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PRESS RELEASE

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EOU Board approved budget, tuition for 2020-21

LA GRANDE, Ore. – Eastern Oregon University’s Board of Trustees held its final meeting of the academic year via Zoom on June 4 and approved a preliminary budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

Trustee Dixie Lund opened the meeting with a motion of gratitude for EOU students and employees and their collective response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



“A heartfelt expression of gratitude to the employees and students of EOU for their heart, service, leadership, creativity, resilience and grit as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic,” Lund said. “This board has a deeply felt appreciation for all of the work that has been done.”

On a larger scale, statewide and national government response to the coronavirus will have lasting impacts for public universities, Vice President for University Advancement Tim Seydel said. He reported university, state and federal updates alongside Vice President for Finance and Administration Lara Moore.

“Public universities are often hit hardest in recessions, but we are advocating that this is actually the time to invest in graduates who are workforce ready,” Moore said.

Capital construction projects also present an economic recovery opportunity and can provide local employment while completing needed improvements and maintenance. EOU collaborates with other Oregon public universities and the Higher Education Coordinating Committee to make recommendations for construction funding.

EOU received \$579,000 for the institution and the same amount to be awarded directly to students through the federal CARES Act. So far, about \$300,000 has been distributed to EOU

students. As the university looks toward resuming on-campus activities in the fall, these funds will continue to be available.

Moore also presented two tuition and fee proposals for 2020-21. After extended discussion, trustees approved the proposal with lower tuition increases. Under this plan, on-campus resident tuition will increase by 4.2% per student credit hour, a difference of \$7 per credit. Mandatory enrollment fees for on-campus resident students go up by 5.5%, and overall cost of attendance, which is based on a student taking 45 credits and living on campus with a medium meal plan, increases by 3.8%.

“Note that whenever we have to raise tuition, we also increase our fee remissions budget, which will be at \$3.03 million for 2020-21 so we can be responsive to student needs,” Moore said. “We’re using every lever in our toolbox to soften the impact of COVID-19.”

By holding tuition increases at a minimum, EOU will have to use about \$2.6 million from its fund balance and also cut approximately \$1.5 million from its Education and General Budget to offset anticipated State funding reductions.

The preliminary general budget was approved, as well as the operating budget, which includes auxiliary functions such as housing, dining and athletics. As variables such as enrollment and state funding come into focus over the next several months, these preliminary budgets will be finalized. Trustees will approve final budgets for FY21 in the fall.

Four trustees will likely have left the board by that time. Staff representative Helen Moore, faculty representative Gary Keller, student representative Quentin Durfee and at-large trustee Jer Pratton all will conclude their terms of service and rotate off the Board over the summer. Brad Stephens was nominated to continue serving for another term.

Although Governor Kate Brown has not yet approved a student or at-large nominee, faculty member Karyn Gomez and staff member Danny Bailey have been nominated by the Governor to join the board for two-year terms beginning in August.

“Thank you for the opportunity to fulfill a lifelong goal by serving on a board like this,” Keller said. “To the incoming trustees, you’re looking at a great group of people who make a difference at the university.”

In other business, the board also voted to begin investigating an in-depth presidential evaluation process that must be conducted every five years. This will be the first time EOU’s independent board has embarked on such a process, and it’s anticipated to take at least a year to complete. The board also completed its mandated self-evaluation, and shared governance leaders gave their final reports.

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