

# President: Toughest fights are ones nobody sees

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The Oregon Campaign, which has been a magnificent success, just a wonderful outpouring of philanthropy at the University, is winding to an end. So while I will continue to do fund-raising on the outside for student scholarships and for support of faculty and for building projects, what we'll be doing is really preparing and looking at prospects for another campaign sometime in the future.

We have our internal process for change, which is kind of an innocuous name for a very, very important introspective and outward-looking effort to make sure that we really are ready for the 21st century, that we're capable of managing the new funding laws. That occupied more than 200 people, faculty, staff and students last year. And I think we'll occupy at least that number of minds, especially beginning this fall as we're putting the final solution phase, implementation phase, into effect. And that should really have a transformative effect on undergraduate education, on the way we reach out to other constituencies. That takes a lot of leadership and a lot of time.

I'll be teaching a freshman seminar. I'll be teaching part of a law course later in the year. I like to be in the classroom, as well. It keeps my mind alive.

**Q** Has the Asian market crisis affected the University?

**A** Less than we might have feared. We won't know until the official numbers come in at the end of the fourth week of October. While we have lost some students and others have suffered serious family financial hardship, I have not yet been told of any significant downturn in our international students who come from Asian countries.

**Q** How do you think students perceive you?

**A** I can only tell you how I hope they perceive me, which is open, accessible, not afraid of new ideas, someone who really cares passionately about the quality of education that we offer in terms of how it

affects student lives and someone who wants to make a difference for this institution.

**Q** What are a few key issues that you think students are facing?

**A** I think one of them is their involvement in the whole process for change because it's one of the major sets of focus. It's really the quality and relevance of an undergraduate education for the rest of their lives. Not merely in the marketplace, not merely for what they choose to do as a job or profession or occupation, but in terms of enriching their lives culturally, civically — helping students understand how to learn through the course of a lifetime, which is really going to be a survival skill, based upon the pace of change that continues to accelerate. So that's one major set of issues that I hope students are involved in.

A second is I hope they will vote. Traditionally, every other year has had the most successful voter registration drives of any campus in the country, and I hope we continue to aspire through our student leadership to that same level of involvement in the political system because it's clear that system makes choices that affect the quality of students' education and their ability to get it.

**Q** What is your ideal ASUO executive?

**A** Accessible, honest, willing to work as partners, willing to talk openly about differences when they exist, and willing to help round the edges of some of the conflicts that always arise, sometimes even among students themselves.

We're asking for leadership that can be trusted and leadership that is honest and able in its ability to identify priorities on behalf of all the students.

**Q** You were a proponent of the Oregon University System changing the system so that universities keep their own tuition and fees. How do you think that will affect the University of Oregon and other schools in the state?

**A** I think it will have a very positive impact, and the system has been constructed so that no one ends up a loser. That means if the legislature and the governor fund this new model at the level where it's shown the base budget shortfalls have always been hit, this is a much more transparent system of financing in the sense that once you eliminate these hidden, secret cross-subsidies, you begin to see how underfunded every institution has been relative to its mission. So that, we hope, will make our ability to make the case for restoration of state funding much more compelling.

**Q** Are there any changes you would like to see on campus?

**A** I think we're engaged in a process of continuous change. Our core mission hasn't changed. We're still in the business of knowledge, transforming lives through knowledge. But how one does that, and the techniques and tools you use change with technology.

Thanks to the brilliance of our people who do network engineering, we have one of the finest campus computer systems in the world, and really at a fraction of the cost that others have invested, and I expect us to continue to be a leader in the field of information technology. I don't expect that to replace the classroom, but I do think that it is a valuable adjunct to the teacher-student-learner relationship.

**Q** What have you learned since becoming president?

**A** I've learned that some of the toughest battles you fight are ones that nobody else ever sees.

The most persistent need that I have come across is to tell our story to the external world in as compelling a way as I can. I think in some people's perception, we were more inward looking than we should have been, and now I think that perception's changed, that we are the University of Oregon, all of Oregon, we are the state's premier liberal arts and sciences university, and that carries with it obligations as well as opportunities. And I think the state is rec-

ognizing that.

I feel good about our efforts at outreach and what that has done for the status of the University. So telling our story inside and telling it outside are two major aspects of my job.

**Q** What do you see as your future at the University?

**A** I hope that by the time my tenure has concluded here — whenever that is — that there will be a revision of the funding model that's permanently in place, that we will be able to reward enterprise, good teaching, high quality, that we continue to maintain and enhance our stature within the research community as being an institution where the discovery of knowledge and transmission of knowledge is prized and is recognized internationally.

There will be some bricks and mortar additions that are very welcome. It's interesting to see all the construction on campus from the student recreation center, which is I think — it's not in the center of the campus. It represents the fact that students are central to why we're here and we have the University.

When Grayson Hall comes on line, we'll probably see a change in student traffic patterns because all of a sudden a lot of undergraduates will be going over to the northwest corner of campus as well.

So I think the campus culture will continue to evolve and will — I hope — maintain the sense of community, a learning community that the University of Oregon has been renowned for through the years.

**Q** Before joining the University faculty, you were the attorney general of Oregon and you ran for state governor. Do you see a political future for yourself?

**A** I don't have plans to run for elective office. At the same time, the nature of the job is such that you're never really out of politics, or at least the political system.

**Q** Do you think there is an average student at the University of Oregon?

**A** Maybe. We're always dealing in stereotypes when you say that.

I think the average student is engaged, is interested, is generally optimistic, wants to make a difference in the future for the better in the world. I think the average student here is looking to have his or her horizons widened. I think they see this as a place of exploration and discovery.

Probably the average student from time to time feels overwhelmed, and yet finds at this time in his or her life that this is a time to come to terms and discover yourself, discover how you fit into the world of other people. And probably this is a student who's at least somewhat apprehensive about the future. Not really, "What am I going to do? What am I going to be?" But, "What's the world going to be like? Am I going to be ready for the world's fight?"

I don't know if there's anything distinctly Oregonian about that, but I'd say that the average student's glad to be here, appreciates the natural environment, is devoted to the outdoors, probably very fond of the campus, not withstanding the occasional period of adversity that any person, let alone any student, runs across.

**Q** How do you think the Danta Graham-Preston case has affected the University?

**A** The case isn't over. It has been a very difficult case for a great number of people irrespective of their view of the merits of the case.

There has also been an enormous amount of misinformation about it, which frustrates me as a person who has had to take an official role in that case. A great number of opinions were reached quite apart from what the specific facts were alleged to be. Maybe that's in the nature of things, but it's quite unfortunate that it's focused on a person by name for a lot of reasons.

**Q** How do you think athletics fit into the University?

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