



EASTERN OREGON
UNIVERSITY

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK:
MONDAY MUSINGS

February 17, 2014

Colleagues,

Over the weekend and continuing for the next few days, I have the pleasure of participating in a working group of presidents from other regional state universities and colleges from around the country. In total, there are nearly 25 of us collectively representing 17 states and our institutions range in size from 2,000 students to nearly 20,000. It is a good cross-section.

Our discussions cover a wide range of topics: student achievement and outcomes; uses of technology in course and program delivery; enrollment pressures; declining budgets and state support; the increasing use of performance measures and outcomes; curricular changes and trends; federal and state legislative changes and the impact on our respective and collective universities; etc.

The significant upheaval in our state with the pending governance changes is well-known, so my colleagues very much wanted to discuss this as well and try to comprehend the ambiguity of the situation.

From these discussions, it is clear all of our institutions are facing immense challenges, and through these challenges we are also working to seize opportunities to position our universities for continued success.

One of the individuals attending these meetings has served nearly two decades as president at three different universities. He made a comment to me that was insightful and put the issues in perspective. He stated, "In my 20 plus years of leadership, I have never dealt with the maelstrom of changes Oregon is going through – significantly declining state support, an inordinate amount of intervention and dissembling of system without a clear pathway forward. Therefore, in such a time of ambiguity, I have always believed that you can either wait and see what happens and deal with the affects of decisions made on your behalf, or you can chart a path and effect the direction of your university through your actions and decisions. Be affected by others or effect the outcomes that are desirable for your university."

It is with that spirit in mind that I continue to believe that while we face significant challenges – financial, enrollment, governance, etc. – it is up to us to determine our course of action and make the necessary decisions that will not only stabilize our University, but will ensure we retain our institutional autonomy and identity. We have, as many of you remind me, persevered

through many challenging times in our history. And, we have done this because of our focus on serving students and our region.

As we move forward through our current challenges, not everyone will agree with every decision, but it is important that we work together and remain focused on the importance of our efforts and the impact we have on our students and region.

Thank you all for your continued support and dedication to our students and our University.

The Star of Eastern Oregon University

There have been many times over the past several years when, due to a crisis, tragedy or emergency, we have needed to communicate quickly, clearly and effectively with the larger University community. These events usually do not take place during the most convenient of times - it may be 6 a.m. when we need to close the campus or a late evening collaboration from across the state. It's not just one e-mail to send out, but critical information to be released to our students, faculty and staff, the media, updating websites and changing information hotline messages just to start, and includes then handling incoming calls and e-mails, fixing bugs in the alert system and finding new solutions to help make this important communication take place.

On each of those occasions, we have relied on the assistance of Laura "Scoop" Hancock, our communications coordinator, to help get the word out and each time she is asked, the response is about what she can do to help. She has performed with grace under pressure, professionalism and flexibility and during her regular working hours continually helps send out news releases, manage several websites and EOU-Infoline and writes and edits various publications and many of our marketing pieces. For these reasons and her ongoing commitment to supporting Eastern, Laura Hancock is this week's Star of Eastern.

For Your Consideration and Action:

To paraphrase Dr. Grigsby's note on East-Talk: "February is food drive month for state employees. We're **90 percent down** from last year. If everyone on campus can bring even one item of food this week and next, we would still end up down 75 percent or so, but at least we would reach the numbers of those students canvassing neighborhoods last term of around 600-700 lbs.

The local food banks are increasingly strapped. They have had to reduce the amount of food they give out to families, even as the demand has increased. La Grande and surrounding areas are still suffering, unemployment benefits have been cut, as have food stamps – Oregon will lose about \$54 million in the Farm Bill passed by Congress. Anyone who has ever wondered where next week's food was coming from, or who had to skip meals to feed children, understands personally.

If bringing food from home is hard to remember, there are other options – donations of money or payroll deduction. If you buy coffee in town or from Mac's, and you can donate one cup for each week of the month (let's say \$12) that would equate to 60 lbs. of food that the food bank can purchase. To anyone who requests a payroll deduction form, they will personally deliver it to your office."

As part of this effort, Wednesday at 7 p.m. our students will read their original works of poetry at Joe Beans to raise awareness and food for those in need of assistance and support. Admission is a donation of a canned or dried food. For more information visit www.eou.edu/news-press/roundhouse-reading-fights-hunger.

Kudos and Miscellaneous

Our men's and women's basketball teams will play their final home games of the season this weekend. They will compete against Northwest University and Evergreen State College on Friday and Saturday respectively. The women start at 5:30 p.m. and the men at 7:30. On Saturday, we will also celebrate the accomplishments of the seniors on each team.

Congratulations to the men's and women's indoor track teams. Over the weekend four individuals qualified for the NAIA National Indoor meet: Hans Roelle, Damion Flores, Isaac Updike and Kadie Booth. Talitha Fagen qualified in the pole vault last week when she set a school record. This past weekend she broke her own record by clearing 3.7 meters (12 feet, 1.5 inches).

Last week I attended our theatre department's production of "Rabbit Hole," which was the directorial debut of Heather Tomlinson, assistant professor of theatre and costume designer. The cast included five talented student actors and the play was masterfully done, delivering an important message in dealing with grief of the death of child.

Portland Opera To Go is on campus this week conducting workshops and individual lessons with our music students. The troupe will perform an English language adaptation of Puccini's "La Bohème" Tuesday at 7 p.m. in McKenzie Theatre in Loso Hall. Visit www.eou.edu/news-press/portland-opera-la-boheme for details.

The next colloquium is scheduled for Feb. 27 with Rebecca Hartman, associate professor of history. Her presentation, "Trailer Queens: Images of Gender, Class and Leisure in Mid-Century Mobile Homes Advertising," begins at 4 p.m. in Ackerman Hall, Room 210.

Last week's colloquium with Amanda Villagomez, assistant professor of education, was on "Fostering and Sustaining Adolescent Literacy" and was extremely well done and insightful. Dr. Villagomez shared her research findings using a qualitative approach based on profiles of young readers to determine ways to "engage and sustain" them beyond middle school. This initiated a fascinating discussion, as pointed out by the participants, as her work and efforts in this area directly impacts our efforts at EOU.

Have a tremendous week.

Sincerely,

Bob

Bob Davies
President