

On [stability and continuity](#): Questioning Board Leadership's intent to stay the outgoing president's course

Continuity (of administrative focus):

Context: There is little evidence beyond outgoing president and the board leadership claims either that continuing down the same business-driven, cost-cutting path is perceived by the majority of the workforce as desired or successful ([student input is seldom sought or considered](#)), or that the plummeting morale, running counter to Strategic Plan [Goal 4, Objective 1, KPI 1](#), supports board leadership's claim of 'stability.' In two years, the Board has yet to publicly acknowledge the low scores leadership received from the 2020 Great Colleges to Work For Survey, or the [University Council's recommendations](#) in any serious way. There was a very brief response from the outgoing president in June (pg 4, '[GCTWF update](#)') that the UC was promised would be more seriously addressed in summer cabinet meetings and board retreats. No such response was received.

Evidence and documentation:

- OPM (contract with online program manager Wiley/Learning House)—President sought approval through [circumvention of shared governance](#); Board approved.
- The premise that such a growth model, where online enrollment subsidizes rebuilding on campus enrollments, [can be implemented without compromising quality](#), is either dishonest or naïve.
- Online enrollment projections proved wildly optimistic
 - Actuals vs targets: [On campus](#) / [Off campus](#)
 - Dec '21, [2013-2021](#) see 'totals' tab in the linked spreadsheet
 - See [video from Board mtg](#) (16 min. in length)
 - Board OPM discussion item ([Feb '18](#); [Apr '19](#)) pitching an unprecedented 525% increase in online enrollment as a realistic goal (growth in the first two years: < 10%).
 - A contract for specific, targeted online programs (SOU did this) would have avoided the revenue drag tied to every online tuition dollar received (for recruitment and retention services that have underperformed), for every online student enrolled after January 2020.
 - Incoming Board Chair seems to incredulously suggest that there may be little connection between leadership and [enrollment declines](#).
 - Now in October '22, administrators, including deans, are claiming that no one ever thought a 500% growth rate was realistic in the first place. This is recent logic, though, and ignores the fact that the humble growth rates of the OPM's first two years, and some bare minimum to remain contractually obligated, would have ever been enough to justify a unilateral decision that marginalized the voice of faculty, who would pay the price for failure. The original bait was used to sell the OPM, and expectations subsequently lowered as overall online enrollment stagnated. It is easier to claim 'success' if the so-called 'targets' are kept from public view.
- Micromanagement of curricula to meet Wiley's requirement of 15 fully online 'contract' programs—faculty no longer have final say on curriculum development, have been forced to increasingly accommodate adjunct instructors teaching by the course, despite the fact that student-faculty working relationships represent the heart and soul of the university and its unique mission.
- EOU may consider leaving the WES contract in December or January ('23, [page 6](#)), because it has been a grave disappointment and revenue sink, and has saddled colleges with programs promoted by administration with little faculty input or support, where expertise on campus was lacking, and where adjuncts will be hired. The President and Board have regularly dismissed [questions](#) and [criticisms](#) of the decision to engage a for-profit OPM for all online curricula.
- Outgoing president seeks and secures Board approval for 4.99% increase in [tuition](#), and a 3% increase in [room and board](#). It is claimed these increases will have a positive impact on all students, including those historically

underserved. These increases risk being counterproductive, and could potentially lead to further enrollment declines, especially among our pride and joy—first generation and underserved student populations.

- The outgoing president has never provided data on the revenue performance pre- and post-Wiley/TLH contract, which included a considerable fee, over 1/3 of every online tuition dollar paid, for recruitment and retention services. This despite the fact that many of the longstanding online programs were seeing enrollment increases when the contract went into effect in January 2020. For instance, considering the growth in enrollment required simply to break even with pre-contract revenue, the outgoing president has been at best selectively forthcoming over the last 2 ½ years about the revenue and the overall performance of the for-profit contractor. Have our existing programs continued to grow, or is it possible that Wiley prioritized their market research-tested contract programs for recruitment and retention efforts? Is there evidence that EOU administrators have been monitoring their performance?
- Despite the digital badges that occupy the bottom of EOU's home page, Oregon's Rural University is being transformed by current leadership into something more akin to an [online diploma mill](#). GCTWF survey results on senior leadership [suggest](#) a different, longer-view continuity must be considered, one including a return to our higher education culture and roots. The for-profit partnership has dramatically underperformed.
- Pres. Insko's [own words](#): "EOU is a leader in providing high quality programs to online students," said EOU President Tom Insko. "This partnership will allow us to significantly increase enrollments and expand market awareness of the great online programs offered and grow the number of lives impacted by an EOU education. Our goal is to be serving 5,000 students through online programs by 2029."

Key initiative: The field house

Context: The field house was sold as a high-profile example of EOU as the region's 'economic engine', as the largest indoor track in the state, capable of holding events and generating revenue for the University, as well as for those in the community who would benefit from regular events, especially during the tourism industry's 'off-season' for La Grande. The planning process apparently underestimated the need to work with city planners, the project was \$3 million under budget, and an ad hoc committee informed the president of this at the time. Only those who bothered to dig into Board meeting materials would have been aware of a process of lowering expectations and scapegoating that occurred to explain how a marquee project was downgraded to a practice facility with offices and some lab space. There was never any question that the facility would benefit faculty and students, the issues had to do with avoiding any details that would call into question the Board's claims of success and leadership of the administration.

Evidence and documentation:

- Originally intended in part to provide [economic development for the community](#), and was sold as the largest indoor track facility in the state.
- [Ethical questions were raised](#) over how money was procured.
- At least \$3 million [underbudgeted](#)—how to quickly make up a \$3 million shortfall ([pg 2](#))?
- \$3 million shortfall led to some unusual proposals. The track ... is not regulation, and for a year a [horseshoe design prevailed](#) (now it has been shortened, is not regulation for official meets, but will be an oval shape)
- Deliverable: A \$12 million practice facility, lost opportunities by failing to deliver on key components for community's hospitality industry (not to mention regional youth athletics and revenue from hosting events).
- President then sought, with no public discussion, [to build a baseball stadium](#) (34:50) on the EOU footprint, though EOU has invested in Pioneer Park. His claim was that a baseball stadium was always in the master plan, although a search of the 2012 document [turned up no references](#). The decision was announced by the capital projects manager in a University Council Projects update. The decision had been made before the president had ever sought buy-in from shared governance, or even informed the campus community.

- The field house would have been a high profile exhibit under strategic plan goal 6, objective 3 ('Expand revenue from alternative sources such as grants, sponsorships, partnerships, and alternative uses of campus property'), had missteps in planning been identified early on, owned, addressed and resolved.

(Stability of administrative focus) The fund balance

Context: Board leadership has been fixated on the university's cash reserves, the fund balance. To his credit, Pres. Insko—with considerable help from interim President Jay Kenton prior to his hiring by the Board—did re-build the fund balance from the mismanagement of the Davies tenure. However, he has grown the fund balance beyond the advised range, with the encouragement and support of the Board (see strategic plan goal 6, objective 1). Meanwhile, academic programs have seen cuts, retiring faculty not replaced or their FTE reassigned to another program, adjuncts hired at unprecedented rates (presumably to fulfill the WES/EOU contract conditions). The outgoing president continued to cut costs based on enrollment and financial considerations that divided the faculty and forced a competitive environment upon colleges and departments, based on the promise of growing enrollments, mostly online. This dynamic helps explain how building of the fund balance led to low morale among programs and faculty.

Evidence and documentation:

- Outgoing president touted cash reserves to the Board and campus. One regular routine was to portray unrealistic scenarios about how long the University would be able to operate were all other sources of revenue stopped. This doomsday logic doesn't reflect how universities are supported through a variety of funding streams. But the fund balance is not intended to be an investment fund.
- Fund balance reserves were not the result of salting away some small percentage of revenue from enrollment growth—there has been none. The promise of surplus revenue from online enrollment growth never materialized. Fund balance growth relied on cutting costs, in both academic programs and support staff. Meanwhile, the president, provost and deans were focused on promoting and gaining approval of Wiley's fully online programs as per a contract, signed by the president, approved by the board, with no faculty buy-in.
- The metric of 'instructional costs per course' was front and center in the administration's spreadsheet-driven decision calculus, which encourages larger class sizes, and less expensive instructors. This management philosophy represented a short-term business strategy versus a long-term strategy of investment in instructional capacity, faculty longevity, and institutional continuity. Morale has suffered, but what was successful, apparently, at the level of the state government and HECC, was a highly self-serving administrative and board narrative of leadership and success.
- Outsourcing to for-profits—These included [Wiley/Learning House](#), [EAB](#), [Crucial Conversations](#), [Revature](#), consultants to promote and help deans shepherd Wiley online contract programs through the approval process. Unspecified amounts of public funds have been spent on marketing while EOU has administrators whose work it is to market the institution. Funds paid to corporations and various private consultants (such as were used to develop unsolicited, online masters-level programs in counseling and social work) have not been enumerated to the campus community, but are certainly substantial.

Rewarding a questionable narrative of success and leadership with extra pay

Context: Board leadership has rewarded Pres. Insko with regular pay raises and bonuses. Pres. Insko, though a longtime La Grande resident, also received a housing allowance (generally reserved for those upper administrators facing relocation expenses), and transportation allowance. It is not clear whether transportation allowances are treated as income or he submitted receipts, like the rest of the campus community, when incurring costs. Trustee sentiment on the amounts awarded was far from unanimous ([pg 3](#)).

Evidence and documentation:

- Chair Chaves has unilaterally given outgoing president over last two years ‘one-time’ bonuses and ‘meritorious achievement’ awards totaling \$38,500 ([2020](#) and [2022](#)). *Ex officio* trustee Insko recommends Mr. Chaves as interim co-president after [accepting a lumber industry executive position](#) in Wilsonville.
- Chair Chaves justifies the presidential salary increases by comparing EOU’s presidential salary to those of its sister institutions ([bottom of page 3](#)). EOU’s enrollment is well below any of those institutions, and the outgoing president and board leadership are discovering just how difficult it is to narrow the enrollment gap.
- Of particular note ([pg 3](#)): “EOU and Wiley Learning House successfully launched in Winter Term and, to date, **enrollment and student success outcomes have exceeded targets** (this is untrue, at least using the metric pitched by the president to the board: FTE). The **agreement with Wiley Learning House came at just the right time considering the current and upcoming COVID-19 financial pressures**. It is virtually a certainty that marketing expenditures would have been reduced. Instead, Wiley Learning House is continuing their meaningful marketing of EOU online.” The actual enrollment versus projections as measures of FTE were not shared with shared governance [until December 2021](#), two years into the contract. In addition, at the very time when EOU’s longstanding and successful online programs would have been well-positioned to compete for students amid a pandemic, the president and board leadership signed a contract, without seeking faculty buy-in, which reduced tuition revenue by over 1/3 for each student Wiley successfully recruited (and we know how that [has turned out](#)).
- President Insko was allowed by the Board leadership to sit in on discussions of his compensation and considerations of pay increases and the annual ‘one-time’ bonuses. The Nov 2019 [presidential compensation document](#), likely a product of the Board’s Governance Committee, is a representative sample of how the president took credit for his initiatives. For instance, the ‘student success mentors,’ not faculty, were prominently responsible for higher retention. ‘Underperforming’ academic programs (based on enrollment) were being ‘addressed,’ an allusion to faculty accountability. And yet an inexperienced president was held harmless for steady enrollment declines.
- Chair Chaves’ [letter](#) of Feb. ‘22, justifying \$16,000 in bonuses and awards, plus a doubling of the president’s base salary annual rate of increase, included numerous misrepresentations of Pres. Insko’s performance and popularity [at his own institution](#). Leadership *did not even seek input from all trustees*, but only chairs of the three board committees. The ‘comprehensive’ evaluation also cherry-picked those chosen to provide feedback. This is a signature tactic used by both the president and board to limit input from constituents. Board leadership has yet to acknowledge the low morale across the institution suggested by the GCTWF survey(s). Then-Chair Chaves’ recommendation bore little resemblance to the state of the organization as experienced by faculty and staff on the ground, or represented in the GCTWF surveys.

(Engagement of stakeholders) State and health of the organization—GCTWF data

Context: Goal 4, Objective 1, KPIs 1 and 2 were designed to measure EOU’s commitment to being a ‘great place to work.’ When the results from campus respondents suggested EOU was located well near the bottom of responding institutions in its class (42), far from the ‘honor roll’ categories and any other less comprehensive recognition, they were ignored by both Administration and Board leadership. There has never been any public discussion outside of University Council meetings. It has been two years since the 2020 results were received, the 2022 survey results are in and show some changes, but on average no improvements, and even lower scores for senior leadership. Further, even chairs and supervisors—the lone bright spot in 2020—scored lower, perhaps suggesting the pressures of a top-down decision-making apparatus, imported from the private sector by Pres. Insko, and used as a talking point by then Board Chair David Nelson, justifying his hiring of Pres. Insko in 2015.

Evidence and documentation:

- Low morale in every area but upper administration, exodus of talent among the ranks of staff, faculty and administration
 - [Average response summaries](#) show greater representation in the negative columns throughout;
 - This table shows [respondent perceptions of the institution](#), note the color coding;
 - [Page 4](#) and [page 5](#) of results provide a representative sample of responses by job category related to morale.
- [Leadership crisis](#)—president, senior administration, and the board leadership that has supported him, to the point of heeding his advice on the interim co-presidency proposal, even as the culmination of his job search leads to a sudden career move in the midst of an enrollment crisis.
- Faculty-administration relationship is [badly frayed](#). Any president that marginalizes the faculty, given their central role in the functioning of a university, is almost assured to create a toxic and counterproductive work environment (see [items 36 and 59](#)). Tables 16 (pg 25) and 18 (pg 27) in the [UC Report](#) illustrate the general sense of where problems lie, and how much agreement exists between campus constituent groups. An administration that alienates faculty risks irreparable damage to the culture of higher education. The Board leadership has repeatedly ignored or dismissed pleas from faculty to provide appropriate independent oversight, or to open channels of communication without the filter of the president and upper administrators.
- Pres. Insko declined to give classified staff representation on the ‘cabinet plus,’ despite [UC support](#).
- GCTWF ’22 summarized data [show no overall improvement](#). Such ‘continuity’ is not sustainable.
- President Insko created a ‘[leadership chart](#),’ which featured the president at the top of every page but one, including academic affairs. Individual names are listed for most every position, right down to the custodial staff, and yet the astute reader is challenged to find the seven boxes out of 26 pages that represent ‘faculty,’ and wonder how CAHSS, COE and COB operate with only 15 faculty each. STMHS has 39, according to the chart, and three library faculty are mentioned by name. Symbolic perhaps of the president’s micromanagement style—asserting leadership of every office—and of efforts to diminish the profile of faculty at the institution.

(Continuity/Stability of Administrative focus) Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access

Context: The President’s home page is replete with lofty goals for diversity, equity, and inclusion. These references should not be mistaken for actual progress toward addressing systemic racism or making our BIPOC students feel safe and supported on campus and in the community.

Evidence and documentation:

- Name of the Diversity Office was unilaterally [changed by outgoing president](#), who did ‘extensive research’ (but did not elaborate) and decided to replace ‘access’ with ‘belonging.’ The state initiative acronym was DEIA, but the president never explained to students or staff his reasoning for the change, or why it was important to him.
- Donor and foundation strategies are a black box. Administration would do well to demonstrate that the university is not beholden to donors with extreme political ideologies. Trustee Martin made the point in the August 19 special meeting that EOU needed continuity in external relations, and there was a clear effort to keep leadership local. President Insko was asked, but [would not share](#) details on prospective external candidates. Another common leadership tactic—anonymity does not permit sharing of such information. The campus [must take administrators at their word](#).
- EOU lost 40% of BIPOC staff in one year; the search for the DEIA VP has up to now failed; At least one of the Pacific Island schools has [stopped awarding scholarships for students to attend EOU](#) (pg 2), for reasons that have never been shared publicly;
- [Rhetoric](#) on diversity on the president’s web page, in the absence of tangible accomplishment, amounts to virtue signaling and photo opportunism.

- Campus Compact of Oregon has for the last two years agreed to provide supplemental support to EOU to help with its DEIA initiatives. They are still waiting for a re-organization of the Office of Student Diversity and Inclusion (SDI), which has been heroically held together by Mika Morton since the departure of former Director Bennie Moses to a high profile position as [Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) at Columbia Basin Community College. This process began Fall term of the previous academic year.
- EOU's Summer Bridge program, traditionally run without funding by Bennie Moses with help from Prof. Nancy Knowles, was designed to help those students from underrepresented and minority groups to manage adjustment to a white, rural setting and to the culture of higher education. The first year, Summer 2021, that the Bridge program had generous state funding, the administration chose not to recognize past practice, not to require vaccines, which denied all of the students (only the BIPOC cohort was asked by faculty to come vaccinated, and all complied) the opportunity to learn about diverse cultures and historical legacies of underrepresented groups through regional field trips (note: changes were made, giving control to faculty over curriculum and administration to the CAHSS college for Summer '22).
- EOU allowed an event, hosted by TPUSA, a [far-right political action group](#), to happen on campus, at the height of the pandemic, with no enforcement of the University's mask mandate, likely firearms in possession by many of the attendees, organized by TPUSA's EOU chapter founder and attended by then-Trustee Lund (who was complying with policy by wearing a mask). The meeting was a campaign event for a far-right fringe gubernatorial candidate from Baker City.
- Students in government have reported that TPUSA, in the name of 'free speech,' has produced posters and encouraged students in the dorms to place them on the outward-facing side of their dorm doors, some of them with pretty clear undertones of the white nationalist movement, despite concerns from EOU's BIPOC student population living in residence halls that the posters made some feel uncomfortable and unwelcome.
- Evidence that the outgoing president's strategy for building the Foundation endowment might be focusing on a donor class that opposes 'West Side' politics, including public health policies related to Covid-19, as well as calls within the campus community to address systemic racism. To wit:
 - Removal of 'Pierce' from the library's name. The library was named after a former Oregon Governor, who though not a member of the Ku Klux Klan in Oregon, did receive and accept the group's support and endorsement. History is history, the issue could have been resolved years ago, Faculty Senate voted on this more than five years ago, students in ASEOU have been calling for its removal, and yet it took three years of occasional meetings, chaired by VP Seydel, before the inevitable conclusion—removal—could be realized.
 - Office of DEIA—a supposed 're-organization' plan was announced in Fall 2021, President Insko has said that he wanted to invest in this office, yet the money comes from public funds earmarked for this purpose. One could argue that the priority seemed to be funding streams, rather than any difficult campaign to address systemic racism in a predominantly white region of the state.
 - Campus Compact of Oregon's experiences trying to support EOU and the University Council in some DEIA Initiative (see above bullet) have been ongoing for almost two years. Now they await some future 'reorganization' of the DEIA office.
 - Example of potentially compromising political alliances would include the attendance of then-state representative Greg Barreto at a board meeting. Then-ASEOU President called Rep. Barreto out for sponsoring a xenophobic referendum (see '[Dear Friend](#)' letter), [soundly defeated](#) at the polls. Neither Pres. Insko or the Board stood up for the student, who was trying to convey the intimidation felt by undocumented students at EOU. Her courage was met not only with silence and support for Rep. Barreto, but the recording was turned off, and the minutes reflect little of the conversation that occurred. The sole reference in the [minutes](#): "[student] advised that ASEOU passed a resolution to stand against racial profiling of our students. Faculty Senate and University Council voted to support this ASEOU resolution."
 - The DEIA report mandated by the state in 2017 as per [HB 2864](#) (addressing various aspects of cultural competency) was written in draft form, mostly by General Counsel (though campus representatives did draft a strategic plan), days before it was due at the end of the 2020 calendar year, suggesting it was neither

a collaborative effort nor a priority of the administration. Frustration boiled over more than once in University Council meetings in 2021 over how to proceed (e.g., Feb 23 [special session](#)).

- Finally, calls to keep the interim co-presidents local, and VC Martin's statement that Chair Chaves would be the person to continue Pres. Insko's strategy of donor outreach. Why is it, one might ask, that a local person with no higher education leadership experience is best-suited to build an endowment, when alumni are no doubt widely distributed geographically? Transparency is much needed.

(Transparency, continuity) Hiring practices and cronyism

Context: The Board leadership's contention that continuing the outgoing president's policies and initiatives should be a priority for interim leadership, as well as the ultimate search for a new president, lacks evidence of consensus among the campus. One element of the status quo is the double standard that has seen the president direct-hire as he has seen fit, while faculty continue to engage in national searches, and in at least two occasions saw tenure-track positions downgraded to instructor at the last possible moment before announcing an opening.

Evidence and documentation:

- President Insko's direct hires of friends and colleagues in the lumber industry, without competitive searches or seemingly relevant credentials.
- The [Board Chair appointed, by the Board, as interim co-president, along with VP of Finance](#), neither of whom has higher ed leadership or management experience that would justify such promotions. Chair Chaves' move from Board Chair to co-president, voted on by the Board he has chaired, creates multiple perceptions of conflicts of interest. As interim co-president, he will be working with the Board where he is the outgoing chair, a questionable look if independent oversight is important (and according to the Board's values, it is).
- Outgoing president was ranked fourth out of four candidates visiting campus in 2015 on a survey conducted by the search firm, and yet was chosen by the Chair of the Board at the time, David Nelson, a long-time state legislator in Eastern Oregon.
- VC Martin (long-time schoolteacher and Eastern Oregon ranch owner) [explains](#) that there were [no other options](#) that had been adequately researched to merit a vote (her [opinions](#)). It also [appears](#) from Trustee Mendoza's comment that the Board did not share input submitted to the board@eou.edu email [seeking comment from campus constituents](#) (instead focusing on the two shared governance chairs, responding as individuals and not as representatives of their governance bodies).
- Eastern Oregon refers to the location. Higher education depends on national and international searches to provide the needed expertise to deliver on pledges such as those embedded in the Mission Statement:
 - EOU guides student inquiry through integrated, **high-quality liberal arts and professional programs that lead to responsible and reflective action in a diverse and interconnected world.**
 - As an educational, cultural and scholarly center, **EOU connects the rural regions of Oregon to a wider world.** Our beautiful setting and small size enhance the personal attention our students receive, while partnerships with colleges, universities, agencies and communities add to the educational possibilities of our region and state.

(Continuity, Engagement of stakeholders) Decision making processes

Context: Broad public input is rarely sought over important decisions. The *modus operandi* has more often been one of making decisions, and then claiming shared governance bodies exist to provide 'consultative' feedback. If these decisions were broadly popular or successful, there might be less contention over how decisions are made. And yet even with the current proposal, the decision was made in private, feedback from campus may or may not have been shared with other trustees. VC Martin's [reply](#) to Trustee Mendoza's question suggests as much: (<https://youtu.be/53UpHcLJ7Vg?t=1914>). At least one member of faculty asked to use the 10-minute public

comment period, [from 8:10 to 8:20](#), and never heard back (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Zt1VUEKnRzaga127aBJmOq2HRtk9DCNC/view?usp=sharing>).

Evidence and documentation:

- The outgoing president's imposition of a corporate, top-down decision-making structure marginalized groups on campus with the on-the-ground experience and institutional memory that the president lacked. So-called representative voices were generally hand-picked or simply solicited as individuals—not representatives of constituents—in most cases to reinforce and support administrative decisions already made.
- Key decisions are often made over the summer without shared governance oversight—[EAB](#), (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sW- oR7I8Sa-0BUtXUqbpiGW0lxfG1J/view?usp=sharing>), [email deletion policy](#) (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/18Jburep9cN1METfz11OZM02sp122XWN1/view?usp=sharing>), planning for the for-profit OPM. Faculty did not see the Wiley/Learning House contract until four months after it was signed. 'Scaling up' priorities occupied several shared governance bodies in the Fall to accommodate anticipated rapid growth in online enrollment that never materialized (much having to do with expediting transfers and giving the Provost more discretion to overrule faculty). And now this latest series of decisions.
- Shared governance has under the Insko Presidency strategically been avoided, or post-decision 'consultation' with leadership figures claimed to justify decisions already made (by asking for input only from chairs). A previous Faculty Senate president conducted a survey of faculty in providing end-of-year feedback on the president's performance, and was told survey data were not permissible to share with trustees.
- Decision on interim co-presidents appeared to have been made ahead of time; VC Martin said the other three 'options' were 'too vague' at the time of the meeting to make a decision (despite outgoing president's claim that he did 'extensive research' on 'external' candidates, but declined to provide specifics, though pressed on multiple occasions to do so). Incoming co-president Chaves was speaking about his presidency in the present tense, before the vote to confirm the interim co-president model—the lone option seriously considered.
- There is a complete lack of transparency in how Board and President make decisions, despite the fact that 'transparency' is Board [priority number 4](#) (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EkzW7hfkpSOBCFJVt_Q7JlchXQuHhiuo/view?usp=sharing). Moving forward, one presumes. 'Engagement with stakeholders' is Board priority number 3 (VC Martin [reads statement](#) of Board priorities for AY 22-23 ;<https://youtu.be/53UpHcLJ7Vg?t=1268>));
- EOU's legal counsel and senior leadership [deleted all emails](#) over five years old in late August of 2019 (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yNL5biZY_4VhznuhvMTOQD-YforxZFDo/view), citing 'risk liability.' It is unclear whose emails posed the risk, but just as likely that the university's true risk would have been a lawsuit from those who lost irretrievable communication, data, research and correspondence from colleagues, alumni, etc. Faculty were off contract at the time. Prof. Nancy Knowles advocated for a longer period—no other university deletes emails—but hundreds of thousands of electronic communications were lost because of General Counsel's and the President's decision, again, made over the summer. Claims that the emails were 'archived' and retrievable proved inaccurate. The process of rescinding the policy took two years in shared governance, and great persistence on the part of Prof. Knowles.

(Continuity, Engagement of stakeholders) Board and presidential evaluation processes

Context: The Board for the most part, through the Governance Committee, evaluates itself, coordinated by the governance committee, chaired by trustees Johnson and then Lund. Evaluation instruments are neither independent nor validated. Perhaps that is intentional. Committee Chairs deserve recognition for failing to listen to faculty input on this issue, in repeated settings and meetings. The 'comprehensive' evaluations of both Board and President were not comprehensive, and provided little if any opportunity for the vast majority of members of the campus community to weigh in in any meaningful way. As they function, these evaluations seem more like pro forma approvals, with hand-selected respondents providing the occasional quote for a final report or Infoline.

Evidence and documentation:

- These are not comprehensive— Board has created a policy that prevents 95 plus percent of campus from providing feedback on the performance of the president;
- Even some Trustees are severely restricted in their abilities to represent their constituencies (e.g., student, staff and faculty trustees are instructed that they are not representing their constituencies);
- The Board has been advised by shared governance leaders of these limitations and communication dysfunctions in previous years, on [evaluation](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kECwkRW0Vmc8GySHrapmxC3M2484GYCv/view) (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kECwkRW0Vmc8GySHrapmxC3M2484GYCv/view>) and [more generally](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SQ24sM5OVMwsfDWjMdzt6PCgE5jVh6Gw/view) (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SQ24sM5OVMwsfDWjMdzt6PCgE5jVh6Gw/view>). There is no forum to discuss such matters, and faculty have on multiple occasions been disrespected and treated discourteously for bringing them up during the shared governance or public comment portions of their meetings. That is, meetings are mostly for show, not an opportunity for trustees to engage with constituents—there is no forum for that.
- Board [continues to evaluate itself](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UtBOBmSc7zKx4eBh1Gr1rDAIYlieSi7v/view?usp=sharing) (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UtBOBmSc7zKx4eBh1Gr1rDAIYlieSi7v/view?usp=sharing>), using an embarrassingly amateurish satisfaction survey, literally uninterpretable, despite the fact that AVP Chason has a background in the creation and administration of legitimate survey instruments.
- Policies approved in 2015 and shepherded through by General Counsel have circumscribed the ability of constituents to provide genuine feedback on the president or board. This includes the [Employee Records policy](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gndsLkigNHh78gf_9gioBOxyzgbMIb33/view), one of the first approved by General Counsel and President, in July 2015 (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gndsLkigNHh78gf_9gioBOxyzgbMIb33/view).

(Transparency) Lack of accountability

Context: Upper Administrators and the Board are held to a much lower standard when it comes to holding themselves to account for performance.

Evidence and documentation:

- [Triennial review of administrator policy](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1IGN-Dwt-yE1nSd4q1RGVrtLt1BOdmdUU) (<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1IGN-Dwt-yE1nSd4q1RGVrtLt1BOdmdUU>) has never been implemented.
- No discussion publicly or even public acknowledge of GCTWF survey data, despite hundreds of hours of collective work by members of the University Council and other participants. Recommendations by the UC from Spring '22 have not been addressed in any meaningful way (compare [UC recommendations](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uIxS488Jmo9s9sIPGEm4Qm5V8uobApgQ1QCGIVRMVZc/edit?usp=sharing) (<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uIxS488Jmo9s9sIPGEm4Qm5V8uobApgQ1QCGIVRMVZc/edit?usp=sharing>) for addressing problems revealed by GCTWF data with Pres. Insko's comments in the June '22 [UC agenda](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LNln6IOvcbDHwDpIPSea0KHLyIj-LN10XX6bRkg0il8/edit#heading=h.nfcnih9fo2co), pg 4: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LNln6IOvcbDHwDpIPSea0KHLyIj-LN10XX6bRkg0il8/edit#heading=h.nfcnih9fo2co>).
- When Trustee Bailey questioned the wisdom of continuity with the outgoing president's agenda and initiatives (not including those federal initiatives such as Title III that were initiated at the state level), VC Martin [seemed to claim](https://youtu.be/53UpHcLJ7Vg?t=3486) (<https://youtu.be/53UpHcLJ7Vg?t=3486>), somewhat incredulously, that current leadership bore little responsibility for the enrollment declines over the last seven years (considerably pre-dating the pandemic).

(Transparency) Communication dysfunction

Context: Administration uses communication with the campus as much for public relations as for seeking input or providing useful information. Often times the communiqués are embedded in an Infoline, which includes a wide range of information, including the trivia question (which may be the main draw for many at this point). There is, in other words, considerable 'white noise,' and neither the President's infrequent 'chats,' the Board's periodic

meetings, or the Infolines seem to hold the interest of a majority of the campus. Except maybe for *and trivia!* Daily question.

Evidence and documentation:

- Misleading on most of the initiatives, especially Wiley/Learning House (did not provide metrics on FTE, which was how it was pitched to the Board, buried online enrollment in an 'off campus' metric, focused on student head counts or student credit hours, and never responded to faculty inquiries as the start date approached);
- Making announcements after decisions had been made (such as board leadership's on interim co-presidents)
- Communiqués from leadership are often part information, part public relations. The campus community has a right to expect a higher standard of intellectual honesty and engagement from its leaders.

Other Insko Initiatives underperforming

- *Business model*—the main successes beyond simply day to day management challenges have involved securing public funds, either via students successful borrowing efforts, or the state funneling money to programs for specific initiatives (not initiatives driven by leadership decisions). These could as much as anything represent Oregon officials bailing out underperformance. One hopes the opportunities will not be squandered, or the need for campus expertise and input once again neglected. The outgoing president pursued a corporate, top-down model, driven by money and cost-cutting and an emphasis on fully online academic programs, which has not produced students. The community and the region would suffer in the absence of a vibrant physical campus. Perhaps HECC understands that. Higher education starts with the students, not the money, something the outgoing president seems to have been slow to acknowledge in seven years. Nevertheless, Board leadership continually increased his annual and one-time compensations. And is still heeding his advice.
- *REV*—The REV (<https://www.eou.edu/rev/>) came into being after months of discussions with the outgoing president, Justin Chin, former Director of Career Services, and a handful of faculty. An announcement was made over the summer in which the president and VP Seydel claimed credit for the REV. There was no acknowledgement of the considerable time and contributions of [faculty intellectual property](#) from the Center for Rural Studies proposal and CHART initiative (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bQHqOnM6CgG-MT5H4IID7dv8gyF7vZyJ/view?usp=sharing>). REV is essentially a wood products and natural resource workforce development project. It is ill-equipped to involve departments across campus in regional outreach and research, as the CRS had envisioned.

On continuity

Faculty and staff provide the actual stability and continuity at Eastern Oregon University. Faculty retain students, it is not the job of faculty to recruit them or identify markets (and yet many of us spend countless hours doing this), or to understand the distinction between marketing and sales. Wiley is being paid over 1/3 of online tuition revenue for a <10% enrollment increase. It is likely EOU's online offerings were growing faster before the WES/EOU contract went into effect. The Board will no doubt consider the contract's escape window in January 2023, without mentioning that Board leadership and Pres. Insko entered into the arrangement lacking the support of faculty as a body, or the input and deliberation of the main shared governance bodies. If EOU is persevering under difficult conditions, the above should cast doubt on whether it is because of President Insko's leadership (as then-Chair Chaves seemed to believe—[bottom of pg 4: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OOkSaWxaOrz8JjyZ6799pg6vxJnOeKBV/view](#)), or *despite* his leadership. Faculty have centuries of collective experience and institutional memory. Emeriti are watching this murky transition. They witnessed President Insko leave in the midst of an enrollment and leadership crisis, and yet claim that continuity of his direction for the university was necessary. Local, internal candidates with no higher education leadership experience were the right choices, he claimed. The Board leadership seems to have uncritically embraced the outgoing president's advice. However, not all trustees, and many have expertise and professional credentials that

merit support. Newly-elected Vice Chair Mendoza has shown a willingness to ask uncomfortable questions in meetings, and we hope that he and the other trustees consider these words carefully. They are not offered cavalierly. They represent pent-up frustrations with Board leadership that has overseen an organization in the grips of a degraded higher education culture and plummeting morale, historic enrollment declines, and a strained narrative of success and leadership that does not square with on-the-ground realities. And has decided EOU needs more of the same. To believe there is no connection between support of the interim co-president model, and control over the subsequent presidential search process, would be naïve in the extreme. We have all experienced the effects of cronyism. This is a call for change, not continuity, a level of professionalism befitting a 4-year university, and valuing a culture of higher education. The institution's credibility among its sister institutions may otherwise suffer. Hence there is some irony in [VC Martin's choice of words](#).

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53UpHcLJ7Vg&t=1745s&ab_channel=TheMountieNetwork).