



EASTERN OREGON  
UNIVERSITY

Board of Trustees

**Retreat of the Board of Trustees**  
**August 13th, 2015**  
**8:15 AM – 5:00 PM**  
**Ascension School and Conference Center, Cove, OR**  
**Eastern Oregon University**  
**La Grande, Oregon**

**Trustees:** Ray Brown, Richard Chaves, Bobbie Conner, Pat Hinton, Holly Kerfoot, Bill Johnson, Dixie Lund, Cheryl Martin, George Mendoza, Abel Mendoza, David Nelson, and Jer Pratton.

**University Staff:** President Tom Insko, Chris Burford, Timothy Seydel, Lara Moore, Xavier Romano, Sarah Witte, DeAnna Timmermann (Representing the Faculty Senate), Colleen Dunne-Cascio (Chair of the University Council), Addie Beplate (ASEOU President), Heather Cashell, and Heidi Tilicki.

**Guests:** Senator Betsy Johnson, Brad Stevens

**Minutes:**

The morning began with an informal breakfast reception. At 9:15 a.m. Chair David Nelson announced the board retreat and special session of the Eastern Oregon University Board of Trustees is now in session.

Chair David Nelson called for any announcements. Secretary Burford asked to silence all cell phones and for any members of the media to sign in at the recorder's desk. Chair Nelson made some opening remarks toward the board. Eastern Oregon University (EOU) is in constant competition for students. There are 17 community colleges, and about 192 school districts in the area. There are at least ten different interest groups within the university and all these have different views of the world. Chair Nelson said a citizen mentioned to him that 25-30% of the economy in Union County is related to the university. EOU has about a \$35-36 million budget and funding is now outcome based and based on graduation rates. EOU's biggest donor is the State of Oregon. This board and university need to come together as a group and make this campus as successful as possible.

President Insko laid out the purpose of the retreat for the day. He would like retreats to be a step back from the operational governance, and focus on the strategic aspect of the university. He wanted to give the board an idea of what the campus is currently doing and how each group is working together. This retreat is an overview of the key issues the board might face. As most legislators expect university presidents to ask just for money, President Insko said he does not want to ask just for money but tell the capitol what we as a university are doing and what solutions we are bringing to our campus.

## **Campus Updates**

- **Financial:**

Vice President for Finance Lara Moore gave the board a recap of the 2015-16 year which includes major revenue and expense categories, a long-term budget, and annual and revenue expenditures. We have a challenging expenditure model. We will always be working hard to keep these numbers solid. For the last six years our expenses actually exceed our revenues. Eastern has had its share of struggles, but we, as a university have a challenging financial model. Referring to the PowerPoint, EOU's cost revenue is so significant and difficult to shift that we are always going to be working hard to keep these bars in the right order.

The fund balance is what is left over when all the bills have been paid. The fund balance goal for us is about 10% of our revenue. The Oregon University system had a goal for each university of 5-10%, where 10% is where you should aim to be. The fund balance policy is one area that our finance and administration committee will review in the future. From the end of the 2014 financial year to the end of the 2015 year, EOU went from a negative balance to a 6.8 % positive fund balance. The increase in our fund balance for the 2014-2015 year was a result of a decrease in the operating budget, mid-year tuition increase, sustainability plan cuts, cost reduction, reduced fee remission, reserves from the bookstore transfer, and people being more responsible in their spending.

Trustee Pratton asked how much was the tuition increase for this last year. Lara Moore answered 4.9%.

Our revenue of \$39,003,000 came mainly from tuition and state allocations. A main portion of our expenses of \$37,446,000 came from payroll. On average, our salaries increase about 2.5% annually. And the PEBB and PERS rates increase in the 3-6% rate annually. The university has to keep our revenue increasing if our expenses increase. Financially, this university needs to think about how quickly we can correct a problem that we see coming. Trustee Lund said that the revenue for this next year looks very different, the level of tuition and state funding will be coming in at about 50-50% from each. Lara Moore said that we did see a 20% increase in state funding this last year which is thanks to Tim Seydel and all the hard work his group has been doing.

Trustee Pratton asked how likely is it that the increase in state funding will be sustained in the future. Lara Moore said that EOU should not count on that increase being sustained in the future.

There has been a significant disinvestment in higher education in Oregon. But this year the trend might change which will obviously help us manage our finances a little better. And we always have challenges in the future. Chair Nelson mentioned that one way to help our finances is through enrollment.

President Insko noted that we have a small increase in state funds, but not even at the 2007 level we had. Our tuition in total dropped because of our enrollment numbers, and with the dissolution of the Oregon University System (OUS), the money that was given to OUS is now given directly to us.

Trustee George Mendoza clarified that the funding from state allocations is based on enrollment and retention. Chair Nelson mentioned that the average cost of education for a year in Oregon is about \$12,000. Eastern would get more state support than the University of Oregon. Is that true? Lara Moore answered yes, the smaller institutions are less likely to be funded at a 60%-40% level because the state and other schools realized that we do need some help. This, which is called mission differential funding will remain, and then a portion of our funding will be wrapped in this new model. Chair Nelson asked what the three criteria for the mission differential funding is. Lara Moore responded that it is based on mission statement and size of the school. Some bigger institutions will get more dollars for research. Student credit hours (SCH) will also play into the funding model from the state. Having students enroll in classes is not enough, we now need those students to graduate.

Trustee Martin asked when this new funding model will kick in. Lara Moore said we are in a phase-in path and the funding model will be fully phased-in, in four years. 2016 will be the beginning of the transition.

Trustee Lund mentioned that students from Washington, who pay instate tuition, and may not finish in the same amount of time as an in-state Oregonian student, will not hurt our funding model. Lara Moore mentioned that the model only funds Oregon students. The former president, Jay Kenton, was able to get some additional funding to help with students from outside the state of Oregon. So EOU got about \$2 million to help with those students. This is just a flat amount which might grow incrementally based on state allocations. Long-term, this amount will probably not cover every student, but that is something to think about in the future. President Insko said we will be spending time on this during our next board meeting and the finance and administration committee will look

at it as well. This model is based on a 6% enrollment decline, and there was an attempt to be conservative in our forecasting. I don't want to build a model based off of state funding.

Student Body President Addie Beplate asked what role does fundraising play in these costs. President Insko answered that fundraising from the foundation board actually goes to the students in the form of scholarships. Activities around building new structures and arenas are part of a different fund flow. Trustee Pratton mentioned that operating and capital funding are two separate things.

Trustee Ray Brown asked what potential impact the Service Employees International Union Local 503 (SEIU) contract and the discontinued state funding for Eastern Promise will have on the financial model. Lara Moore responded that bargaining and SEIU are definitely cost drivers for EOU. We are in a bargaining session right now. Lara Moore noted that as far as bargaining goes, it is state driven and whatever happens at those negotiation groups then trickles down to our staff and faculty groups. The Eastern Promise program got defunded at the state level. EOU got about \$2.2 million from the state. We have not created a specific pathway from Eastern Promise to EOU, just towards higher education. Therefore, EOU does expect some return from this organization, but we could do more to track it.

President Insko noted that we should turn the conversation from how much college credits have increased towards what a great deal these credits are. Career and technical education (CTE) across the state has a tremendous opportunity. We are looking into why transfer student numbers are falling. Even if some of our prospective students go to community colleges, our hope is that they will eventually come to EOU. Our community college partners in the last ten years have been declining in enrollment. My hope is that Oregon Promise starts building a pipeline from community colleges to EOU. Trustee Conner noted that Eastern Promise is a narrowly constructed opportunity because it is within six months of high school graduation and the average age of a student in Oregon is 35.

President Insko mentioned that at any university, it is easy to grow but we need to be thoughtful about how and where we grow, so we don't waste our resources. The finance department and he are creating a model that will help the university track expansions and monitor if they will be feasible for EOU. This model will predict the costs of new programs years down the road. Surprisingly, no one in the state is doing this. President Insko noted that if we are clear about the costs of certain programs to begin with, we can outline the impacts, and track those affected by the new changes on campus. Lara Moore added that this model could also track student enrollment, cost of attendance, etc. which can

help us track our finances better. If state funding goes down, this can help us track and prepare for the next year. We are going to set the example for this model.

Trustee Cheryl Martin asked what is the approximate cost per student at EOU. Lara Moore answered \$11,600 in 2014.

Trustee Pratton said he is delighted to hear that President Inkso is taking a proactive approach.

Trustee Conner asked what our indirect rate is. Lara Moore answered direct is about 45-55% and indirect is about 8-10%. The federal direct rate is at 60% of salaries. The state and other indirect rate is at 8-10%.

Chair Nelson thanked Lara Moore and invited Interim Provost Sarah Witte to present.

- **Academic:**

Interim Provost Sarah Witte gave the board and guests an overview of academic affairs on campus. Recent sustainability planning conversations that were being held focused on curriculum, which led to streamlining the curriculum. This was one of the first things we asked disciplines and majors to do by shaping their curriculum around the core. Streamlining was also approached by looking at electives and disciplinary specialties. This created the bulk of faculty conversations this last year and what the curriculum will look like.

As a university, EOU also needed to look at our instructional capacity and how the instructional load was being impacted by reassignments. The OUS asked us to create a release time policy. EOU also needed to manage how much programs cost, which can only be seen by knowing what the instructional capacity is relative to enrollments. This also will benefit the students so they have a better idea of how many credits they need, and when they need to take them.

In the course of the year we were able to rescind some of our timely notices. For example, about a year ago we rescinded the elimination of the computer science program and we have reinstated that program here at EOU. We are leveraging an opportunity to partner with Western and Southern Oregon Universities so students will always be able to get a four-year-degree here at EOU. Three writing positions were also rescinded because we focused those conversations around retention and since math and writing serve largely under-prepared first year students, these classes and instructors were important to keep.

We need to have some time to reaffirm our partnerships with Oregon State University (OSU) and Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU).

This year a number of the losses resulted in an opportunity to right-size and reposition the curriculum for more opportunities. We know what we have and can see more clearly where we can expand, and know what we are investing in. The more opportunities students have to explore inter-disciplinary connections the better the student is served by us. We whittled down the majors to a core which we hoped would not exceed a threshold of 60 credits. So students have more credit time to spend in other disciplines making those important connections in different fields of knowledge.

We also positioned programs to open up the silos to those productive curricular conversations that might result in productive interdisciplinary programs in the future for those emerging fields that are already occurring or fields and employment opportunities that have not yet emerged. One thing to think about is what our students will need in the year 2030.

Trustee George Mendoza asked if Sarah could explain faculty release and more instructional capacity. Full-time faculty have 36 instructional load credits and they have 9 credits of service to the institution, to their discipline, and outreach to the community. When we start asking faculty to do things more suited for clerical staff or administrative staff, then we are eating into instructional capacity. So now faculty can be more focused on teaching or that time is being put into their 9 service credits.

This sets the stage for us to begin positioning academic affairs in three prongs; retention, focused on graduation targets, developing criteria tools for monitoring the progress of students through our curricula to completion. Outcomes based funding is driving a lot of this. There was a push from faculty and staff to get freshmen registered and to get returning students registered before the summer break, so we can better measure our retention at EOU. We are piloting a particular number of classes for our underprepared students and first year curriculum. We are planning for an intentional first year curriculum that will become a common learning experience that allows disciplines to focus on drawing students into a discipline.

Trustee Brown asked how the school determines a student as under-prepared. Provost Witte answered that those student numbers are determined by their score upon entry. Right now the scores focus on writing and math.

Another strategy we are using to move the dial on graduation is for the leadership to think about program mixes on campus. We need to think about how we are positioned in the state with community colleges, and how we can have a conversation with them that results in a better program mix. This is one

of the conversations we will have in the fall when the faculty come back. We are also strategically placing ourselves into other markets that are contiguous to this state. We are strategically trying to position programs to reach out to and draw in and meet the needs of the region in terms of opportunities for our students to engage in applied and integrative learning either in a workplace, agencies, community or any applied field.

EOU is also looking at hybrid technology and leveraging technology on our campus to serve on-campus students who are forced into an online environment because that on-campus class is not large enough to maintain.

Addie Beplate noted that while these hybrid technologies are created to increase instructional capacity, they should not force on campus students to take classes online. Trustee Ray Brown said that unfortunately hybrid courses require technology the university currently does not have a lot of, which is an issue to solve for these hybrid courses. Trustee Cheryl Martin noted that students would have to pay more for an online course in this hybrid option. Provost Witte added that the campus has invested in an instructional designer to help us with these technologies. We are trying to use pipelines for different populations and demographics for campus.

Trustee Lund noted that students who would choose online courses (due to family obligations or work obligations) are not as available to meet with professors as other on-campus students are. Trustee Lund noted that having mentors and effective advisors is important for first generation students and can help in retention. EOU needs to make sure they have the right people doing those jobs. Addie Beplate echoed that comment and added that it might be beneficial for students to keep the same advisor throughout their time at EOU, rather than starting out with a general advisor and changing to a program specific one.

Sarah made note of the comments given for future meetings. We are developing and working with our new Institutional Research (IR) director to track these numbers for enrollment and faculty instructional capacity. Trustee Johnson noted that with streamlining curriculum, administration loves it because it saves money, faculty don't like it because they cannot teach their pet projects, and sometimes students have to wait an extra year to complete their degree because they could not complete or take a course they need to graduate until the next year. What metrics are we using that tell us we have done enough? How do we know students are able to take the classes when they need them? Provost Witte mentioned EOU has a two year schedule available for students and advisors. And therefore there is not much ability to plan beyond that two year schedule.

Trustee Lund asked if there is a role for board members to contact pre-registered students in the spring that don't show up in the fall, to literally call them and ask, what is going on? President Insko commented on the body language of the room in response to that comment.

Trustee Martin asked if we have the completion rates for students taking online and on campus courses. Provost Witte noted that data shows us 65% of transfer students who take courses online complete their degree rather than the 45% who are hybrid students who do not complete their degree.

Chair Nelson called for a recess at 10:53 a.m. and to meet back at 11:00 a.m.

- **Student Services**

Vice President for Student Services asked the audience to look back 12-13 months earlier, to when the sustainability conversation was alive and kicking on this side of Oregon. Students and community members were wondering if this was a viable institution for the future. Twelve months later, due to the amazing work of this board, university leadership and the extraordinary admissions counselors, we are now seen as an exciting and viable institution, but a complex one. If I were at a traditional university, I would be standing on a box shouting with excitement for the fall term. Right now, I am cautiously optimistic for this fall and what we will see when opening day happens in a few weeks.

We are a mixed use university. Some people see us as a community college, whether we like it or not. Some people see us as a university. And those two have very different and sometime similar population sizes. There is no way to track if a student comes to EOU with the intent of transferring. We won't know what to expect until we see the students in the fall. From the Mountaineering Days, we have been rebuilding our enthusiasm. Academically, the incoming freshmen are stronger coming in this year. Addie Beplate said that, from what she has seen, the incoming freshmen are an amazing group of people.

The demographics of this university are changing. One of our challenges is retention, more so that recruitment. Online and onsite retention is down. There is a lot of competition for online classes. Our campus locations and presence in Baker, Wallowa, and Harney County has been abandoned. These counties could be some of EOU's bread and butter for recruitment. EOU should do more outreach in these counties to the local high schools. If possible, EOU should reach out to areas such as Bend, Coos Bay, and North Bend. Terry Walters, who was involved with the presidential search committee, is stretched too much for one job. The Bend outreach location is close to closure.



Very thoughtful conversations are happening towards students and financial accessibility. The daily registration reports are coupled with the campus report. Some reports have more to do with retention than enrollment and students admitted. Our enrollment looks like it will be down about 7% for this fall. The admittance of transfer students was up to 63%. But we have factors in place this year that we did not have last year. EOU is not in a crisis but we still have a lot of work to do.

Trustee Lund recommended telephone calls can make a huge difference in the retention of students. Addie Beplate recommended creating a list of students who have been accepted so people can reach out to them. Do we have a process in place for that? Vice President Romano noted that admissions does most of the work. Trustee Richard Chaves said he spoke with three students who decided to attend EOU because they got that phone call after a campus tour. A phone call follow up is a lot more effective, even though it may cost more.

Trustee Conner noted one pivotal factor for some Native American and other students is following up with those students during their first months on campus and chasing them to finish classes. It is an enormous challenge, but it is so important especially as we have read for first generation students. A personal phone call is the beginning and we have to follow up with them.

Vice President Romano announced that EOU will receive \$1.1 million for the Federal TRiO grant and there was a round of applause. This will better academically support touch points for first generation and low income students which will tremendously help EOU and can help retention with this group of students. This year we have new operational paradigms such as residence life, outdoor programs, the multicultural center, mountaineer activities, family networks, and food services. EOU also earned the National Science Foundation STEM grant, which is amazing as EOU has an excellent science department.

For the student week of welcome EOU is focusing on the theme “engaging in difficult and challenging conversations.” How to talk with students, faculty, and with each other regarding difficult conversations such as the new United States presidential search, can help us learn how to communicate with each other regarding difficult conversations. There are ways to communicate with families to prepare their students for finals weeks, such as mid-term reminders and care packages. For recruiting, EOU is going into farther territory such as Alaska and even Hawaii.

Trustee Martin noted that as a former teacher, faculty must be kept number one. Do we have top-of-the-line faculty that are professionally trained that will keep the students wanting to keep coming to classes? Trustee Brown responded

that as a board we are supporting this effort. There is a student course evaluation for faculty, post-tenure reviews, but the conversations will change around advising in terms of providing enough professional development courses, training, gaining tools to engage in an interactive learning environment. All these tools will help faculty to do what they do best.

President Insko noted that is a cultural thing. One of his goals is to change the faculty conversation (which will be explained later). Director of Student Services Colleen Dunne-Cascio mentioned that EOU has worked very hard to provide opportunities for deans, faculty, and students to voice their concerns and track that information. The majority of these issues are resolved at the informal level.

Trustee Johnson suggested that EOU reinvigorate the student experience. These are all on campus paradigms, and surely there are a number of things EOU can do to help move our students academically forward? This might be one area where the board can work with admissions. There may be some more things we need to do to get more success from online/onsite courses. Consider how we can engage these students. Trustee Johnson asked Provost Witte what is our program mix?

Addie Beplate noted that Trustee Elsie Praeger-Goller will be an online, off-campus student and we can gain some insight from her experience.

- **University Advancement**

Vice President Tim Seydel started off this segment with a legislative overview. EOU and higher education has had a successful legislative session. EOU was able to work with Senator Buckley and other senators to lobby for a separate set of funding for higher education and EOU. The Technical and Regional Universities (TRU) were able to advocate together with each other and all had their presidents meet with legislators about the same things at the same time. EOU secured a shared services agreement and athletic funding. One key bill from this legislative session included free community college, which was one hot topic. It is only a \$10 million pot of money. To qualify, all students must complete a FASFA. One question that arose from this bill is what happens with undocumented students who apply. What we have found is that even when a bill passes, it is not necessarily done.

Trustee Conner asked if EOU made an impact at TRU day and in the Ways and Means Committee. Mr. Seydel responded that EOU had a large group of students and lobbyists at the capitol to represent the university. He said it felt that his counterparts from other universities had his back, and they were helping each other across different universities and kept each other in the loop. Mr. Seydel said that the decentralization of OUS put a lot of attention on higher

education this year. President Insko mentioned that this governance structure is much better than what it formerly was. Now, without that filter, there is a more direct line of communication to our legislators. As a presidential council we will be strong as long as we stick together; if each university breaks away, then the legislature might think we need a baby-sitter and then bring the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) in.

Trustee Pratton noted that we don't want our strong legislature to run adrift. Trustee Lund mentioned that Southern Oregon University (SOU) and EOU have equity as two universities with similar legislative interests. Trustee Johnson said that students were in the capitol when this (TRU Day) happened. Addie Beplate thanked Mr. Seydel for keeping the students up to date on the legislative issues.

Mr. Seydel noted that EOU has a campaign under way to lobby for \$11.5 million, which would be primarily for scholarships. The EOU Foundation Board, a group that helps fundraise for the university, pays its own expenses. The foundation supports two full-time positions in university advancement, helps with some scholarships, and provides support for community projects and events.

Trustee Conner said she would be happy to help Mr. Seydel with this area. President Insko noted the buildings and infrastructure at EOU can help bring in money and revenue to the university and the community. Career technical education, the center on rural studies, the regional solution center, and institutional technology brought about by Blue Mountain Community College (BMCC) and Treasure Valley Community College (TVCC) are all opportunities on how we can provide these needs to and for our students. For example, if they need a welding program how can we help them and how can we market that through EOU. We always need to think about where and who is our target market. Developing that niche will put everything together. Understanding our audience, through social media applications and such, and enrollment strategy can help us find our niche. If we have online students in Alaska, how do we help them? The Presidents' retreat in September will strategize items for the next legislative session.

Trustee Conner mentioned that three of her nieces are not going to college because of the FASFA hurdle. They are waiting for documents from other parties. The hurdle that they have to get through is the FASFA form. Her fear is that they won't go to college because of this. President Insko noted that the system makes it so hard for our students to transfer. Are there things and paradigms we can break down to make this process easier? Trustee George Mendoza asked if EOU has FASFA events where students who are struggling with their FASFA forms can get a hold of people to help them. Trustee Kerfoot admitted to having a hard

time pretending to not be her daughter to help her with the FASFA forms because of this challenge.

### **Board Orientation at Six Months: a Look Back and Forward**

Secretary Chris Burford said he would give the board an overview of the State of Oregon's policy regarding universities with a governing board, their goals, why we have them, and ambitions within state universities. The state policies are surprisingly minimal. Then he would lead a discussion about their experiences as a board, what they have done well, and what they can improve on.

Secretary Burford gave a brief overview of Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 351 and 352. Quoting from the statutes he noted that a governing board is necessary for the survival and political and economic wellbeing of the university. The success of the state is dependent on the health and progress of the boards and universities. Oregonians need educational opportunities beyond high school. Secretary Burford read from the ORSs and read how university boards are important to the state of Oregon. Creating educated citizenry, achieving the 40-40-20 principle (ORS 351.009) are all goals the board and university should strive to achieve. As we are now universities with a governing board, we have public accountability, must obey the public records law and public meetings law.

Governing boards should provide transparency, stay focused on the university, and act in the best interest of their university and the state. That is the goal of what all university governing boards are supposed to achieve. Even if EOU buys land it still belongs to the state, and has responsibilities to monitor it. The roles and duties of governing boards include what Oregon law expects the board to do, such as adopt bylaws, hire and evaluate the president, adopt a university mission statement, and submit it to the HECC, seek HECC approval of any significant changes in academic programs, submit biennial funding requests to the HECC, review university fees, adopt a budget, and maintain custody and control of real property for the university. Secretary Burford referred to the handout which compares the duties and powers of the HECC with the governing board. All other duties not specified by the HECC reside with the local universities. The HECC is given rule making authority by the state legislature, which no doubt, the legislature will not want to get out of hand. We are starting to run into some head butting between the HECC and the universities. President Insko noted that the HECC is made up of a lot of Oregon University System (OUS) transfers, as education is what they are familiar with. Therefore, that is why we are reminding the HECC what they may or may not mess with. Our boards have tremendous authority and autonomy which was developed to keep the HECC from creeping into what the OUS was.

Chair Nelson mentioned that he intends be more "wild west" about this new governing process. He thinks EOU should push the envelope. You might have to draw him back.

The board has to be respectful of the faculty and staff so we don't trample on their affairs but still be successful.

Secretary Burford went over the qualities of an effective governing board from the Associated Governing Boards (AGB) handbook. Governing boards should impose high ethical standards, nurture and enhance the legacy of the university, commit to due process, commit time and energy not only to their basic tasks but also to the enjoyment of the board experience.

Secretary Burford started a conversation by asking the board: "How do you as a board think we have done, with contact with the press, speaking on behalf of the board, with board meetings and the public process." Trustee George Mendoza mentioned that he works with two other boards, and this board works well with communication, compared to other boards he works with. Trustee Kerfoot said that we want something to do. Trustee Conner mentioned that serving as references and endorsements for jobs at the university is one way to be involved with the EOU community. Chair Nelson noted that Secretary Burford has done a great job with the communication. There are a couple of things he is concerned with, but growing a new academic program is not part of the board's job. When people start to reach over their chain of command and take over, it can be threatening, intimating and harmful. Every board in the country has to review their finance model annually, as well as endowments, scholarships, playing an advocacy role with the legislature, and backing our president up with the big hard stuff. This board, and EOU, does not want to get in a position where we split and diffuse our capital and make some decisions that are only micro and not macro.

Trustee Chaves noted that the main challenge of communication and doing something can be channeled through the committees we are all on. Trustee Martin mentioned that after reading the committee charter, there are both large and small obligations that the committees can handle. Trustee Brown reminded the board that our job is to govern not manage, which we need to keep in mind.

Trustee George Mendoza continued the discussion by saying he really likes it when we bond over lunch, or small conversations. Trustee Pratton said that he hopes we do get out of the blocks. He would rather be a race horse than a plow horse, and that he really enjoys our board. He is hoping what comes out of this retreat is where we are going next. He recommends we formulate 5-6 things we as a board want to do. So we know where to put our efforts for the next year, what we stand for. We don't have the energy to do everything, and therefore need to set priorities.

President Insko noted that in terms of board dynamics, he needs to change how he influences the board activities. He mentioned that he is the type of person to be straight and not candy-coat things. The challenge with that is in a public forum, and having strong conversations, the public can view as "the world is coming to an end." Think

about how to not turn the conversation into a large public debate. He would rather be frank with all board members. He and Secretary Burford have talked about board dynamics and he has biases on two structures. One, he would like input from the public and recommends the board have a limited public comment time with a sign-in sheet, the chair looks at the list, and the board manages each public comment section the same. Second, this way the board treats each item the same way, if we have a “Wild West” issue. Thus, we have a formal, consistent process for the occasion. He will be working with Secretary Burford and Chair Nelson to decide how these meetings will flow. If the structure is too rigid, let President Insko know, as they are the board and these are their meetings. These concepts are driven from his perspective from other boards. From some, he has seen a lack of structure.

Trustee Lund recommended designating a group of people during the continental breakfast in the morning before board meetings to meet and mingle with the board members. Then begin the meeting and include them in the public comment. Trustee Pratton mentioned that he remembers how he was treated in academics and other groups. People will remember that, how you treat them, and how they felt, so making those connections are important. The board could schedule times for important conversation. President Insko noted that it is important for the board to hear from groups that have specific comments on sensitive issues.

President Insko noted that convocation is coming up, and his staff are setting up the schedule and notifying the campus community. Board members will be invited to intermingle with faculty and staff as they come. He would like to set the tone for this event.

Chair Nelson called for lunch at 12:51 p.m.

Chair Nelson reconvened the board at 1:40 p.m. and the board went immediately into executive session. Secretary Burford read the rules and conditions regarding the executive session.

At 2:00 p.m. Chair Nelson ended the executive session and called the other audience members back into the room.

### **Creating Our Future for Eastern Oregon University:**

President Insko began a conversation on the future and vision of EOU. He coined the phrase “Together, it is possible.” He gave the board a perspective of how he is looking at the university after his first six weeks as president and encouraged any feedback. In 2029 EOU will be celebrating their centennial. When he was interviewed for this job he said he would listen. President Insko had a lot of people asking him to make decisions, yet he wanted more time. As he had conversations with various community members

he noticed that the university does not have an alignment on what EOU's main theme will be.

There are a lot of people who are trying to do good, and there is a lot of finger pointing. The language from university members is referenced around "I am looking at the perspective of the student but if they (the others guys) did this . . ." Therefore, he has been heavily focused on culture. President Insko asked what our vision is, because EOU really does not have one. EOU has a mission, but he does not think anyone can articulate it. How is EOU going to be as an organization? He talked with some faculty who stated that EOU has gone through that process, but he thinks we need to go through it again. He envisions over the course of this year to do that, and to go over the board's role. President Insko will not create a strategic plan and just put it on the shelf. He would like to gather data that points EOU to the values and outcomes that we strive for as a university. Until then, he has asked the staff what EOU's action plan is for this year. This campus cannot afford to just sit and wait. How does that feel to you as a board? Trustee Conner asked when was the last time we revised the strategic plan. Provost Witte answered not since 2007.

Trustee Pratton noted one of the big things will be finances, which is incorporated into our strategic plan. We want to be in charge of our own destiny and this is the way to go.

Trustee Pat Hinton said she is excited that President Insko is using the word culture, and using that holistically as a belief system on campus.

President Insko said he is an action kind of guy, and one of the advantages of this is that since I do not understand academia as well, this helps me create a better understanding of how all this fits together.

Collen Dunne-Cascio noted that strategic planning helps her and other offices plan, otherwise people can flounder. This mentality of culture should be a whole university culture, not just for students, but for everyone. Chair Nelson added that some folks on campus feel that way too. Faculty representative DeAnna Timmermann noted that the last time we had a strategic plan it took a while for everyone to agree on it.

President Insko noted that he embraces tradition, but he will challenge every paradigm out there, some things will take longer than others to achieve. It should not take 2-3 years to create a mission. At other schools things like the conversion of OUS policies might take 18-24 months. But since EOU is a smaller school it might take a shorter amount of time.

Trustee Pratton asked Lara Moore when does EOU typically complete their budget for the year. She responded that the planning process starts between January and March, but the budget is set in June. The biennium might change the starting date of planning

for the budget. The Budget and Planning Committee on campus would be a channel where these conversations would take place as well as the Board Finance and Administration Committee. Trustee Prattton asked if this board will have enough done to make an impact on this next academic year. President Insko responded with probably the following year. He see the financial model for EOU built on pillars of public support, philanthropy, performance, and efficiencies.

President Insko noted that when EOU talks about a new program we should put it into a model so we can see the outcomes, costs, and benefits of it, as well as track freshman retention rates. President Insko made reference to his PowerPoint slides and to the importance of having an index to track retention. The red line is all Oregon public schools other than EOU, the green line are Oregon private institutions, and the other line is regional private institutions. This data is from freshmen last year that are coming back this year. Our data this year shows that we have improved about 3 to 4 points. Holly Chason is our new Institutional Research (IR) director and has collected these numbers.

My point is that we are not performing at the level any of us would like. Our role as a board could be to outline what EOU would look like in 5 to 10 years. We would like freshmen who start at EOU, to finish in four years and finish as a senior. Some of this data might be skewed low, because these numbers only capture four year graduates who start as a freshman and leave as seniors. This data might not be representative of non-transfer students. Of course we all want these numbers to be higher. How and what we can do to improve these numbers are the discussions we need to start to have. How involved do you want to be as a board?

Trustee Lund noted that those plunges were correlated with a presidential crisis and crisis in campus leadership. Having a president that will stay longer than five years will significantly help the campus and with retention. Trustee Brown noted that during times of fiscal crisis the school is likely to admit students into classes who are not ready for college courses, and then we are setting them up for failure, which is not good.

Trustee George Mendoza asked do we know what was helping our enrollment and retention numbers in 2008. Provost Witte answered that the economy tanked and so people went back to school, and then that timeframe completed a round of four-year-freshman. Trustee Brown said that using a 4 year graduation rate, may not be a good way of tracking student success because many students cannot graduate in 4 years due to financial cost or other personal reasons.

Trustee George Mendoza asked when the president would want feedback on enrollment and retention. President Insko said to wait for now on the feedback.



While he has been the president people talk to him about governance structure and how important communication is. From the faculty, what he hears is that we have all these structures in place but they do not work well, because we do not communicate very well. There is a lot of talking but not a lot of effective communication. We need to look at our current structures and decide what is working well and what needs to change. President Insko said that does not mean any particular structure is going away. To change the dialog at the state level, we have to perform. We have to have a story that people want to invest in. If you take a good story and you demonstrate your performance, we can get a positive response at the state level. EOU has to demonstrate that we are executing on the dollars.

President Insko noted that right now we have a lot of stuff to focus on and we need to figure out what to focus on and how to be productive. An example of this is holding a productive meeting. Too many times we waste two hours on a meeting because we are focused on the wrong things, or the meeting itself was not necessary. To have a productive meeting EOU needs to be productive on the right things. Academia likes to have a lot of meetings and heads in the room. He understands this, but he would like to create the right type of culture so we can drive efficiency. He would like to drive decision making to the point where he does not have to be in every meeting, so he can focus on the critical things, as a president, he needs to be focusing on. Each Vice President has their own area. He inherited this meeting structure of huge groups that would take three to four hour meetings. President Insko said that he is not saying anyone is wrong, but seeing this as an opportunity to create the right type of culture, so people don't view it as an exclusion, to drive efficiency.

Addie Beplate said that she is concerned that the student voice will not be heard if these groups get smaller. Chair Nelson mentioned, regarding public outcomes, that EOU is now in a different arena for funding, and we have to start doing things differently. We are constantly competing for funds with other schools.

Trustee Conner asked if a task force will be established to focus on strategic planning or will EOU have external resources doing this job. President Insko said he is trying to stay away from educational consultants, because he thinks EOU has plenty of knowledge already on campus. He would like a value proposition, strategic plan, the OUS policies, and an evaluation framework, completed by fall 2016.

Trustee Conner noted that there has been a lot of fear-based anxiety. Inclusivity, especially with the board's feedback, is very important when there is a lack of trust. Trustee Brown noted that this campus still has shared governance and he doesn't think it can be eliminated from the process.

President Insko said that EOU needs to bring more rigor into funding for the university. He added that EOU can do a lot more with the staff that we currently have. EOU needs

to think about targeted outcomes. He wrote a letter to a music student who graduated in 2016, and donated \$1,000 to EOU. President Insko said it was great to see a return like that.

President Insko went into detail about his working values. When he hires people, he thinks about what values and types of results they can bring to the organization. You can expect this in the provost search process. There is opportunity to create rigor in our development programs.

President Insko noted that context is decisive. This university has a future shaped by our past and we have to change the context of our organization. As people articulate the past by stories, circumstances, facts, interpretations, predictions, opinions, and judgments they assign meaning to their present actions. The president said that, for example, if he shows up to meetings or any public event, he is going to listen and engage people differently than if an administrator is complaining about faculty. These are opportunities to take positive action and to change the conversation. At his church, the president mentioned that he keeps getting surprised responses by people who ask him if he is beat down yet, he answers, "No. The people are great and there is just so much to work with." Setting an example of everything counts when it comes to leadership. When these members signed up for this board they all gave up being able to sit down at a coffee table downtown without having to hear about a complaint. That is bad, and board members have to change the conversation. This campus must get out of the pity party, focus on our opportunities and then we can move forward. He is challenging his leadership team to do this and he asked for any reflections.

Trustee Conner acknowledged the directions the president would like to take yet noted that in her community she is working with kids who are coming from a tough past. She believes it is important to get people when they are young and coming in as freshmen and not just adults, to change the conversation in this manner. This recommendation has to penetrate the whole organization.

Addie Beplate recommended getting back to a family vibe for students on campus.

President Insko said that if the campus community does this, then it will snowball. It is amazing how people respond to a change in your state of being and reaction to questions. He then briefly overviewed the values that he strives to work and live by which include integrity/honesty, trust, respect, stewardship/service, commitment/care, and knowledge. Curiosity drew him to this position and finding out what can we do as a board and community to make our campus better.

The board took a break from this conversation to meet with State Senator Betsy Johnson. Senator Johnson entered the meeting, introduced herself, and gave brief background of her career. She noted that she didn't think it was right for "Portlandia"

give a state-wide agenda for Eastern Oregon. She decided to fly out and see what the people in this region are talking about, what the people are doing, and what their needs are. Each person at the table, introduced themselves, went around and vocalized a concern or recommendation to the Senator.

Chair Nelson noted his concern with the HECC and what role they will play with higher education now that each university has a governing board.

Trustee Lund said that EOU might be the only option for some students in this region. Therefore, we should make ourselves a strong competitor.

Trustee Conner is interested in the role the Confederated Tribes will play at EOU. What does EOU offer to them? What is the most compelling reason for students to come? The funding model for community colleges in Oregon makes it difficult for universities to get the amount they need.

Trustee Abel Mendoza asked that the state continue to invest in higher education. Since the demographics in this region are changing, more Hispanics and first generation students will be provided educational experiences and therefore need to be prepared for college.

Addie Beplate recommended that every type of student be included in conversation.

Trustee Pratton referred to a proposed irrigation project adjacent to the Columbia River. A 100,000 square foot piece of fertile land has the potential to produce \$2.3 billion. Yet, the state takes about 30% from the revenue generated. If people can get water to land then they can grow, and generate revenue. We need more educational opportunities to help with the needs of this region.

Trustee George Mendoza focused on cost and tuition and stressed the importance that they be kept low. He said that schools should focus on increasing enrollment and retention and making sure they are mentoring connections for the students. Think about how we can have regional students gain access to education flat funding and then give schools an incentive for graduation; don't hurt students and schools but encourage them to complete degrees. Senator Johnson referred to the motto, "don't do it to us, do it with us."

Provost Sarah Witte said she was overwhelmed by how often agencies and their partners knock on her door and talk about how much they value the colleges in this region, including the community colleges, and fearful they will be cut. The region and local businesses need people with experience in accounting, public relations, etc. Local businesses want and need that in order to thrive. Currently, companies are having to

hire west side employees, and then they leave when loans are paid off. It is important to focus and fulfill the needs of business.

Colleen Dunne-Cascio said that some students are struggling to complete or start their education due to sickness, family or other medical issues. She would like to see the state help those students more and give them the tools to be successful.

Lara Moore mentioned that EOU is cautious and concerned about their funding model but there is room for opportunity.

Trustee Bill Johnson said he serves on a few other committees and boards, and he is concerned with the poverty in this area, and the minimum wage. There needs to be some alternative. Minimum wage goes to Ontario and does not continue into the Idaho region of the Treasure Valley.

President Insko mentioned that EOU has struggled with some leadership instabilities, but with this board, he thinks the university can do a lot better. He asked that as the state legislature thinks about state governance, he likes having local, regional decision making. The more we can take these decisions to the local communities, the better.

Heather Cashell echoed Lara Moore in support of reinvestments in higher education.

Trustee Pat Hinton mentioned a comment the former Interim President Jay Kenton said noting that one of his concerns was for Eastern Oregon and not just EOU. The Eastern Oregon region could be in trouble, economically, if local schools do not provide the opportunities for the region to thrive.

Trustee Martin appreciates the Senator's interest in this area.

Trustee Kerfoot appreciates the idea of the board being an advocate for EOU and online and onsite education, as it is a big interest in this area.

Trustee Brown noted that his own son felt prepared for graduate school after attending EOU. He wants to maintain the small, rural nature of this school. He mentioned a company called Oregon Pearson and Associates, for the teacher/professor qualification process in the state of Oregon.

The faculty representative, DeAnna Timmermann, noted that one size does not fit all and EOU has adult students taking classes so it is challenging for them to graduate in four years. The state should recognize that we need to support our students and other business models which can benefit the university. She also suggested that Amtrak provide train service to La Grande once more.

Secretary Burford shared a story of his godchildren attending EOU, and how their parents are now taking classes here. He said he has been very impressed with his colleagues. With interviews, sometimes it is like rolling dice, but he has been very impressed with the senior level management he has been working with.

Senator Johnson said the character of each board will be different and asked the board to invite her me back to the area. She does not want this to be a single visit and to get a roster of the board members.

Chair Nelson called for a recess at 3:56 p.m. and Senator Johnson left the meeting.

Chair Nelson reconvened the meeting at 4:09 p.m.

President Insko continued the discussion on creating a future for Eastern Oregon University.

President Insko referred to the “squirrel syndrome” meaning it is easy to get distracted with things on campus. A challenge that this board will face is to have an internal focus.

President Insko read the students’ creed which is displayed on a rock outside on campus:

This my college shall help me to honor the truth. Appreciate the beautiful value that I equipped with knowledge and inspired by her ideals, may daily prepare for life’s opportunities.

To this my college I will give fervor, to uphold her traditions, enthusiasm to maintain her sportsmanship, zeal to endear the spirit of friendship found within her halls.

To her I pledge my deep respect, my sincere support, my lasting loyalty. (Presented by the class of 1947)

President Insko asked the student-athletes the other day what “fervor” meant, and not one knew. It means heated passion. There is a lot in the creed that embodies, for him, what this university should be. He began a discussion by asking the board members where do you see your role going forward in this dialogue.

Chair Nelson recommended that this board take a bigger role in lobbying in the state legislature and marketing within the community.

Trustee Kerfoot asked what will the timeline and process of this mission vision and strategic plan be? President Inkso responded that he envisions board members taking an active role in the university by forming our mission vision. The board can provide a perspective that has never been part of this conversation before. Fall convocation for example, is an event he would like the board to attend and engage in conversation with faculty and staff to build a mission vision and strategic plan. We would provide a framework to start the conversation at convocation, and this is just one example. How do you feel about board members attending faculty meetings and engaging with them?

Trustee George Mendoza said that he is interested in listening to and getting to know the faculty, and people on campus better before the board makes those decisions and vision statements. What would the timeline be? Can we get a schedule of some type? Would that be enough input from the board? He also asked to have the board notified when they are tasked for events. Trustee Martin added that it is important to reach out to the faculty and allow them to reach out to us.

Trustee Conner noted that a lot of what we heard from the last president was stellar. Making this machine work, all parts are well oiled, and that communication flows well, is important. We have external communities where we can fundraise. However, as a board we need to be advocates and be champions for this university. It might be meaningful if administration wants to give us each a layer of duties, and schedule meetings where we need to be and give input at, which would have meaning. Trustee George Mendoza said he likes the idea of convocation as a place where the board and the faculty can meet and engage in conversation.

Trustee Chaves noted that in the bylaws, the president makes the plan, and the board approves it. Trustee Lund mentioned that the board members are all on one or more committees, and they are involved in multiple activities where some of the work can be done.

Chair Nelson recommended that this board could create internships, and create relationships with businesses board members are on or affiliated with. Secretary Burford noted that lobbying activities would be something that the governance committee would deliberate over and make recommendations to the board on.

President Inkso noted that EOU has created the center for rural studies. He has already been hit by businesses that wish to start a partnership for the students. What does EOU need to do, to make this relationship between businesses and the students work? We blasted forward with this idea, but did not think about how EOU can deliver with the system, go out to communities and ask for support.

Trustee Brown noted that this board has to be careful and make sure what we are doing is helping the students and not creating slaves job for them. President Insko noted that

campus administration and faculty may come up with a plan and the board may ask, what our role is. And we are not quite sure just yet.

Trustee Kerfoot mentioned that since the president is busy in the house, board members can help with other external things and lobbying.

Trustee Conner said that we are not deal makers or closers, but advocates. Trustee Pratton noted that he likes being on target and being focused. It is important to let people know why we are here, and give board members note cards and talking points to help engage with conversation.

Addie Beplate said that board members can help find ways for people to engage in campus activities.

President Insko said that he could lay out his agenda for the university, but that's not what he wants to do. He wants to engage with the campus community. This board can provide feedback on what they envision the university to be in 5-10 years at a future board meeting.

Chair Nelson said that the campus and board will be looking for direction from the Office of the President. President Insko asked to think about what we want the perception of EOU to be. This conversation could be scheduled for the regular meeting in October.

Trustee Lund mentioned that the morale on campus last year was so low, and we as a board should think of ways to change that for this next year. Trustee Conner said that the tone could change depending on who is invited, like inviting Senator Johnson back for example. President Insko briefly went over his vision for convocation. Trustee Brown recommended that the board reviews the current mission statement to figure out what works, what we already have in place, and what needs to change. He wondered how many board members have read the university's mission statement and said it should be reviewed before changes are made.

Trustee Brown said most presidents have a honeymoon year, and unfortunately, our president is not going to have that. Trustee Brown added that we need diverse thought for growth to occur.

Trustee Lund recommended that our campus move on from the past and focus on what opportunities we have. Trustee Conner said that the conversation sounds like a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis.

Trustee George Mendoza supported the idea of a meet-and-great with the board members and faculty. This would be an opportunity to listen and support each other. He

said that his focus is all about retention and enrollment, and he is willing to help out in any capacity as a board member to increase those numbers.

Trustee Hinton recommended creating 3-4 main elements or selling points the board can use as advocates for the school.

Trustee Conner mentioned that after working for so many bosses we should avoid sounding like “what we were doing previously was not good enough.” As a board we don’t want to show that what the campus was doing in the past was not good enough. It is all about how we frame the conversation.

Trustee Pratton recommended that unless we have a lot to say, don’t say much. He listed off a summary of items the board should be involved with such as; create a positive and inclusive culture; be user friendly, increase enrollment, increase graduation and retention rates, plan for sustainability, look for new markets, improve reputation, and expand political influence.

At the next campus event Trustee Lund recommended asking staff and faculty what they are most proud of with their position at EOU, and what they are most frustrated with. Posing these questions to people and getting responses can help the board gauge the campus culture.

Secretary Burford added that when people don’t know or have gaps of information, they fill them with their fears.

President Insko asked if there were any further comments. Trustee Abel Mendoza said that creating a strategic plan is a messy process, especially if every time you start from scratch. He asked how the university can identify the carrying-capacity of students on campus. Trustee Johnson thinks this conversation has been good. But, asked if this board is focusing on retention, regional issues, or on site issues. It is not clear how the board will help with these issues. This board will all have some ideas, but this board is uncertain where their priorities lie. Trustee Chaves said the committees can help focus those priorities. President Insko said this conversation has been good and wanted to gauge and get responses from questions.

Trustee Conner noted that there are multiple music, theatre and other club and athletic events on campus that board members can attend. Letting board members know about events can optimize that presence and the bigger picture. Trustee Martin requested that this board does something before they lose their zeal and move on to other investments.

President Insko mentioned that EOU’s volleyball team is ranked number one in the cascade conference. EOU is in the process of starting a wrestling program after the state



ear-marked a bill granting the school \$300,000. President Insko says that he enjoys thinking outside the box. For example, he thought about what EOU can do about music, and if EOU approached music the same way it approaches athletics. Therefore, musicians would go compete and the university would have elite musicians, receiving a music scholarship even if they wanted to pursue a math degree. This program would be performance-based like athletics.

Chair Nelson adjourned the meeting at 5:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Tilicki