

EOU board to decide on tuition increase

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 across the nation deal with the repercussions of inflation, lowered enrollment and the COVID-19 pandemic, public universities across the state 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 Eastern Vice President of University Advancement Tim Seydel.



Seydel

Six out of the 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 saw 1,193 part-time enrollments and 1,632 full-time students.

Eastern Oregon froze tuition in



The Observer, File

An Eastern Oregon University student walks across the campus quad on Oct. 28, 2021. A tuition increase could be on the horizon for students attending the university in La Grande.

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 is 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 coronavirus 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.”

With tuition and student fees accounting for roughly half of most university’s overall revenue,

lowered enrollment trends due to the pandemic play a pivotal role. National trends of inflation and lowered attendance to full-time college programs have forced colleges into increasing tuition and focusing efforts on increasing tuition back to pre-pandemic levels.

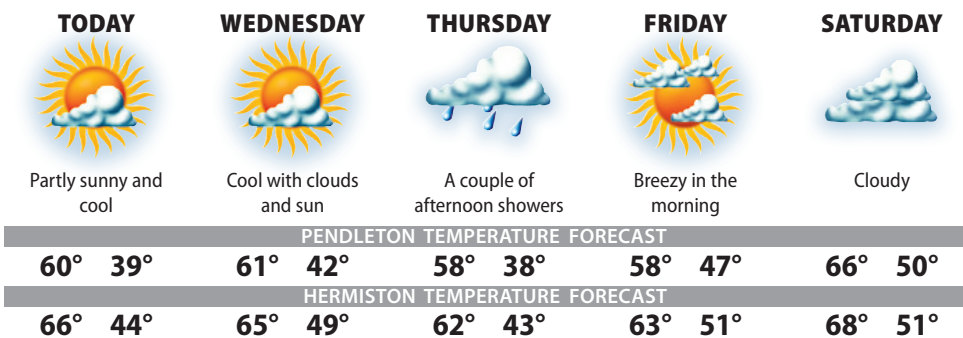
“Certainly the emphasis is to increase enrollment to ensure that more student have an opportunity to go to Eastern,” Seydel said. “What we’re doing there is really focused on intensive connection with our students and prospective students.”

Seydel noted that the university’s focus is in retaining its student services and retaining faculty members. The challenge of enrollment creates a balance between managing cost factors while still ensuring that Eastern Oregon can serve as an affordable, accessible university.

As COVID-19 cases remain low, Eastern remains focused on increasing enrollment in years to come through proactively reaching out to prospective students and individuals who can utilize wrap-around services to study at a higher education institution.

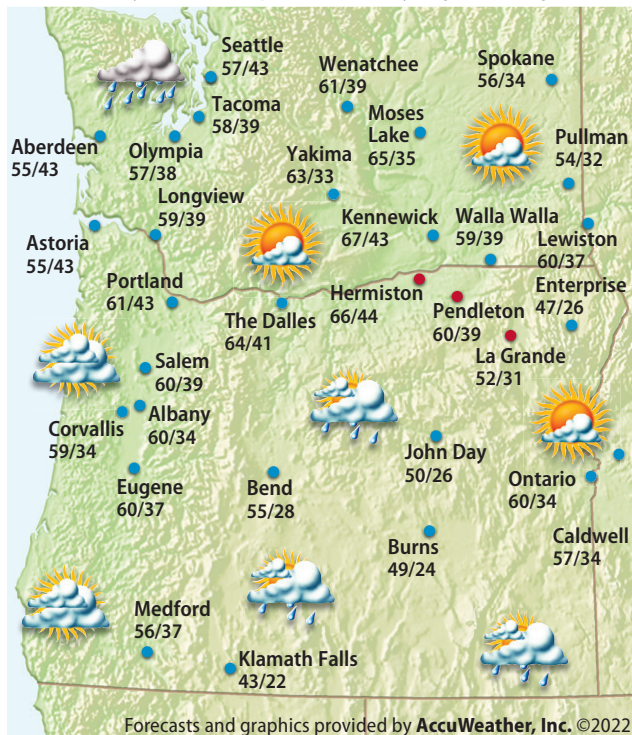
“We’re trying to do everything we can to make it possible for them to come to La Grande,” Seydel said, “be on our campus, be here taking classes, meet one on one with their faculty mentors and being able to get the wraparound services they need from our tutoring centers or student support areas so that they can be successful.”

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



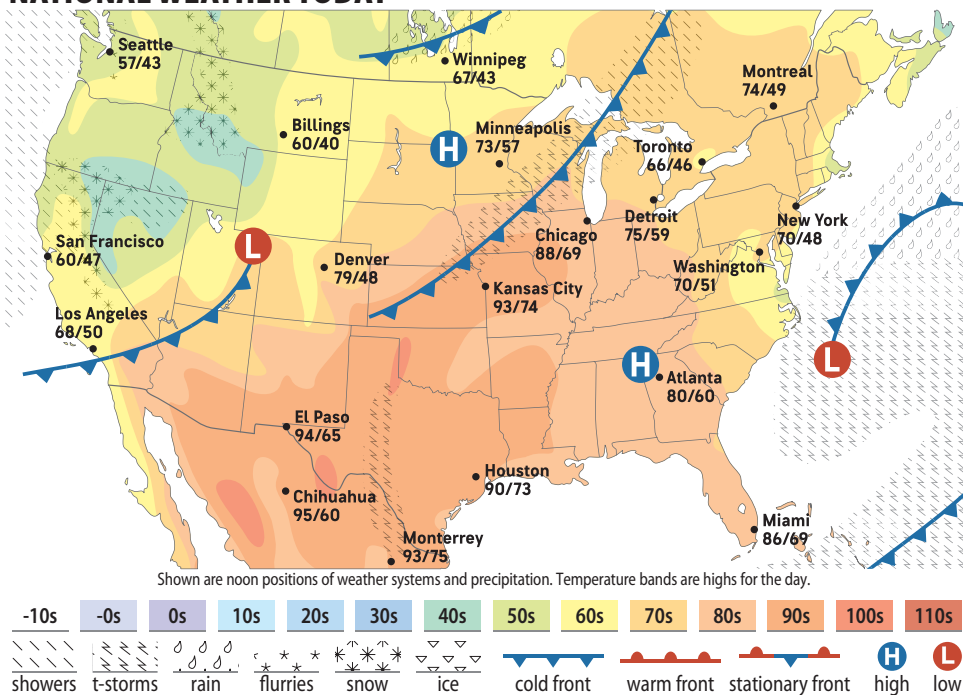
ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	54°	39°
Normals	71°	45°
Records	91° (1940)	28° (1922)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	Trace	
Month to date	0.99"	
Normal month to date	0.38"	
Year to date	6.61"	
Last year to date	3.81"	
Normal year to date	5.72"	
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.		
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	60°	42°
Normals	75°	44°
Records	95° (1987)	31° (2010)
PRECIPITATION		
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"	
Month to date	0.68"	
Normal month to date	0.22"	
Year to date	4.57"	
Last year to date	1.99"	
Normal year to date	3.77"	
WINDS (in mph)		
Today	WSW 7-14	
Wed.	WSW 7-14	
Boardman	W 7-14	
Pendleton	W 7-14	
SUN AND MOON		
Sunrise today	5:30 a.m.	
Sunset tonight	8:13 p.m.	
Moonrise today	1:52 p.m.	
Moonset today	3:20 a.m.	
Full	Last	New
May 15	May 22	May 30
		June 7

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 107° in Altus, Okla. Low 13° in Bridgeport, Calif.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Baker City mother, daughter to receive \$200K in settlement

Warren Wilson lost coaching job after student's allegations of sexual harassment

By JAYSON JACOBY
Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — A Baker City woman and her daughter who filed a federal lawsuit against the Baker School District two years ago, claiming district officials retaliated against the daughter after she complained about a Baker

as an example of how one person's dedication can positively impact a community. We are committed to protecting all students in our district.”

Jennifer J. Middleton, a Eugene attorney, represented the Fast's, who filed the suit in U.S. District Court in Pendleton.

Roberta Fast on May 5 said she and her daughter would talk about the settlement when Katrina returns to Baker City from college in about two weeks.

The central charge in the suit was that school district officials kept Katrina Fast, then a BHS junior, off the varsity volleyball team — she played on the junior varsity team as a junior in the fall of 2019 — as retaliation for her complaints about the actions of head volleyball coach Warren Wilson.

Katrina and Roberta Fast complained about Wilson to multiple district officials in January 2019, after Katrina's sophomore volleyball season in the fall of 2018, according to the lawsuit.

Katrina Fast also played for a club volleyball team. After graduating from Eagle Cap Innovative High School in Baker City in 2021, Fast enrolled at Iowa Lakes Community College in Estherville, Iowa, where she has played setter and led her team, and was fifth in her conference, in assists.

In April 2022 Fast signed a letter of intent to transfer to Warner Pacific University in Portland, her parents' alma mater, to continue her college volleyball career this fall.

After the Fast's expressed concerns about Wilson to district officials, including superintendent Mark Witty, Witty fired Wilson as head volleyball coach and assistant

baseball coach on Feb. 25, 2019. The firing was appealed to the Baker School Board, which upheld Wilson's termination on March 19, 2019.

During the meeting, Wilson's supporters criticized the way the issue was handled and spoke favorably of Wilson's character and coaching abilities. A member of the volleyball team urged the board not to act based on comments from a few players who were dissatisfied with the coach and how much playing time they had been given.

As recently as April 4, both Middleton and the school district's attorney, Kim Hoyt of Salem, jointly filed a pretrial order in which they agreed to certain facts.

On March 17, 2022, the attorneys filed a document in court stating the parties had mediation sessions on March 23, 2020 — before Fast's filed the lawsuit — and again on Aug. 9, 2021, after the lawsuit was filed. Both were unsuccessful, according to the document.

The Fast's lawsuit notes Wilson was kept on as a BHS volleyball coach after the Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission disciplined him in November 2017. The discipline was imposed after the school district investigated a complaint against Wilson for alleged “inappropriate teacher/student boundaries” in regard to his interaction with student athletes in his role as BHS girls JV basketball coach in 2015.

Wilson signed a stipulated agreement on Sept. 23, 2017, in which TSPC found his actions constituted “gross neglect of duty” in violation of state law.

His teaching license was suspended for 60 days and he was placed on two years' probation.



Fast

CORRECTIONS: The East Oregonian works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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