



EASTERN OREGON
UNIVERSITY

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK:
MONDAY MUSINGS

November 18, 2013

Colleagues,

Over the past month, we have had many discussions on the possible governance models for our university and the other three regional and technical universities. These forums have been extremely useful and insightful in providing ideas about the various strengths and weaknesses of each model. Furthermore, I have had multiple personal conversations with numerous people that have provided a great deal of information and conveyed many feelings about the prospects of the models.

It is clear many individuals are very passionate for or against one of the models. This is also reflected in our online survey, (which I freely admit is not scientific, nor will be the tool to make a final decision), showing fairly equal support for an institutional board or a consortium board, and the affiliate model receiving support of about 15 percent.

Beyond the numbers, all three models have ardent positives and rampant negatives, which is expected, as there is no "perfect" model. What is also clear, and again is no surprise, is that the people who have responded to the survey and/or who I have talked with in regard to the various models are very interested in the continued success of EOU and our students.

To assist in these efforts, a State Board of Higher Education task force is working with the four universities in developing various models under each of the scenarios. This task force, through the input and recommendations from the presidents, will make a report and proposal to the legislative University Governance Committee. Through this process, while receiving input from you and members of our community, I am talking directly with the other three presidents because while we indeed have the opportunity to make our own recommendation, what the three other universities ultimately decide will also impact our direction.

To me, the challenge rests in positioning our university in the best manner to serve students and our region. Each of the models addresses this goal in different ways and at the same time poses a degree of risk in the forthcoming changes to the manner in which the state of Oregon will oversee higher education with the empowerment of the Higher Education Coordinating Council, and the granting of further powers to the Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB).

An institutional board would clearly be focused on the needs of EOU; however, will we have the “political juice” to carry our agenda and is the cost of such an approach justifiable? A consortium board would reduce the costs of an institutional board and forge political ties, but will we receive the necessary advice and leadership from such a board? An affiliate model could produce a different “brand” and possible strong leveraging point for us; however, decision-making will be conducted farther away and rest with a board lacking a direct connection to our university. The hybrid approach of the institutional and consortium boards is intriguing as it combines the best of the two and mitigates the weaknesses, yet it is also built on a common agenda. What would occur if, for whatever reason, that common ground were lost?

None of these models are a “silver bullet” or perfect solution. The decision, too, rests on not only what is best for EOU at this point in time, but also over the next decade and possibly beyond. With your input and advice, I am weaving through all of these questions. Later this week, I will be meeting with the legislative committee, the State Board of Higher Education task force and the other three presidents. As things develop, I will be sure to inform you.

I appreciate all of your comments and suggestions on this very important decision facing our university.

The Star of Eastern Oregon University

Following is a recent submission to the “We’re Listening” page about this week’s “Star of Eastern,” Lyle Henderson:

I am pleased to nominate Lyle Henderson as a Star of Eastern. Lyle's work as an analyst programmer – along with the work of his colleagues throughout IT and our other administrative services areas – is largely transparent to our larger university community and often goes both unnoticed and unappreciated. Lyle's commitment to EOU and to his responsibilities in IT deserves both notice and appreciation. Lyle's knowledge and experience form the foundation for his work as an analyst programmer, and he maintains the highest degree of professionalism in his expectations for himself and his work. Beyond his technical qualities and commitment, though, Lyle's finest qualities center on his unfailing ability to go the extra mile, to ask questions, and to encourage his colleagues across functional areas, helping him to better understand and serve others. His ability to focus on getting the work done and setting aside distractions is remarkable, given the constant challenges our campus and our IT staff in particular have met over the past few years. Lyle stands as a fine example to us all and is truly a Star of Eastern.

Kudos and Miscellaneous

Congratulations to our football team for ending the season on a successful note over Montana Western, bringing their total wins to six. In the most recent national poll, they were ranked #25.

Our volleyball team also ended their season over the weekend and was extremely successful, posting a 25-6 record and finishing just outside the top 25. Congratulations

to junior Casey Loper for being named Cascade Conference player of the year. She is also a top-ranked barrel racer and goat-tying competitor!

The men's cross country team finished second in the Cascade Conference Meet, and based on their overall season, qualified for the NAIA National Meet that will be held in Lawrence, Kansas.

Today is the beginning of International Education Week and there is full slate of events and activities. Go to www.eou.edu/news-press/international-education-week-2 for details.

Congratulations to Kenn Wheeler and to all who performed in and supported the benefit concert last Saturday. The event was based on Professor Wheeler's career spanning nearly 40 years of performing and directing. All proceeds from the event support a scholarship fund for our returning theatre students.

Thank you all for your dedication and support of Eastern and our students.

Respectfully,

Bob

Bob Davies
President