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BLUE MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Showdown in the works over faculty, program cuts

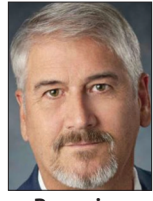
College president says labor agreement with faculty prevents necessary changes

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The Blue Mountain Community College Budget Committee has its first public meeting to discuss the plan to cut faculty and programs to meet the college's bottom line.

BMCC Faculty Association President Pete Hernberg said some instructors plan to be at the public meeting Monday, April 25, at the Pendleton campus, but he stayed mum about any addresses or statements they might make to the committee.

BMCC President Mark Browning contends the college started the 2022-23 budget process with a \$2 million hole. After cutting 39 classified and administrative positions from 2020 through 2022, the college



Browning

no longer can make cuts to those areas. Now, he told the East Oregonian in a meeting April 19, it's time to "right-size" Blue Mountain, and that means eliminating faculty.

His proposal calls for cutting 10 full-time faculty and several part-time positions in multiple disciplines and eliminating criminal justice, college prep and industrial systems technology programs. Browning said BMCC is top heavy with faculty compared to other Oregon community colleges.

BMCC has 47 full-time faculty teaching just more than the equivalent of 1,000 full-time students, he said, while Clatsop Community College has 29 full-time faculty and 800 full-time students and Treasure Valley CC in Ontario has 566 full-time students and 26 faculty.

Hernberg contends Browning is conflating the 35 full-time faculty who teach on campus with those who teach in the two state prisons in Umatilla County. The teachers at Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution, Pendleton and Two Rivers Correctional Institution, Umatilla,

receive separate funding, he said, and those students don't count as part of the college's 1,000 full-time students.

Hernberg teaches math and said he keeps a close watch on funding for the college, so Browning's claim the college is \$2 million short is shocking.

"The revenue is projected to be up \$300,000 from where we were a year ago," Hernberg said.

And some of the cuts in the proposal, he said, are for classes that are full.

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EDUCATION

The harm of bullying

Schools deal with the problem but are not always able to improve situations

By ERICK PETERSON
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — When 11-year-old Marc Martinez goes to school, he is not always able to concentrate on education.

Martinez said he goes to school with a different worry. Like some of his classmates at Sunset Elementary in Hermiston, and other students everywhere else, he said he is greatly concerned with being bullied.

This is an issue of interest at schools, including the Hermiston School District, at which Martinez attends.

Services to address bullying

Dan Greenough is the Hermiston School District's director of student services. He said he is not certain of how much bullying there is within the district, but there is enough to warrant concern. And the district has "a number of prevention pieces" to address bullying.

For instance, he said, counselors deliver lessons about bullying to students on a monthly basis, and students take surveys so the schools can better understand their experience and tailor lessons to problem areas.

The Hermiston School District also hired two additional social workers, to its previous one social worker, within the last year to help address bullying and other mental health issues.

"They are a support to students," he said.

The pandemic, and students being kept at home for extended periods, have necessitated this addition, he said.

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THE KWALK INEET



A large crowd turns out Monday, April 18, 2022, for the opening ceremony of a weeklong Plateau Long Tent event on Whitman College's Ankeny Field, Walla Walla. Greg Lehman/Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

Whitman, CTUIR partner for educational opportunity

By JEREMY BURNHAM
Walla Walla Union-Bulletin



People tour the photographic display Monday, April 18, 2022, inside the tent at the opening ceremony of a weeklong Plateau Long Tent event on Whitman College's Ankeny Field. Greg Lehman/Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

WALLA WALLA — Kwalk ineet, or "long tent" in English, is a traditional structure used by people in this area dating back thousands of years, Don Sampson, chief of the Waluulapam, said. But this week, students at Whitman College and members of the public can get an up-close look at one.

A kwalk ineet has been constructed at Ankeny Field on the Whitman campus and will remain there for the rest of the week. The display is the result of a partnership between the college and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

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VA plan calls for big changes to its Walla Walla medical center

By DAVIS CARBAUGH AND JOHN TILLMAN
EO Media Group

WASHINGTON — Oregon U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden this week said he plans to personally contact the Department of Veterans Affairs regarding recommendations to reduce services at the Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial VA Medical Center in Walla Walla.

The VA in mid March released a report from the Asset and Infrastructure Review Commission to modernize and realign the VA health care system. According to the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin, the report is in response to the 2018's MISSION Act, also known as the Veteran Community Care Act.

After site visits, listening sessions and data gathering around the coun-

try, the AIR Commission listed among its recommendations that the Walla Walla VA reduce services to primary care and mental health, which could result in the facility being reclassified as a community-based outpatient clinic, known better as a CBOC, rather than a full medical center, according to the Walla Walla UB.

At a virtual town hall for Union County residents on Wednesday, April 20, Wyden addressed several concerns related to veteran health care in Eastern Oregon. Key points included slow hiring processes, travel pay, difficulties at call centers across VA clinics and attaining health care services outside of the VA.

Wyden noted he has been hearing often from veterans on similar issues

and said he will be reaching out to the VA himself for an explanation and how to address the four major concerns brought up at the meeting and potential changes to the Walla Walla medical center.



Wyden

"Vets have earned the benefits because of their extraordinary service," Wyden said. "The vets committed their lives to our country and now I'm going to make sure we make our commitment to them really clear."

A market analysis showed veteran enrollment in VISN 20, the service region centered by the Walla Walla VA, is predicted to increase modestly and largely outside of Walla Walla. According to the Walla Walla paper, the recommended strategy is to invest in new outpatient facilities and expand

services in existing clinics to meet future demand, while "rightsizing" services at the Walla Walla VA, officials said.

The full set of recommendations call for closing a total of 17 VA medical centers nationwide while building 14 new ones and 140 new clinics, according to the Spokane Spokesman-Review, and encourages veterans, especially in rural areas, to seek care from private providers.

Under the proposal, Walla Walla would become an outpatient clinic similar to those in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, and Wenatchee, Washington, per the Spokane-Review. Along with ending surgeries and other inpatient treatment at the Walla Walla hospital, the plan proposes relocating

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