



EASTERN OREGON  
UNIVERSITY

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK:  
MONDAY MUSINGS

November 25, 2013

Colleagues,

During this week of Thanksgiving, I am taking the opportunity to offer my gratitude to all of you for your dedication and service to our university and the communities we serve.

I am frequently asked two questions in my role as president and they each highlight why I am thankful to be here. The first is “what do I enjoy the most in my position” and the second is “what are the biggest issues facing higher education?” While these may seem unrelated, they have an excellent connection.

My response to the first question is easy: “the people.” This regularly confuses the person who asked, but it is simple to explain. Each of you makes Eastern Oregon University what it is. Your consistent efforts on a daily basis to perform your duties, and to without fail, go beyond what is called for, do not go unnoticed. Our staff members frequently demonstrate creativity and focus in handling issues as they arise; moreover, they anticipate problems and diligently, yet quietly, work to prevent them from ever occurring. Our teaching faculties are continually energizing their students with a zest for learning and discovery, propelling them to experience many adventures they may have never realized without their mentorship. Any visitor to our campus, or to one of our sites and centers throughout the state, cannot but notice and appreciate the passion we all bring to teaching, learning and service.

Our community greatly benefits from the numerous activities and vibrancy that is brought on by this passion. Be it through events directly sponsored by Eastern, or through the numerous volunteer and leadership positions occupied by our faculty and staff, it is clear that we make an incredible and dramatic difference in the lives of countless individuals every day.

Through your efforts and commitment, we ensure and encourage a sense of pride and community that cannot be replicated anywhere – and it is this community I am grateful for.

The second question regarding the biggest issues facing higher education, is one people almost expect the answer to be funding or governmental control. My

answer is a little different, (not that funding isn't an issue!), but equally as short. I also often receive a quizzical look when I say, "loss of community."

As stated by Frank Rhodes, the former president of Cornell University, "Without community, knowledge becomes idiosyncratic. The lone learner, studying in isolation, is vulnerable to narrowness, dogmatism, and untested assumption; pursued in community, learning will be expansive and informed, contested by opposing interpretations, leavened by differing experience, and refined by alternative viewpoints."

It is each of you who reinforce the notion of community. Your daily activities, both professional and personal, strengthen the sense of connections at our university and throughout the towns and neighborhoods in which we live. Our associations with our students are meaningful as they engage them in broader contexts and bring in larger issues for examination. Because we are ingrained within our own communities, we are able to provide a classroom experience that sets the foundation to put these concepts into practice in real and consequential ways.

I often hear of stories from people within our community or from someone who has been impacted by our commitment to education, and it reinforces in my mind the important role Eastern plays, and more critically, the individual importance each one of you contributes to our larger successes.

So, yes, the favorite part of my job is you—the people of Eastern. And during this time of "giving thanks," I wish to express gratitude to all of you for your work, your dedication and most importantly, your passion for our university. I am ever grateful to be a part of this community of scholars, learners and doers.

When we return from the Thanksgiving observance, in partnership with ARAMARK we will be co-hosting our Annual Holiday Reception on Tuesday, Dec. 3, from 4 to 6 p.m. in the Gilbert Center. I hope you will be able to attend so Cindy and I can properly thank you for all that you have done and wish you a wonderful holiday season.

Please have a tremendous Thanksgiving and I hope you all take this time to provide thanks to others around you.

### **The Star of Eastern Oregon University**

This week's "Star of Eastern" is JoLyn Scott, and the entire Registrar's Staff for that matter! The following is an excerpt from a note I received regarding JoLyn:

*I would like to nominate JoLyn Scott, Administrative Program Specialist in our Registrar's Office, as a Star of Eastern. Covering her regular duties with graduation applications and other key duties, JoLyn has also maintained primary responsibility for our DegreeWorks implementation, our degree audit and student advising platform, one of the most important tools for student success we are currently working on. Along with her deeply committed colleagues in our Registrar's Office, JoLyn has worked ceaselessly to make sure that our students and faculty have what they need to function effectively, despite the myriad of day-to-day stresses and challenges facing our entire campus. That she and*

*the rest of the Registrar's staff have been able to do so is all the more remarkable, since we have not had a Registrar in place all fall term.*

*For her commitment to getting the job done no matter how deep the backlog or how challenging the conditions, JoLyn is truly a Star of Eastern.*

### **Kudos and Miscellaneous**

If you are able, I hope you will join me and many other members of our university in making a donation to those less fortunate by selecting a tag from one of the Giving Trees located in Hoke, Loso, Badgley and Inlow. After selecting a tag, purchase a gift and follow the wrapping instructions on the tag. Bring the gift with the tag attached to my office in Inlow Hall, Room 216 by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 10. If you have any questions, please contact Heather Cashell at [hcashell@eou.edu](mailto:hcashell@eou.edu) or 541-962-3512.

The Observer's 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Holiday Music Festival is right around the corner and will feature more than 200 local performers. Nine different EOU and community groups will take the stage at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 7, and 3 p.m. Dec. 8 in McKenzie Theatre in Loso Hall. Koza Family Dental sponsors the "gala" event and all proceeds support music funds held in the EOU Foundation. In addition, the Community School of the Arts, a partnership between ArtsEast and EOU, will hold a silent auction in the Loso lobby to benefit community arts programs for children and adults. For more information contact Peter Wordelman at 541-962-3352 or by e-mail [pwordelm@eou.edu](mailto:pwordelm@eou.edu).

Again, I wish all of you a bountiful Thanksgiving holiday.

Sincerely,

Bob

Bob Davies  
President