

Colleges:

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ations by governors through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act.

“This initial investment is a critical first step to launching this five-year initiative,” Eastern Oregon University President Tom Insko said. “Together, I believe we can reshape the future of post-secondary education in eastern Oregon, which means eliminating the equity gap and making sure all students reach their attainment goals in less time and money and set the path to better career outcomes.”

The Eastern Oregon University Board of Trustees convened via Zoom for a special meeting on June 27 to authorize Insko to enter into a contract with educational



Yasser Marte/East Oregonian

The Blue Mountain Community College Class of 2022 stands and turns tassels to the left June 9, 2022, to commemorate graduation. BMCC in Pendleton, Treasure Valley Community College in Ontario and Eastern Oregon University in La Grande have joined Moon Shot for Equity, an initiative to remove systemic barriers that prevent access and attainment to a post-secondary education degree.

consulting firm EAB Global Inc. Board authorization is required because the contract exceeds \$1 million.

EAB Global launched the Moon Shot project in the fall of 2020 with a focus on removing systemic barriers to grad-

uation among first-generation students as well as students of color.

“Our work with this new cohort of institutions in Eastern Oregon adds a new focus around bridging the rural versus urban divide that too

often leaves students from more remote areas with reduced access to higher education,” EAB Vice President of Partnerships Tom Sugar said, “and all of the opportunities that go along with that.”

Morrow:

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He asked commissioners about what they knew about any complaint against him. Doherty and Commissioner Melissa Lindsay said they would not make statements on the advice of attorneys.

But Commissioner Don Russell did. He said he had been trying to obtain information about the investigation for months, with no luck.

Without knowing more, he said, he could not support Green’s termination.

Doherty called for the vote, and he and Lindsay voted in favor, while Russell stood against. With that, Doherty closed the meeting.

The decision drew ire from many in attendance, some calling this a “witch hunt,” and another shouting “recall.”

Morrow County Clerk Bobbie Childers was present. After the meeting she said her office has received requests for recall information, and her office has sent that information.

Several people complimented Russell for his position.

“I have to be able to look at myself in the mirror,” he replied.

Russell explained the county in late 2021 hired an investigator to look into possible violations regarding grants the county health department received. He said it was his understanding that

if the department was doing something amiss, the investigation was to show what the department needed to rectify.

Then a county employee told him he should listen to recordings of the investigator questioning county staff. Russell did not reveal who the employee was but said the person was concerned the investigator was pushing a certain narrative rather than conducting an open inquiry.

Russell said he sought the recordings.

“I’ve been denied them every time I asked,” he said.

That happened, Russell continued, in spite of Justin Nelson, the county counsel and district attorney, saying there was no reason to deny the request. Russell said

he found out that to get the recordings, he needs the full approval of the county board.

Green on the way out of the building reiterated he still did not understand what his termination was about. He said if there had been a complaint in August 2021, the county commissioners could have talked with him about it face to face rather than going to the expense of hiring an investigator.

“The No. 1 priority in this county is communication,” Green said. “... And that didn’t happen.”

Lindsay after the meeting said the county likely will bring on a temporary county administrator, but with a new board poised to serve in 2023, hiring a permanent replacement remains a question.

Heat:

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“I think I over-stressed for the competition at first,” Nguyen said, “It was nerve-wracking. But I was able to calm down, be cool, and do what I normally do.”

She prepared a three-course meal for the judges, allotted only one hour to make bruschetta, carbonara and tiramisu. Though each participant received the list of ingredients weeks in advance, there still were some hiccups in the process. Nguyen dealt with a different cheese than she was expecting, a harder cookie than she practiced with and learned the day of that she had to make her own balsamic glaze.

“The thing that matters most is time management,” she said. “You have an hour to do everything, and you need to have it all come out at the same time so you can give it to the judges hot.”

After all the stress of the day, Nguyen’s practice paid off. Her score of 92.66 was the best of the competition, earning her the gold medal and a trip in late July to San Diego for nationals. Her classmate, Clay Thornton, placed third, narrowly missing out on a nationals appearance.

No time to let up

“I’m incredibly excited for nationals,” Nguyen said. “I’ll get to meet people from all over the world, compete with the

best cooks and talk to them. It’ll be my first time ever visiting California.”

Although the junior does not see herself pursuing a cooking career — instead hoping to enter college in the medical field — that was hard to tell from her work process. Smith and Nguyen have practiced every day since school let out, perfecting the dish for nationals: chicken, rice and green beans.

It’s a meal that only the instructor and pupil will get to see her make. Due to financial constraints, no other FCCLA members will travel with the two to California.

“It’s a bit disappointing to go without my friends,” Nguyen said. “I guess I’ll just have to fundraise even harder with everyone next year.”

The two won’t be completely alone, though — groups from La Grande, Enterprise and Umatilla also will be staying with them.

And for a program that did not exist when Smith arrived, it’s a huge step forward. The hospitality instructor is stepping down from teaching following this year, but she already has left a mark. In her wake are a group of students, including Nguyen, who are passionate about FCCLA.

“This program works because of the students,” Smith said, “Kids get other kids excited, not teachers.”

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