

Nevada Faculty Alliance 2021 Legislative Session Summary

The [Nevada Faculty Alliance](#) is the statewide independent association of faculty at NSHE colleges and universities. The NFA is affiliated with the American Association of University Professors, which advocates for academic freedom, shared governance, and faculty rights. We work to empower faculty to be wholly engaged in our mission to help students succeed. You can support the advocacy of the NFA by becoming a [member](#).

The NFA had a daily presence at the legislature (virtually or in person), led by Kent Ervin (NFA Legislative Liaison) and Doug Unger (NFA Southern Government Affairs Representative). NFA produced [fact sheets and position papers](#) on critical topics which were well received by legislators. We thank the many NFA members who gave public comment and submitted opinions.

NFA/NSHE Wins

- Removal of appropriations bill language in the Governor's Recommended Budget (GovRec) that would have prohibited use of state appropriated for professional merit raises. This allows the Board of Regents to implement of the recommendations of the NSHE Performance Pay Task Force (on the June 11 [BOR agenda 20](#)).
- Funding of enrollment caseload growth and capacity enhancements in the NSHE budget per GovRec. This enables implementation the NFA Collective Bargaining agreement with CSN for a 1.75% equity adjustment (on the June 10 [BOR agenda 13](#)).
- Partial restoration of NSHE faculty and staff positions eliminated in GovRec, through authorization of \$93M of federal American Rescue Plan funds for the biennium starting 7/1/2021. The restored positions will be in the base budget (implementations ongoing now). NFA [strongly advocated](#) for these restorations.
- Partial restoration of PEBP Benefits versus GovRec: Medicare retiree HRA contributions and one-month employee premium holiday each year.
- 1% COLA for all state employees in FY2023 starting July 1, 2022 ([AB493](#)).
- Capital improvement projects funded ([AB492](#) & [SB434](#)): UNLV Med School (\$25M), UNLV Engineering (\$37M), GBC Welding Lab (\$5.7M), WNC Marlette Hall (1.5M), NSHE deferred maintenance (\$15M).
- Supplemental appropriations in [SB460](#) to Cooperative Extension (\$214K/year) and the Nevada Teach Program (\$750K/year).
- American Rescue Plan funds dedicated to a statewide K-12 outreach program similar to the UNR Dean's Future Scholars program (\$4M, [SB461](#)) and Silver State Opportunity Grants restored to FY2020-FY2021 levels (\$600K/year, [AB495](#)), both part of the mining tax compromise.
- \$42M for Millennium Scholarships ([AB475](#)), \$7.6M for Nevada Promise Scholarships ([AB454](#)), \$5M for Knowledge Fund (GOED budget).

NFA Disappointments

- [SB373](#) collective bargaining bill not passed—died in Senate Finance Committee. NFA offered an [amendment](#) to remove fiscal notes from state agencies, but it was not heard.
- Drastic [cuts to PEBP benefits remain](#), including the elimination of Long-Term Disability Insurance. Further efforts are needed with the Interim Finance Committee to restore benefits for FY2023.
- 1% COLAs are insufficient to match inflation (4.6% since last COLA for state employees in July 2019). NFA pleads to match the 3% given to Classified bargaining units who reached agreements with the state were not acted upon. *It is evidently the state policy is to give preference to members of state bargaining units, from which NSHE faculty are excluded by statute [[NRS 288.425\(2\)\(f\)](#)].*
- 12% across-the-board cuts to operating budgets remain with cuts of about \$76M for the biennium statewide. These cuts affect professional schools and non-formula programs the hardest because they

have no offsets from enrollment caseload growth, as well as institutions with enrollment drops. But see the next section.

Possible Future Budget Add-Backs

- [SB461](#) directs allocation of the state's \$2.7B in American Rescue Plan funds, with hundreds of millions of dollars to be transferred into the state general fund based on the generous revenue loss formula in the ARP Act before spending on other listed priorities.
- These funds will be available for distribution by the Governor's Finance Office with approval of the Interim Finance Committee, which [meets next on June 22](#). "Addressing budget shortfalls (up to the level that was legislatively approved in the prior biennium)" is a priority of the Governor's [Every Nevadan Recovery Framework](#).
- *We hope these funds will be used to restore NSHE and state operating budgets and to restore PEBP benefits for state workers.*

Other Notable Bills

- [SJR7](#) - New question 1 to remove the election and duties of the Board of Regents from the constitution. NFA offered a good-faith [amendment](#) that included protection of academic freedom, which was not accepted. Requires re-approval in the next legislative session and a vote at a general election.
- [SB287](#) – Establishes land grant status for UNLV and DRI under NRS, amended with provisions intended to hold harmless the budgets of Cooperative Extension and the Agricultural Experiment Station. NFA took no position.
- [AB450](#) – A 2-year study on community colleges, workforce development, and governance, rather than a mandated change in governance structure as implied by Governor's state of the state address. The NFA asked for membership on the study committee by faculty and students, which was not added. We hope subcommittees will include faculty who are expert in developing and delivering career and technical education programs.
- [AB416](#) – Requires a legislative audit of NSHE non-state accounts for 2019-2021 (NFA supported).
- [SB347](#) – NSHE sexual assault task force and provisions; out-of-state tuition waiver and allows scholarship applications for DACA students (NFA supported).
- [AB262](#) – Waivers of tuition, registration fees, lab fees, and other fees for Native American students with a Nevada tribal connection, for undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs (NFA supported).
- [AB156](#) – Expansion of registration and fee waiver for Nevada National Guard to their dependents.
- [AB165](#) – Expansion of out-of-state tuition waiver of veterans beyond 5 years after service.
- [SB193](#) – Expansion of out-of-state tuition waiver to veterans using Post-9/11 G.I. bill and their spouses and dependents, admission preferences for veterans in nursing and education programs.
- [SB342](#) – UNR Medical School/Renown partnership for graduate medical education.
- [SB128](#) – Study by the state Treasurer on funding and effectiveness of state-supported scholarships.
- [SB233](#) – \$500K funding for the Nevada Health Service Corps, which provides medical services to underserved rural areas, administered by the UNR Med School
- [SB310](#) – \$400K funding for the CSN Nevada GROW program for small business development.
- [AB355](#) – \$750K funding for the UNLV International Gaming Institute for an initiative to increase diversity in the gaming industry leadership.
- [SB294](#) – Gives binding arbitration rights to local government employee unions, making NSHE faculty the only large group of public employees in Nevada without.

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