

PEARSON

Continued from Page 1A posted online — that he does not “take lightly (the) delay in making a determination on a partnership with (Pearson).” However, he pushed the deadline to November 15.

Lack of Information

In June, when The Observer sought the opinions of EOU faculty on partnering with an online management company, the majority of the 13 faculty members contacted said they were not comfortable discussing the issue on the record. The faculty who agreed to answer questions all stated that while Eastern needs help in marketing, they didn't believe an OPM was the best solution — and may even put the university, as a whole, at risk.

Shortly after the June story was published in The Observer, the president's office released a campus-wide email, obtained by The Observer, that said, “It is important to note that there were a number of unfortunate inaccuracies in the (Observer) piece as neither the President's Office nor University Advancement were contacted to provide clarification or context for some of the claims made (by faculty) in the article.”

For clarification of the campus-wide email, The Observer reached out to University Advancement to learn what was inaccurate in the article so corrections could be published.

Seydel responded in an email stating, “Any time confusing information is published or broadcast about EOU in today's interconnected world, we receive inquiries, questions, comments and concerns. While requesting corrections after the fact is

possible, unfortunately the message is already published, and does not address the direct communication that needs to take place with a specific audience.”

The editor of The Observer emailed once more for clarification on what was specifically inaccurate in the article but did not receive a reply.

Because the Board of Trustees will make the final decision on whether to bring on an OPM in November — each with an individual vote — The Observer contacted each member of the board to see how he or she felt about the board's future decision.

Of the 15 members of the board, 13 refused to comment on the matter.

All board members referred The Observer to Seydel or Board Chair David Nelson.

Nicole Almanza, an EOU student whose term on the board ended this spring, committed to an interview to discuss the OPM. On the day of the interview, she canceled, stating, “I was contacted by the school and they asked me to refer you to Chair Nelson.” She would not say who contacted her.

Helen Moore, said she was “not allowed to answer (questions about the OPM),” but later said she “wasn't comfortable answering at this point.”

More than one board member said they were “not allowed to talk to the media.”

The Observer left a message on Insko's private cellphone and later received a call from Seydel who said Insko was unavailable and the board would speak only as a unified voice.

“We follow (rules) that say trustees will speak as one voice,” Nelson told The Observer on Tuesday. “We have disagreements in committees and meetings, but it's our policy not to air them out in

the newspaper.” Nelson said the trustees give their individual opinions at the board meetings, but are not allowed to speak to the media outside of meetings individually.

He said Eastern has not yet decided on partnering with Pearson and is still in the evaluation process — something that Insko has echoed in letters to faculty, that were published as part of a 60-page document online.

“At EOU we're in fierce competition for students, staff and faculty with significant political overtones, since half of our money comes from the State of Oregon,” Nelson told The Observer.

He said the goal of the board is to avoid passing on the cost of higher education to the students. Rather than increasing tuition, they must look for another way to produce revenue.

“Our two main sources of revenue come from students (paying tuition) and the state,” said Richard Chaves, who is on the Board of Trustees and also the chair of the Finance and Administration Committee said.

The concern for EOU, according to Nelson, is that in six year Eastern's reserve funds of \$8 million will be gone, if they don't increase enrollment, since they will be using the reserves so as not to increase tuition for students.

Chavez disagreed with that.

“I'm sure there are scenarios where our reserves could be used up, but I wouldn't say that in six years our reserves would be gone if we don't increase enrollment,” he said.

Marketing and online presence

Faculty agree with admin-

istration that EOU does need assistance in marketing the university.

“If we lack anything, it's marketing — we need to extend our brand,” Brienna Fleming, an English and writing instructor, told The Observer in May.

Vande Pol told The Observer in February that Pearson would assist with marketing.

“They bring terrific marketing skills and a budget that, quite frankly, we don't have,” he said.

While the marketing may be beneficial, faculty have expressed concern about giving an OPM control over the college's online presence.

“My online students are my students,” DeAnna Timmermann, assistant professor of psychology, told The Observer in May. “Under an OPM model — at least the model that has been shared with us — they won't be. I can see how administration is concerned about enrollment, but I would hate for (an OPM) to be the only avenue they explore.”

According to Nelson, administration has investigated other marketing options.

“We looked at (options) in-house, but thought that would take resources we don't have,” Nelson told The Observer on Tuesday. “We looked at hiring a marketing firm, but don't think there (would be) any return (on our investment) there.”

However, Insko told the EOU Faculty Senate in March that he had not looked at other marketing options.

“Are there no revenue-sharing models with marketing firms?” Cori Brewster, a Faculty Senator and English and writing professor, asked in the meeting, according to

EOU faculty weigh in on partnering with an OPM (Online Program Management)

1. The administration has presented faculty with a wide range of viable options to consider in addition to partnering with a for-profit OPM
Agree: 1
Disagree: 10
Strongly Disagree: 26
2. I am optimistic that partnering with Pearson will solve EOU's enrollment and revenue problems
Agree: 3
Disagree: 8
Strongly Disagree: 26
3. Based on what I have learned so far, I expect Pearson to serve students well.
Agree: 3
Disagree: 15
Strongly Disagree: 22
4. EOU leadership has accurately identified the pressing problems EOU faces, and the investment of time and resources in considering a private OPM is well-placed
Agree: 6
Disagree: 15
Strongly Disagree: 18
5. Faculty have had adequate opportunity to provide public and meaningful input on the future direction EOU should take in confronting its enrollment decline.
Agree: 6
Disagree: 14
Strongly Disagree: 19

All numbers are out of 40 participating faculty. These are the partial results of a survey created by Ad hoc Committee members, Cori Brewster, PhD, Bill Grigsby, PhD and John Knudsen-Martín, EdD. For full results of the survey, visit www.lagrandeobserver.com.

meeting minutes provided online. “They don't have their grip in the education but there still is some accountability.”

Insko responded that he wasn't aware of any in terms of marketing. “I have not (approached any marketing firms),” Insko said at the March meeting. “I doubt (Seydel) has.”

When asked what the end goal was for the university by partnering with an OPM, Insko told the Faculty

Senate the university needs to grow.

“This campus is sized to feel like a small, private school of 2,000-2,500 students,” he said. “From the online side it opens up — keeping us connected to what's emerging in the education marketplace.” He was then asked if that was possible without an OPM.

“If it's not an OPM we will identify something else (to increase enrollment),” Insko said.

RALLY

Continued from Page 1A viduals who signed the petition at the rally mentioned potential tax revenue from marijuana sales as a reason to support it.

Haley Pullem, a La Grande resident who signed the petition at the rally, said she thinks the potential tax revenue from marijuana sales is worth considering.

“This is actually really important because it could mean a lot of tax dollars com-

ing into our town and that seems like something the city should vote on,” she said.

Moyal, who sits on the city's budget committee, said it would be the “height of foolishness” to ignore an extra potential revenue stream.

“I look at how tight the budgets are and how we have to scrimp and save on everything from new vehicles to infrastructure for water system sewage to services for kids and parks and rec,” he said. “Our budget is so close to the bone it's ridiculous.”

In January, the East Oregonian reported Pendleton had brought in \$130,000 in marijuana tax revenue in the first half of the 2018 fiscal year. Moyal said he believes La Grande could bring in at least \$120,000 to \$130,000 a year in marijuana tax revenue.

For some local business owners, the current ban is limiting business. Rona Lindsey, owner of Highway 30 Cannabis, a medical marijuana dispensary, said she lost a significant amount

of business due to the ban.

“Last year I had over 3,000 people stop at my store — I kept a record of it — asking for recreational,” Lindsey said. “Those were 3,000 people who were here to spend their money, to buy gas, to eat lunch, but they got mad because they couldn't buy and said, ‘We'll just go on down the road to Pendleton or we'll go to Huntington.’”

Statewide there are five cities that previously banned recreational marijuana sales where residents will be voting

on whether to repeal the ban in November.

Even if the ballot initiative doesn't receive the necessary 1,200 signatures, Moyal said it will not be the end of the effort to vote on reversing the ban in La Grande.

“If we don't make it this year, we'll just wait two years. I'm telling you in 2020 this is going to happen, because I'll start doing it in February,” Moyal said. “And there's no doubt we'll get the signatures.”

LA GRANDE

Continued from Page 1A more appropriate than the city council implementing another vote. If the council were to bring this to the voters again, he said, it would be as if they were saying their original votes on legalizing marijuana didn't count.

Howard, who was the only voice on the council who wanted to pursue the ordinance in the June meeting, said while she didn't entirely disagree with what Lillard said, the council should have kept their word.

“It was confusing. We said we were going to take care of this,” she said. “That's really an injustice. We supported it in April.”

Lillard said the process wasn't complete in April and people should not have assumed it was a done deal.

Howard disagreed. “We need to own the bait and switch,” she said.

The majority of those who participated in the public hearing at Wednesday's meeting agreed with

Howard. David Moyal, one of the two co-sponsors of the initiative, voiced his disappointment with the council when they “reversed course.”

Moyal said the June decision left the citizens with a very tight deadline to gather the signatures needed to put the measure on the November ballot.

Even if they do not get enough signatures, he said, they'll pursue the initiative again.

“Our initiative may not have enough time to gather signatures,” he said, “but we'll be back.”

Ashley O'Toole, who is running for city council in November, said the council “lost focus” on what the discussion was about.

“The discussion was about whether or not the citizens of La Grande should be allowed to vote on such a hot-button issue,” he said. “I agreed with your 5-2 vote in April to put it on the November ballot. I even remember more than one of you having a sentiment of wanting to see it on the ballot just so you can vote

no. So what happened last month?”

O'Toole said he doesn't want people to buy marijuana on a street corner or from some shady characters.

“Every weed dealer in La Grande should be here right now saying, ‘Thank you for your continued support,’” he said. “It has been proven around the state, and more so in other states where it has been legalized longer, that legalized, regulated cannabis sales have all but dried up black market activity.”

Brent Clapp, who owns

La Grande Alive TV and records the city council meetings, supported the council's decision. He said it is inaccurate for people to say the council is not allowing them to participate in the democratic process.

“It's disingenuous,” he said. “No one took your right to vote away. They took away the way to make it easier.”

Contact Cherise Kaechele at ckaechele@lagrandeobserver.com.



Need a safe ride home?

~ • ~

We are here for you.

Loveland's Safe Ride Program offers a free, safe ride home from major events in Union County where alcohol is served. We have provided over 50,000 rides from the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show and the Elgin Stampede for over 16 years.

We would love to serve you this year.

Call 541-963-5022

LOVELAND

FUNERAL CHAPEL

Our Family Serving Your Family

1508 4th St, La Grande, OR 97850

Storage Solution

www.CountrysideSheds.com

Countryside

SHEDS

CCB #149931

L C

“More Than Just a Shed”

Look at a Side-By-Side Comparison

	Rent-To-Own	Self-Storage
Ownership Option?	Yes	NO
Customization?	Yes	NO
Can I sell it when done?	Yes	NO
Moveable?	Yes	NO
Location?	Your House... Across Town	

See our display lot at
10102 S. McAlister Road Island City
(541) 663-0246 or toll free (800) 682-0589
Locally owned and operated for over 20 years

Nicole Cathey

Reed & Associates for excellent service **LOCALLY!**

An Independent Insurance Agency

Medicare, Auto, Home insurance and Annuities

Kevin Reed

10106 N. 'C' • Island City **541-975-1364** Toll Free 1-866-282-1925 www.reed-insurance.net