



EASTERN OREGON
UNIVERSITY

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK:
MONDAY MUSINGS

April 28, 2014

Colleagues,

This Wednesday, April 30 at 3:30 p.m. in Huber Auditorium, the provost and I will hold a University Hall with faculty, students and staff to release the draft of the update to our Sustainability Plan.

Over the past five weeks, many individuals have been spending a great deal of time focused, working diligently and creatively in compiling and interpreting data, drawing preliminary conclusions and making recommendations that have become part of the drafting of the update to the Sustainability Plan. Through many conversations—both formal and informal—we have sought additional input and ideas. In addition, incoming Interim President Jay Kenton has provided a great deal of insights and recommendations to our efforts. It has not been, nor should it be, an easy task.

As I have written on this subject to you many times over the past year, highlighting the key fiscal aspects each term after the “fourth week” enrollment numbers are finalized, we all should be aware of the fiscal realities of our University based on the significant declines we have seen in our student credit hours. As you know, from the reports I have received and forwarded to you, we are down over 10 percent in credit hours. As we look toward next year, we are projecting an additional decrease of 10 percent in credit hours. There are many reasons for this change, but primarily it can be explained that EOU, like many other universities, is returning to enrollment numbers that existed prior to the great recession. As a result of this, to properly position EOU for the next five years, our efforts have been focused on reducing our budgets by \$4 million over the next two years.

Once the draft plan is released, as we have done in the past, we expect to receive many ideas, suggestions and alterations to the plan. We not only expect this, we encourage this dialog to occur as it will—as it has in the past—lead to better decisions and a set of recommendations that will be implemented.

In making these recommendations, we are very aware of the human element. We ask that while this will be an emotional time, that we all remain professional and compassionate. The decisions that have to be made are difficult for all and the impacts are far reaching. We, as a University, have limited resources and unfortunately, over the last five years, like each of the public universities, have not received—based on the services we provide to our region and the state—full investment from the state. While investment for EOU and the other regional universities may improve in the forthcoming

years (and I do think it will) we must deal with the challenges that are before us now, which are shrinking enrollments and corresponding declines in revenues.

The draft plan deals with many of the fundamental structural issues and I believe provides a firm foundation for the next president and provost. This foundation, when fully implemented, will create a baseline of services and scope of programs that will match the projected size of our University and the needs of our regions. In doing so, in a relatively short time period additional funds will be available to offset unexpected cost increases and/or unanticipated declines in revenues. Furthermore, it will provide funding that can and should be used for strategic investments based on the needs of the University and our students. However to get to this point, as suggested by many, we must reduce deeper than our immediate needs and we have followed that advice.

During these times of ambiguity and unease, I appreciate the respect many of you have shown to your fellow colleagues and the assistance you have provided. With the release of the draft plan this week, I hope we will maintain the professionalism and the commitment to our students you have demonstrated in the five years that I have had the privilege of working with you.

Thank you for your continued commitment to our students especially during these times. It is sincerely and greatly appreciated and does not go unnoticed.

Star of Eastern Oregon University

Over the past six months, EOU through Eastern Promise has hosted more than 700 fifth-graders, arranged nearly 15 Professional Learning Communities, generated over 5,000 student credit hours and seen more than 1,000 high school students participate in at least one college readiness event. At the heart of this work is Laurie Powell, who has steadfastly put her energies and soul into the success of this program, and thus, our regional high schools students, in generating and encouraging them to set a goal to earn a university degree and proactively attain the required skills and determination to follow through with this goal. Over the next several years, the impact of Laurie's work will be witnessed by EOU as more of our regional students will attend our University and be better prepared for the rigors of higher education.

Miscellaneous

The final Ars Poetica Lecture Series of this academic year is Thursday, May 1 and will feature Justin Hocking, sharing his widely acclaimed new book, "The Great Floodgates of the Wonderworld." The reading starts at 7:30 p.m. in Pierce Library. Find out more at www.eou.edu/news-press/ars-poetica-hocking.

The annual Art Center Gala Extraordinaire is Saturday, May 3 at 7 p.m. and features a four-course dinner, live auction, opening of a collaborative exhibition "By Post" and musical guests Hillfolk Noir from Boise. James Long, EOU employee and art major, created this year's Membership Print, a benefit for those who join at the \$50 level. Tickets to the gala are \$35 and available online at artcenterlagrande.org/events/gala-extraordinaire or at the center located at the corner of 4th and Penn. For more details call Annie Eskelin at 541-624-2800 or e-mail Susan Murrell at smurrell@eou.edu.

Thank you for all that you do for EOU.

Sincerely,

Bob

Bob Davies
President