

EOU joins state's other universities approving tuition hike

By MEERAH POWELL
Oregon Public Broadcasting

LA GRANDE — Eastern Oregon University's Board of Trustees Thursday, May 19, approved a 4.9% tuition increase for undergraduate students for the upcoming academic year.

EOU is the last public university in Oregon to decide on tuition this year. It follows in the footsteps of the six other universities that have all recommended increases.

However, even with the tuition increase, and an esti-

mated boost in enrollment, Eastern officials are still anticipating a budget deficit of at least \$2 million.

EOU's Vice President of Finance, Lara Moore, said the university made certain decisions it knew would contribute to that operating deficit — including freezing its tuition rates for most undergraduate students last year.

"Our tuition proposal recognizes that," Moore said. "It recognizes that we are in an operating deficit. It recognizes the inflationary pressures that we are under

as an institution, because we do want to maintain our financial stability."

Moore stressed that even with the tuition increase, affordability is an important principle to the university. According to EOU board documents, Eastern is still Oregon's cheapest public university by credit hour for in-state students even with this increase.

Undergraduate in-state students are paying a little over \$7,800 in tuition this school year if they're taking 15 credits per term in a regular three-term year.

They'll pay roughly \$380 more starting next school year — or about \$8,200 in annual tuition. Students from Washington and Idaho can also get in-state tuition at Eastern.

Undergraduate out-of-state students are currently paying about \$20,500 annually, based on that same 15-credit load. They will see an annual increase of about \$1,000 — up to \$21,500 in annual tuition.

Tuition prices also vary for students in the Western Undergraduate Exchange Program, or WUE — stu-

dents who come from a number of states near Oregon, like California and Nevada. Rates also vary for students solely taking classes online.

Eastern is Oregon's smallest public university and like nearly every other public university in the state, it got a little smaller during the pandemic. Only Oregon State University has avoided a decrease in enrollment this past fall compared with numbers before the pandemic, according to Oregon's Higher Education Coordinating Commission. Officials at the small

university in La Grande are reporting an 8% decrease in enrolled students from 2019 to fall 2021 — a trend they say is critical to address.

"The real key to everything really is enrollment. That's what we're going to live and die on is enrollment," EOU Trustee Brad Stephens said at the board's meeting.

All of the public universities are instituting tuition increases for the upcoming academic year of anywhere from around 3% to 5% for in-state undergraduate students.

Commissioners hear update on weed battle

Progress reported for 2021; more expected this year

By BILL BRADSHAW
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — In an update on the battle against noxious and invasive weeds in Wallowa County, Andy Marcum, the county's Vegetation Department manager, listed the department's accomplishments in 2021 and outlined plans to continue the efforts this year.

Working in conjunction with other agencies and, in particular, with landowners in the county, the department has made significant progress, Marcum said.

"We're staying on top of the yellowstar (thistle) in the Lostine," he said of one area of achievement.

He also said landowners are of great help.

"They're doing a great job of keeping their roads clean and staying on top of medusahead," he said.

Last year, some 400 acres of medusahead rye was treated on property belonging to five landowners, Marcum said. Another 1,641 net acres of weeds on different

lists were treated, as were 490 acres of bareground and broadleaf weeds on county roads, gravel pits and right-of-ways, according to Marcum's slide presentation. Gravel pits, he noted, can be sites that lead to the proliferation of weeds when gravel is hauled to various areas around the county.

Marcum said the department found and treated three new sites of plumeless thistle. Some \$20,712.27 was shared with landowners by the county to help combat the weeds.

But there's still more to do.

"As you know, if you drive down the Little Sheep Highway in another few weeks, you're going to see Scotch thistle this tall everywhere," he said as he raised his hand several feet off the floor.

This year, the department plans to survey for weeds an additional 10,000 acres northeast of Ant Flat for plumeless thistle and other weeds. The department also plans to:

- Continue education and outreach with partners at local events.
- Hold a "spray day" for myrtle spurge at Wallowa Lake.
- Install a hay station at the Flora junction.

- Reestablish the noxious weed tour with the weed board in late July.

Numerous other projects are planned for the Little Sheep Corridor, the Wallowa River, the Lostine River, Water Canyon, Big Canyon, the East Moraine, treat the mid-valley for musk thistle, treat the mid- and lower-valley for yellowstar thistle, conduct an annual invasive grass survey and treatment in the mid-valley.

Marcum said the department is attempting to address areas it believes are more manageable.

"We need to refocus our efforts away from Zumwalt (Prairie). We've been working out there for 20 years and spent a lot of money out there over the past 20 years and it's just so bad out there, so we've tried to find an area that is manageable for eradication of weeds and grasses and the sites that are out there are pretty clean."

He said the goal is to have efforts on the Zumwalt be more cost-effective.

"You get to the point where you dump millions of dollars into the Zumwalt for basic grasses and you have to do it every single year," he said.

However, Marcum said later that without the efforts by the county and its partners on the Zumwalt, it would likely be a lot worse than it is now.

Treatment other than herbicides

Commissioner Todd Nash agreed that the department can't just continue to pour money into treatment of the prairie.

"At some point, you have got to have a bigger, badder perennial that out-competes an aggressive annual," he said.

Marcum agreed. "And that's what they try to do with the reseedings," he said.

Commission Chairwoman Susan Roberts asked about a section that burned several years ago and then was reseeded.

"That's the ideal treatment for those annual grasses," Marcum said. "Burn, treatment and reseeding."

He said Wallowa Resources has done some trial burns and reseeded with success.

Marcum also talked about biological methods of treating weeds, such as insects that do the job of herbicides.

IN BRIEF

May is motorcycle safety month

SALEM — As Oregon weather turns warmer, drivers should expect to see more motorcycle and moped riders. By intentionally looking for riders, drivers can reduce the potential of a "Looked But Failed to See" crash.

The governor has proclaimed the month of May Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month, urging all drivers to look for riders. The proclamation also encourages riders to ride in a courteous, legally compliant manner, which can reduce some risks associated with riding motorcycles and mopeds.

Joseph to hold hearing on zoning change

JOSEPH — A public hearing on a resident's request for a zoning change will be held during the next Joseph City Council meeting Thursday, June 2, according to a press release.

The meeting begins at 7 p.m. at the Joseph Community Events Center. The

public is welcome to attend in person or via Zoom.

To join the Zoom meeting, visit <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88138754137?pwd=Z3c4WEFkUzdWLU-3RqdzSbkFSPFRodz09>. The webinar ID is 881 3875 4137 and the passcode is 269827. To attend by telephone, call 253-215-8782.

The council will adjourn its regular session to go into the public hearing to consider a request by Andy McKee for a minor partition of property at 201 E. 2nd St. and a zoning change from R-2 (general residential) to Commercial.

A map showing the request is available on the city's website.

All residents who own property within the 250-foot conditional use/variance zone are allowed to voice any concerns about the requested changes. The council also urges any residents with other concerns to speak at the hearing.

Anyone wishing to provide input before the meeting is asked to do so before 4 p.m. May 25 at Joseph City Hall or email the city-of-josephoregon@gmail.com. For questions regarding this meeting, call City Hall at 541-432-3832.

— Chieftain staff

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Veterans Appreciation Dinners

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Wallowa County Veterans Services & Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness

We are hosting Veterans Appreciation Dinners in each town throughout May and June.

- May 5, 6:00 - 7:30 PM**
Imnaha Christain Fellowship
- May 19, 6:00 - 7:30 PM**
Troy School
- June 2, 6:00 - 7:30 PM**
Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise
- June 16, 6:00 - 7:30 PM**
Senior Center in Wallowa
- June 30, 6:00-7:30 PM**
Joseph Community Center

Please RSVP to help us plan.

scan me to RSVP or call 541-426-0539.