How Obama reversed course on federal college ratings

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama dearly wanted to get the government in the business of rating colleges and universities based on value and affordability, promising a new system by 2015. Now that goal is shriveling under the weight of a concerted opposition from universities, lawmakers and bureaucrats in Obama's own administration.

Nearly two years after the president, standing before a crowd of 7,000 at the University at Buffalo, unveiled the bold proposal as a way to curb soaring college costs, his administration has quietly but drastically scaled back the initiative. No longer does the federal government intend to use a formula to score schools based on factors like price, average student debt and graduation rates, as Obama had envisioned.

Instead, the new tool will allow prospective students to decide which factors are important to them, then draw their own conclusions from the statistics. But the Education Department declined to say which new statistics the tool will offer that aren't already available on existing government websites.

Abandoning the original plan marked the latest in a series of stumbles for Obama's education priorities. In his 2013 State of the Union address, Obama called for expanding access to pre-kindergarten to all American children, and in his 2015 address, he pushed a $60 billion plan to offer two years of free community college. Neither proposal has gained any traction.

The Education Department said it's still determining what the revised college tool will look like, but that it's still on track to roll it out by the start of the 2015-2016 academic year, roughly two months from now.

Yet Obama's goal, as he described when he announced the plan in August 2013, was to create an alternative to private rankings like U.S. News and World Report whose formulas incentivize schools to "game the numbers" and even raise costs. Instead, Obama sought a system that prioritized whether schools are enrolling and graduating poorer students and whether their graduates succeed in the workforce.

"I think we should rate colleges based on opportunity — are they helping students from all kinds of backgrounds succeed — and on outcomes, on their value to students and parents," Obama said. He took it a step further by proposing that Congress eventually tie a school's eligibility for federal financial aid to its score in the new ratings system.

Resistance to Obama's plan was swift, vehement and nearly universal.

Associations representing colleges with traditionally conflicting interests — such as community colleges and private universities — all lined up in opposition, warning the project was too complex, too subjective and too dependent on shoddy data to ever work fairly. As the Education Department mounted an extensive, lengthy listening tour across the country, college presidents warned of dire unintended consequences and implored the government to reconsider.

On Capitol Hill, the proposal drew pushback not only from the president's traditional Republican foes, but also some Democrats. Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., a former education secretary and chair of the Senate's education panel, took to the Senate floor to threaten an amendment blocking the ratings system. And in the House, Republican Rep. Bob Goodlatte of Virginia and Democratic Rep. Michael Capuano of Massachusetts — two states with large numbers of colleges — joined forces to sponsor a resolution opposing Obama's plan.

University associations that had fought the proposal praised the Obama administration for taking their concerns seriously and eventually agreeing to abandon the initial plan, calling it a rare example of the government acknowledging its own missteps.

COMING EVENTS

SATURDAY, JULY 4

COMMUNITY YARD SALE, 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., Roy Raley Park, 1205 S.W. Court Ave., Pendleton. Includes vendor booths. Booth space is $20, registration required by 12 noon July 2.

IONE FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION, 7 a.m., downtown Ione. Firecracker 5K walk/run ($10) and Fireman's Breakfast at 7 a.m.; children's activities begin at 11 a.m. at the city park; Red, White & Blue Parade at 1 p.m., Main Street; also horseshoe tournament, 3 on 3 basketball tournament, talent show, boat trip auction, craft show, food and craft vendors, free concert featuring James Otto at 8:30 p.m. and more.

LET 'ER BUCK RUN/WALK, 7 a.m. registration, 8 a.m. races begin, Pendleton Round-Up Grounds main gate, 1205 S.W. Court Ave. Costs $25; runners are encouraged to wear pink to support Tough Enough To Wear Pink. Prizes for age groups and best man/woman in pink. 1K Dash 'n' Splash for ages 3-11 is $15, includes pizza and soda following the race and free admission to the Pendleton Aquatic Center.

COLOR ME FREEDOM 5K RUN/WALK, 7:30 a.m. registration, 8 a.m. races begin, Yantis Park, Milton-Freewater. Other activities include rock wall, pugil pit, kids' patriotic parade around the park with a prize for the best dressed, and old-fashioned kids' games, apple pie contest for adults. Costss $25 with T-shirt, $15 without for those pre-registered, $5 more for race day registation. (marlattfam@outlook.com,Sharame Marlatt 541-969-7467).

BOARDMAN THUNDER RUN/WALK, 8 a.m., 206 N. Main St., Boardman. 5K run/walk or 10K run. Registration $20 at Boardman Chamber of Commerce.

HERMISTON'S OWN FARMERS MARKET, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., McKenzie Park, 300 S. First St., Hermiston. Food, crafts, live music, art.

KIDS' ART IN THE PARK, 9 a.m. to noon, McKenzie Park, 320 S. First St., Hermiston. Free kids' art activities with Laurie Ellis for ages 6-17. All supplies provided.

INDEPENDENCE DAY BARREL RACING, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Pendleton Round-Up Grounds, 1205 S.W. Court Ave.

FREE FOR ALL, 9:30-10:15 a.m. Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St., Pendleton. Family art experience for children up to age 12. Children under 8 should be accompanied by an adult. (541-278-9201).

BOARDMAN THUNDER FOURTH OF JULY, 10 a.m., downtown Boardman. Parade at 11 a.m., vendors, kids games and more.

FREE ADMISSION SATURDAY, 10 a.m., Heritage Station Museum, 108 S.W. Frazer Ave., Pendleton. (541-276-0012).

PENDLETON FOURTH OF JULY PARADE, 10 a.m., Main Street. Route runs from chamber of commerce parking lot down Main Street, west on Court Avenue to Southwest 12th Street, east on Southwest Dorion Avenue to Southwest Fourth Street. Trophies awarded in 13 categories, plus the VFW Patriot Trophy for entry with most overall votes.

LIVING CULTURE VILLAGE AT TAMASTSLIKT, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tamastslikt Cultural Institute, 47106 Wildhorse Blvd., Mission. View replicas of traditional and prehistoric Plateau Indian people and participate in cultural activities. Free with admission. (541-429-7700).

"ROBBERS, REPROBATES AND THE RED LIGHT DISTRICT" WALKING TOUR, 10:30 a.m. (after the parade), beginning at MaySon's Old Fashioned General Store, 369 S. Main St., Pendleton. Learn about Pendleton's 18 bordellos and 32 saloons in a four-block area of downtown. Costs $5 for adults, $4 for children under 12. (541-276-8206).

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Joe Meling of Richland, Wash., rides Night Hawk for 83.5 points at last year's PGG Independence Day PBR Touring Pro event at the Happy Canyon Arena in Pendleton. Barrel Racing is Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Pendleton Round-Up Grounds. PBR is from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the Happy Canyon Arena.

HIP & HANDMADE, 11 a.m. to noon, Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St., Pendleton. Free drop-in art project class for adults. (541-278-9201).

WYKED A&I CAR SHOW, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., downtown Stanfield. Cost to participate is $10, $5 for students with student ID. Poker walk, ring and lug nut toss and more. Prizes in 16 classes awarded at 3 p.m. (Jessica Arnold 541-969-8843).

STARS AND STRIPES FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION, 1-11 p.m., Butte Park, 1245 N.W. Seventh St., Hermiston. Pool party, barbecue dinner, games and more. Tickets for pool party at Hermiston Family Aquatic Center, $10 for ages 2-14, $14 for 15+, free for under 2. (541-289-7665).

SATURDAY SPIN-IN, 1-4 p.m., Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St., Pendleton. Fiber enthusiasts are encouraged to bring spinning wheels, portable looms and other tools and share fellowship and expertise. (541-278-9201).

WILDHORSE POW WOW, 1 p.m. to midnight, Wildhorse Resort pow wow grounds, 46510 Wildhorse Blvd., Pendleton. American Indian dancing and drumming contests, vendors offering native arts and crafts, apparel and food. .

INDEPENDENCE DAY PBR, 7:30-9:30 p.m., Happy Canyon Arena, 1601 Westgate (behind Pendleton Convention Center). Tickets are $25-$45, available at http://pendletonroundup.ticketforce.com

MOVIES IN THE PARK, 8-10 p.m., Community Park, 1000 S.W. 37th St., Pendleton. Concessions available.

SUNDAY, JULY 5

OUTDOOR WORSHIP SERVICE, 8 a.m., Bard Park, Stanfield. Free and open to all ages. Sponsored by Stanfield's church community.

WILDHORSE POW WOW, 1-9 p.m., Wildhorse Resort pow wow grounds, 46510 Wildhorse Blvd., Pendleton. American Indian dancing and drumming contests, vendors offering native arts and crafts, apparel and food.

ADULT OPEN GYM, 7-9 p.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave. Free access for ages 16 and up. (541-276-8100).

MONDAY, JULY 6

WALKING FOR WELLNESS, 8:30-9:30 a.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave. (541-276-8100).

SENSORY PLAY, 10 a.m., Children's Museum of Eastern Oregon, 400 S. Main St., Pendleton. For children ages 0-3. Free with paid admission. (541-276-1066).

SUPER HEROES AT THE LIBRARY, 10 a.m., Athena Public Library, 418 E. Main St. Summer reading program participants are encouraged to gather and bring your super hero cape or make one with us. (541-566-2470).

PRESCHOOL STORY TIME, 10:30 a.m., Athena Public Library, 418 E. Main St. For ages birth to 6. (541-566-2470).

PENDLETON SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12 noon, Pendleton Senior Center, 510 S.W. 10th St. Costs $3.50 for seniors, $6 for those under 60. Pool, puzzles, crafts, snacks, Second Time Around thrift store from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For Meals On Wheels, call CAPECO at 541-276-1926. (541-276-7101).

ART STUDIO, 4:00-5:30 p.m. Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St. Free class for ages 7-12 to develop skills and encourage art exploration. (541-278-9201).

MUSIC IN THE PARK, 7 p.m., Irrigon Marina Park, end of Northeast 10th Street,. Bent on Blues is the featured performer, and veterans will be honored. Bring blanket, lawn chairs and a picnic.

TUESDAY, JULY 7

TERRIFICALLY FREE TUESDAY, all day, Children's Museum of Eastern Oregon, 400 S. Main St., Pendleton. (541-276-1066).

WALKING FOR WELLNESS, 8:30-9:30 a.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave. (541-276-8100).

PRESCHOOL STORY TIME, 10:30-11 a.m., Stanfield Public Library, 180 W. Coe Ave. (541-449-1254).

BOARDMAN SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12 noon, Boardman Senior Center, 100 Tatone St. Costs $4 for seniors 55 or $5 for others. (541-481-3257).

HERMISTON SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12 noon, Hermiston Senior Center, 435 W. Orchard Ave. Costs $4 or free for children under 10. Extra 50 cents for utensils/dishes. Meals on Wheels available. Transportation arranged by donation. (541-567-3582).

JUNGLE STORY TIME, 12 noon to 2 p.m., Children's Museum of Eastern Oregon, 400 S. Main St., Pendleton. Free with paid admission. (541-276-1066).

PENDLETON SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12 noon, Pendleton Senior Center, 510 S.W. 10th St. Costs $3.50 for seniors, $6 for those under 60. Pool, puzzles, crafts, snacks, Second Time Around thrift store from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For Meals On Wheels, call CAPECO at 541-276-1926. (541-276-7101).

HELP WITH MEDICARE, 3-5 p.m., Hermiston Public Library, 235 E. Gladys Ave. Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance Office answer Medicare questions. For individual consultation, call 541-667-3507.

CRAFTERNOONS, 4 p.m., Pendleton Public Library, 502 S.W. Dorion Ave. Drop in for a craft project. All ages. (541-966-0380).

PENDLETON KNITTING GROUP, 6 p.m., Prodigal Son Brewery & Pub, 230 S.E. Court Ave. (541-966-0380).

TALENT OF THE VALLEY AUDITIONS, 6-8 p.m., Milton-Freewater Community Building, 109 N.E. Fifth St. Solo and group performers in vocal, dance, instrumental, magic and other kinds of talent are encouraged to try out for the annual show. Audition fee is $10 per act, all ages welcome. Audition applications and guidelines are available at ww.mfchamber.com. (Taridy Robertson 541-497-0210 or mfchamber@mfchamber.com)

DEATH NOTICES

Elaine Conklin

Pendleton
Oct. 17, 1929-July 2, 2015

Elaine Conklin, 85, of Pendleton died Thursday, July 2, 2015, at a local care facility. She was born Oct. 17, 1929. Arrangements are pending with Pendleton Pioneer Chapel, Folsom-Bishop.

Ashlee L. Hodgen

Pendleton
March 18, 1991-July 2, 2015

Ashlee L. Hodgen, 24, of Pendleton died Thursday, July 2, 2015, in Pendleton. She was born March 18, 1991, in Pendleton. Arrangements are pending with Pendleton Pioneer Chapel, Folsom-Bishop.

UPCOMING SERVICES

SATURDAY, JULY 4

No services scheduled

SUNDAY, JULY 5

No services scheduled

MONDAY, JULY 6

HANSEN, ORLIN — Memorial service at 2 p.m. at Munselle-Rhodes Funeral Home, 902 S. Main St., Milton-Freewater.

STALEY, ALLAN — Funeral service at 1 p.m. in the chapel at Burns Mortuary, 685 W. Hermiston Ave., Hermiston.

TUESDAY, JULY 7

No services scheduled

OBITUARY POLICY

The East Oregonian publishes paid obituaries. The obituary can include small photos and, for veterans, a flag symbol at no charge.

Obituaries may be edited for spelling, proper punctuation and style.

Expanded death notices will be published at no charge. These include information about services.

Obituaries and notices can be submitted online at www.eastoregonian.com/obituaryform, by email to obits@eastoregonian.com, by fax to 541-276-8314, placed via the funeral home or in person at the East Oregonian office.

For more information, call 541-966-0818 or 1-800-522-0255, ext. 221.

MEETINGS

MONDAY, JULY 6

WEST EXTENSION IRRIGATION DISTRICT SPECIAL MEETING, 8 a.m., district office, 840 E. Highway 730, Irrigon.

HEPPNER PLANNING COMMISSION, 7 p.m., Heppner City Hall, 111 N. Main St.

MILTON-FREEWATER PLANNING COMMISSION, 7 p.m., Milton-Freewater Public Library Albee Room, 8 S.W. Eighth Ave.

WESTON PLANNING COMMISSION, 7 p.m., Memorial Hall, 210 E. Main St.

TUESDAY, JULY 7

UMATILLA MORROW RADIO & DATA DISTRICT, 1:30 p.m., Boardman City Hall, 200 City Center Circle. (541-966-3774).

WESTON LIBRARY BOARD, 5:30 p.m., Weston Public Library, 108 E. Main St.

IRRIGON PLANNING COMMISSION, 6 p.m., Irrigon City Hall, 500 N.E. Main St.

MEACHAM VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT, 7 p.m., Meacham Fire Department, Meacham. (541-786-2069).

BOARDMAN CITY COUNCIL, 7 p.m., Boardman City Hall, 200 City Center Circle.

PENDLETON CITY COUNCIL, 7 p.m., Pendleton City Hall council chambers, 501 S.W. Emigrant Ave.

PILOT ROCK CITY COUNCIL, 7 p.m., council chambers, 143 W. Main St.

STANFIELD CITY COUNCIL, 7 p.m., council chambers, 150 W. Coe St.

UMATILLA CITY COUNCIL, 7 p.m., Umatilla City Hall, 700 Sixth St.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 8

UKIAH SCHOOL DISTRICT, 8 a.m., Ukiah School, 201 Hill St.

MORROW COUNTY COURT, 9 a.m., Port of Morrow, 2 Marine Drive, Boardman.

MILTON-FREEWATER CEMETERY MAINTENANCE DISTRICT #3, noon, Milton-Freewater Golf Course restaurant, 301 Catherine St.

SAFE COMMUNITIES, 12 noon to 1 p.m., Good Shepherd Medical Center conference center 2, 610 N.W. 11th St., Hermiston. RSVP to Kathy at 541-667-3502.

PORT OF MORROW COMMISSION, 1:30 p.m., port offices, 2 Marine Drive, Boardman.

PENDLETON FACADE COMMITTEE, 3:30 p.m., Pendleton City Hall community room, 501 S.W. Emigrant Ave.

RIVERSIDE SITE COUNCIL, 5:30 p.m., Riverside High School library, 210 N.E. Boardman Ave., Boardman.

WESTON CITY COUNCIL, 6 p.m., Memorial Hall, 210 E. Main St.

UMATILLA COUNTY FAIR BOARD, 6:30 p.m., Umatilla County Fairgrounds, 515 W. Orchard Ave., Hermiston.

ADAMS CITY COUNCIL, 7 p.m., Adams City Hall, 190 N. Main St.

ATHENA PLANNING COMMISSION, 6:30 p.m., Athena City Hall, 215 S. Third St.

CONDON PLANNING COMMISSION, 7 p.m., Condon City Hall, 128 S. Main St.

CONDON SCHOOL DISTRICT, 7 p.m., Condon Grade School, 220 S. East St.

HERMISTON FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT, 7 p.m., Hermiston Fire Station No.1, 320 S. First S.

HERMISTON PLANNING COMMISSION, 7 p.m., Hermiston City Hall, 180 N.E. Second St.

STANFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT, 7 p.m., district office, 1120 N. Main St.

HELIX SCHOOL DISTRICT, 7:30 p.m., Helix School library, 120 Main St.

THURSDAY, JULY 9

BOARDMAN RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT, 1 p.m., 300 S.W. Wilson Lane.

LOWER UMATILLA BASIN GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AREA COMMITTEE, 1:30 p.m., Stafford Hansell Government Building, 915 S.E. Columbia Drive, Hermiston. (www.morrowswcd.org)

CAPITAL INVESTMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE, 5:30-7 p.m, Pendleton City Hall council annex, 501 S.W. Emigrant Ave. Public comment accepted the last 10 minutes of the meeting. (541-966-0241).

HERMISTON PARK AND RECREATION COMMITTEE, 5:30 p.m., Hermiston City Hall, 180 N.E. Second St.

ATHENA CITY COUNCIL, 6:30 p.m., Athena City Hall, 215 S. Third St.

UMATILLA SCHOOL DISTRICT, 7 p.m., district office, 1001 Sixth St.

UMATILLA-MORROW COUNTY FARM BUREAU, TBA. Call Julie Spratling at 541-457-6045 for more information.

UMATILLA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S FUN-FILLED FAMILY EVENT

Back in Time:
An Old Fashioned Picnic at Heritage Station
Saturday, July 11, 11:00 am – 2:00 p.m.
Tickets $15.00 adults, $5.00 children 12 and under

Picnic lunch
Live music by Joe Lindsay
(formerly of the BMCC ensemble *Absolutely Nobody*)
Interactive pioneer station for kids

Tickets available at Armchair Books and Heritage Station Museum.

HERITAGE STATION
The Umatilla County Historical Society Museum

Call Heritage Station Museum at 541-276-0012 for information

MEET THE AUTHOR!
MARY A. JOHNSON, PH.D.

- Speaking briefly and signing her book, *"A Caregiver's Guide: Insights into the Later Years"*

Thursday, July 9, 5:30 pm
Hosted by Raphael Hoffman
at Sundown Grill
233 SE 4th St., Pendleton

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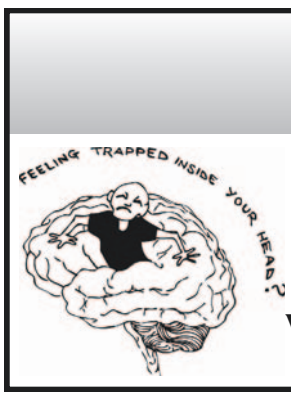

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