

# THE OBSERVER

SERVING UNION AND WALLOWA COUNTIES SINCE 1896

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## EOU will decide on tuition hike soon

Effects of COVID-19 pandemic play major role in increased tuition at public universities

By DAVIS CARBAUGH  
The Observer

LA GRANDE — A tuition increase could be on the horizon for students at Eastern Oregon University.

As institutions of higher education deal with the repercussions of inflation, lowered enrollment and the COVID-19 pandemic, public universities across the nation are turning to higher tuition rates. At Eastern Oregon University, a pending board decision on Thursday, May 19, could lead to similar increases in the coming years in order to continue offering services at the highest quality.

“The priority is always on student resources and student support services, how do we ensure that our students get the best that they need to be successful and graduate,” said Tim Seydel, Eastern’s vice president for university advancement.

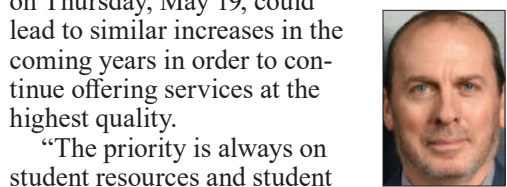
Six out of Oregon’s seven public universities saw decreased enrollment in the 2021-22 academic year, with Eastern included in that group. Eastern’s 2021 fall enrollment was 2,825, compared to 2,853 in the fall of 2020 and 3,067 in 2019. Of that student population, 65% are Oregon residents and 35% are from out of state. The university had 1,193 part-time enrollments and 1,632 full-time students.

Eastern Oregon froze tuition in 2021 as a result of the pandemic but is considering an increase of just under 5% for undergraduate students for the 2022-23 academic calendar. The decision revolves around lengthy discussions from the tuition advisory committee and budget planning committee, which consists of students, faculty and staff — the recommendation from the two committees will be handed up to the board’s finance administration board and then decided upon by the board.

Eastern’s student population primarily divides into on-campus and off-campus students, a trend that existed well before the COVID-19 pandemic increased the usage of online learning at all universities. According to Seydel, the pandemic multiplied that trend and led to more incoming students taking the online approach.

“What we saw over time was more students shifting to the online modality,” he said. “We also saw a slight increase in the number of traditional students wanting to go into our online program.”

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Seydel



Davis Carbaugh/The Observer

Union County commissioner candidate Lisa Hill, right, responds to a question as incumbent Paul Anderes looks on at a 2022 election debate moderated by Eastern Oregon University students at Huber Auditorium in Badgley Hall on Friday, May 6, 2022, in La Grande.

## SQUARING OFF

Commissioner candidates share beliefs on county issues

By DICK MASON  
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The race for the Union County Board of Commissioners Position 1 is coming into sharper focus.

Voters got a closer look at the race’s two candidates, incumbent Paul Anderes and challenger Lisa Hill, at a debate at Eastern Oregon University’s Huber Auditorium, Friday, May 6. Sparks did not fly and voices were never raised, but Anderes and Hill were not shy about answering questions straightforwardly and with candor.

Hill took an outspoken stance when asked about the La Grande School District’s \$4.545 million construction bond on the ballot. Funds from the bond would pay for the construction of a new academic and athletic building, one that would replace the aging Annex gym. The construction would be conducted with the aid of a \$4 million matching state grant the La Grande School District would receive

if voters approve the bond.

“It is great that we got a matching grant. My concern is inflation,” Hill said during the debate, which was sponsored and moderated by the the Eastern Oregon University Debate Club.

The challenger said she believes inflation is actually much higher than the 8% rate often reported, especially for building material costs.

“I’m worried that if the bond passes, the school district might not have enough money to finish the building,” Hill said.

Anderes supports the bond. “It would be an investment in our community and children,” he said.

Anderes said it might be another two or three years before the school district would have a chance to get another matching grant.

The Union County commissioner, who previously taught at La Grande High School for 23 years, said that inflation can be looked upon as an incentive to vote for the bond. He explained that if the new building is

not constructed soon, the cost of constructing it in the future might rise to the point that it is out of the La Grande School District’s reach.

### Candidates talk MERA project

The candidates also addressed the Mount Emily Recreation Area, where a forest management work, a portion of which involves logging, is being conducted as part of a two-year project to help prevent a destructive wildfire.

Hill said she hopes funding will be available to repair trails damaged by the forest management work. She said this will be important because of how popular MERA is to many in the community and people outside the area who come to Union County to recreate there.

“It is a tourist attraction,” she said.

Anderes said forest management at MERA is one of his priorities. He noted he has a firsthand appreciation of the importance of forest management since he fought summer wildfires in the western United States for many

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## Wallowa County rancher legally kills wolf

Death comes after repeated attacks on livestock, issue of kill permit

By KALE WILLIAMS  
The Oregonian

ENTERPRISE — A Wallowa County rancher on Tuesday, May 3, shot and killed a wolf from a pack believed to be responsible for multiple attacks on livestock in the region,

state wildlife officials said.

The rancher had been granted a permit to kill up to two wolves from the Chesnimus Pack, which the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife determined was responsible for at least four attacks on cattle between April 25 and 30.

Under the state’s wolf regulations, wolves can be killed after they are determined to be responsible for “chronic depredation,” or a minimum of two confirmed deaths within a

nine-month period.

The death of the canid comes just weeks after the state’s annual wolf report showed anemic growth in Oregon’s wolf population in 2021. The tally represents a minimum number of wolves in the state, counting only the animals that can be verified by direct observation, trail cameras or physical evidence like tracks.

The report also highlighted a sharp rise in wolf

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Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife/Contributed Photo, File A wolf pack is captured by a remote camera in Hells Canyon National Recreation Area in Northeastern Oregon in February 2017. A Wallowa County rancher on Tuesday, May 3, 2022, shot and killed a wolf from a pack believed to be responsible for multiple attacks on livestock in the region, state wildlife officials said.



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### WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section

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### CONTACT US

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