflict adversely affecting the public image of the legislature could arise from the fact that the Legislature is responsible for setting the budget of the Oregon Government Standards and Practices Commission, which is charged with investigating ethical violations of legislators, therefore the committee recommends that legislative leadership introduce legislation that will remove the funding mechanism from legislative control possibly imposing an assessment on public officials to fund part or all of GSPC work.
17	Preservation of the Citizen Legislature	Take no further action – The work of the commission is addressing the foundations of both proposals.
18	Professional Legislature	

23	Preserving “the Institution” of the Legislature	Take no further action – The committee suggested that this proposal is not critical to the overall mission of the commission.
Nepotism		<p>The committee finds that due to the part-time nature of the legislature and the distance that some members have to travel, the practice of members hiring spouses or relatives as their assistants is understandable and should be left to the discretion of individual members. However, the committee does believe that setting salaries for relatives of members can create an appearance of impropriety.</p> <p>The committee recommends that legislative leadership adopt rules in 2007 that require any legislators hiring their spouse, child, parent or relative as an employee of their legislative office file a statement with the Chief Clerk of the House or Secretary of the Senate certifying that they have hired a relative and indicate the salary of the relative. Before salary can be paid to that employee, the Chief Clerk of the House or Secretary of the Senate must certify that the salary is within a generally accepted range for the position. Similar certifications must be submitted for salary increases.</p>
<p><b>Intergovernmental Relationships</b> It has been suggested that during development and consideration of legislative budgets and policies, local governments are not treated as the partners they are in the delivery system. Proposals to the committee center on improving communication between local governments and the legislative branch. Ideas include: 1) establishing a forum for governments to talk about the effect of legislative decisions on “systems” such as transportation, human services, corrections etc.; 2) provide more orientations and forums for legislators on intergovernmental relationships; 3) urge legislators to think beyond one-size-fits-all solutions for Oregon’s diverse population and geography.</p>		
	Proposal	Possible Recommendation
34	Relationship of the Legislative Branch to Executive Branch	Take no further action – The committee can’t legislate better and more organized communication between the legislative branch and executive branch.
115	One-size-fits-all solutions	Take no further action – Local government organizations and legislators may need to communicate more about the impact of various legislation on their communities.
116	Relationship of the Legislative Branch to Local Governments	The committee heard testimony that Oregon county and city officials are often frustrated by a perceived lack of legislative understanding of problems faces by counties and cities. The committee recommends that the President and Speaker name a Joint Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs.