

Alexander

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Although OSU-Cascades has its own leadership, and is located three hours away from the primary Corvallis campus, the university's president does have an impact on Bend's campus, Johnson said. Perhaps the biggest example is how much sway the president has over local and federal legislators to deliver funding to the expanding Cascades campus, she said.

Johnson believes OSU's acting president — Provost and Executive Vice President Ed Feser — will be effective as a university leader for now.

"He's been very supportive of OSU-Cascades," she said.

Johnson also expects the leadership shakeup shouldn't affect OSU-Cascades' enrollment growth, which continued at a strong pace this school year despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Our applications are looking good for next fall, which means people are feeling good about our campus as an option," she said. "I don't think this (resignation) is going to impact that."

Taha Elwafati, OSU-Cascades' student body president and a sophomore at the university, said accepting Alexander's resignation was the best call.

"I think (the board of trustees) made the right move,"

said Elwafati, 19. "It sounded like the leadership amongst our faculty also agreed with that, and at a university, it's important to acknowledge those voices."

Michael Tornatta, a senior at OSU-Cascades and a member of the university's student government, said he was happy Alexander was gone, but frustrated it didn't happen sooner. This situation shows major flaws in OSU's administrative hiring process, he said.

"Obviously, the administrators that hired him, they could've vetted him a bit better, or they just didn't care about his background," said Tornatta, 25. "We need to hold our administration accountable."

Tornatta added that the Alexander scandal has changed how some OSU-Cascades students view their university's leaders.

"I know for a fact this has made a lot of students on campus really uncomfortable, especially survivors (of sexual assault) — they can't trust their administration now," he said. "They brought someone with this background, who was willing to look the other way with assault, and that trust needs to be regained now."

Multiple OSU-Cascades faculty members did not respond when asked for comment.

Reporter: 541-617-7854, jhogan@bendbulletin.com

OSU board accepts resignation of new president after LSU scandal

BY EDDIE PELLIS

The Associated Press

Oregon State's trustees accepted the resignation of university president F. King Alexander on Tuesday, concluding he was unable to rebuild trust at the school because of his role in the mishandling of sexual misconduct cases during his previous tenure at Louisiana State University.

The Oregon State board had placed Alexander on probation last week, but on Sunday, it received his offer to resign, effective April 1.

Board Chair Rani Borkar said the outpouring of comments since the probation decision from students, alumni and people who have alleged sexual misconduct led the board to realize "that rebuilding trust is no longer possible."

The board voted unanimously to accept the resignation.

Alexander, who will be on administrative leave until his departure, said he was sorry to survivors of sexual abuse.

"I offered my resignation to allow us to move on," he said in a statement after the board's



Courtesy Oregon State University, file
F. King Alexander speaks during an event at Oregon State University in Corvallis. Prior to taking over as OSU president in July 2020, Alexander was the president at Louisiana State University.

vote. "Students have and always will be my top priority."

Borkar said, "We admit when we make mistakes and we always seek to improve," and her thoughts were echoed by the rest of the board. "I know it triggered a lot"

board member Lamar Hurd said, as he choked back tears. "I know there's a lot of discussion around how too much gets overlooked. But I want you to know it wasn't overlooked. I haven't been sleeping well."

An investigation into LSU's response to the misconduct cases found systemic flaws in the school's reaction to allegations during Alexander's tenure there from 2013-19. Alexander told the board last week he was never interviewed by the law firm that conducted the investigation.

But in an extraordinary move, the chair of LSU's board sent a letter to Borkar on Monday, saying Alexander denied requests to be interviewed and only would respond to questions in writing.

LSU board Chair Robert Dampf said Alexander's testimony last week to Oregon State's trustees left him "beyond offended by ... arrogant and condescending comments about Louisiana's culture, our state and our university."

The board agreed to a severance package that will pay

Alexander \$630,000 and an additional \$40,000 in relocation fees.

The president came to Oregon State in the summer, before the mishandling of the misconduct charges at LSU were brought to light.

Also revealed was a 2013 investigation into the former football coach, Les Miles, who was banned from contacting female students after a report found he had acted inappropriately with a few of them.

Alexander said he was aware of the Miles report and didn't feel comfortable with him as coach, but that the LSU board had decided on his status before Alexander arrived there in 2013.

Oregon state Sen. Sara Gelsler, who represents Corvallis, called Alexander's resignation "the right step forward."

"Now the real work towards healing and rebuilding trust can begin," she said. "Survivors and advocates have a detailed, actionable plan that simply needs administrative funding and support to put in action."

Brown announces 10-Point Economic Recovery Plan for pandemic relief

BY SARA CLINE

The Associated Press/Report for America

PORTLAND — Oregon Gov. Kate Brown announced a 10-Point Economic Recovery Plan on Tuesday that aims to help families and businesses across the state — with a focus on people of color — impacted financially by the pandemic and 2020 wildfires.

In addition, Brown said the state is slated to receive \$6.4 billion in funds from the recently passed COVID-19 stimulus package, which she said should be invested in a way that "maximizes economic recovery efforts for Oregonians this year, while also addressing the ex-

isting disparities that were exacerbated by the pandemic."

Oregon had among the strictest COVID-19 restrictions and safety measures in the United States, with the state shutting down in March and businesses — restaurants, gyms and indoor entertainment venues — again forced to close their doors in November for weeks and in some counties months.

Since the start of the pandemic, Oregon has paid around \$8 billion in jobless benefits. Between March and July 2020 alone, more than 500,000 people filed unem-



Brown

ployment claims in the state, causing major delays in people receiving funds.

In the midst of the pandemic, Oregon faced another devastating challenge — wildfires.

During the wildfires that burned more than 1 million acres, at least 4,000 homes were destroyed and some people are still displaced.

"My 10-Point Plan provides a roadmap for economic recovery, and will guide our state and local governments as we invest our shares of federal dollars from the American Rescue Plan," Brown said.

Diving

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"I have my little inflatable boat that I have decked out with sonar to be able to pinpoint a vehicle," Leisek said. "Antonio was inside (his car) and they were able to bring Antonio home that night."

Leisek said recoveries involving bodies are humbling, and he becomes emotionally invested with the families of the deceased. He is honored to be the person to bring a resolution.

"It comes down to being able to do something that others cannot and to give answers to families who would never receive those answers," Leisek said.

Sarah Clark, an owner of Central Oregon Diving in Bend, said her company helped Leisek start diving lo-

cally three years ago.

The company offered Leisek air and gear at a discount as he kept finding trash in the Deschutes River, Clark said.

"We've been there supporting him with whatever we could do to further his environmental impact," Clark said.

Clark is amazed Leisek went from picking up soda cans to recovering cars and solving cold cases. She is impressed with how Leisek connects with the people he helps and shows compassion with every search in the water.

"He would do anything for anybody," Clark said. "He's made that his mission."

Leisek admits finding the bodies takes an emotional toll on him. He also feels a burden by not being able to

help every family in need who reaches out through his YouTube channel.

"The burden is we have hundreds of people who reach out, who are now looking to us," Leisek said. "It's me having to tell these families no."

Despite the difficulties, Leisek has no plans to stop searching in the rivers and lakes in Central Oregon and across the country.

"The entire thing is a very humbling experience," he said. "We honor that and don't take that lightly."

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Find it all online
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Wirkkala

Continued from A1

Prosecutors with the Oregon Department of Justice are resubmitting much of the evidence from 2014, including the 12-gauge shotgun that has spent most of the past eight years in a cardboard box in an evidence locker at the Bend Police Department. Because it's a retrial, there's pressure on witnesses to give exactly the same testimony as in the first trial. That was the case Tuesday and Friday, when witness Cameron Crownover's testimony was word-for-word the same as before — only it was spoken in this trial by another person.

Crownover is the nephew of Wirkkala's girlfriend at the time of the killing, Rachel Rasmussen, and was in the home that night. Under questioning in the first trial, Crownover, who has been diagnosed with autism, was unable to remember many of the details from that night, despite repeated prompting from the prosecutor.

He testified to hearing a loud thud and shattering glass, followed by Wirkkala yelling, "I f----- killed him."

Now 24, Crownover's autism inhibits his ability to recall events accurately, his mother, Jennifer Benedict, testified Friday. Benedict said the shooting caused severe PTSD in her son, whom she called "the sweetest person I know."

Due to Crownover's condition, the state received permission for a legal intern to take his place on the witness stand. On Friday, law clerk Caleb Stats and prosecutor Jayme Kimberly read dialog from the first trial, with Stats as Crownover and Kimberly as his questioner.

At one point, Kimberly read questions originally posed by defense attorney Joel Wirtz, who has represented Wirkkala in both trials, and who was seated several feet away.

Tuesday featured other evidence that factored prominently in the first trial: recordings of Wirkkala's time in police custody after the shooting. Wirkkala's unusual demeanor after Ryder's death was a salient fact of the first trial for many.

Wirkkala was driven by a Bend Police officer from his home to the Bend Police station and taken to an interview room. The officers testified that for the next hour they waited for a detective to arrive at the station to formally interview Wirkkala.

"My goal was simply to keep him company," officer Michael Hatoo testified Tuesday.

Wirkkala showed an interest in the officers, breaking the silence at numerous points to ask about their lives and opinions about music and other art, Hatoo testified.

"So you ski or snowboard?" Wirkkala asked officer Scott

Elliott. At one point, Wirkkala got serious.

"Now I'm here — that f---g guy," he said, indicating Ryder. "But I'd trade places with him in a second."

Wirkkala's demeanor changed when detective Tim Knea tried to interview him, with Wirkkala eventually telling Knea to "cut the s---."

In 2014, the jury did not accept Wirkkala's defense. The

court of appeals later ruled that jury heard portions of the interview with Knea that took place after Wirkkala had requested an attorney.

A partial version of the recording was played in court Tuesday.

Trial proceedings continue Wednesday with more witnesses for the prosecution.

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OBITUARY



Shirley Dexter

February 23, 1933 - March 15, 2021

Born to Lester and Helen Garbutt in Rose Lodge, Or. She attended school in Grande Rhonda, OR. She moved to Tumalo when she was a Junior in High School where she met Fred. She graduated from Redmond High School on June 1, 1951 and married Fred on June 3, 1951. She was a lifelong resident of Terrebonne. Shirley was a homemaker and raised 4 children. Later in the 80's she pursued her passion for dolls. She purchased and dressed them for herself and to sell to others. She also donated several dolls to the Redmond Fire Dept for the Christmas Toys for Kids program. In 2001 she flew to Ohio to the Lee Middle doll factory and in 2005 went to Oklahoma to meet Sheila Michaels who is a famous doll artist. Shirley has the largest private doll collection in the State of Oregon. She also started the local Second Childhood Doll Club. She loved to crochet for her dolls and was a 4-H knitting leader when her daughters were growing up. Shirley was preceded in death by her parents, a sister, 2 brothers, a grandson and granddaughter. She is survived by her husband Fred of 70 years, Her children Linda Reynolds of Caldwell, Id, Debbie (Dick) Ridgeway of Madras, Barbara (Ron) Twardowski of Newport, Wa and David of Redmond, 8 grandchildren, 18 great grandchildren and 6 great great grandchildren.

DEATH NOTICES

Geraldine E. Silva

of Bend, OR
June 4, 1930 - March 16, 2021

Arrangements: Niswonger-Reynolds Funeral Home is honored to serve the family. 541-382-2471 Please visit the online registry for the family at www.niswonger-reynolds.com
Services: A graveside service will be held at a later date in Valley of the Temples Memorial Park in Honolulu, Hawaii.
Contributions may be made to: The charity of your choice or just do a kindness for someone in Geraldine's memory.

Anthony J. Conte, Sr

of Bend, OR
March 8, 1929 - March 4, 2021

Arrangements: 541-318-0842 www.autumnfunerals.net
Services: Private services will be held at a later date
Contributions may be made to: Knights of Columbus, c/o St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, 2450 NE 27th St., Bend, OR 97701

James H. Farleigh

of Bend, OR
Feb 13, 1928 - March 13, 2021

Arrangements: Autumn Funerals, Bend 541-318-0842 www.autumnfunerals.net
Services: Memorial services will be held at a later date

Thomas "Tom" Richard Littlehales

of Bend, OR
Jan 13, 1944 - March 16, 2021

Arrangements: Baird Funeral Home of Bend is honored to serve the Littlehales family. Please visit our website, www.bairdfh.com, to share condolences and sign our online guest book.
Services: A Celebration of Life will take place August 5, 2021.
Contributions may be made to: Humane Society of Central Oregon
www.hsco.org
61170 SE 27th St Bend, OR 97702
541-382-3537
Mt. Bachelor Sports Education Foundation (MBSEF)
mbsef@mbsef.org
541-388-0002
2765 NW Lolo Drive Bend OR 97703

Linda Ann Burger

of Redmond, OR
November 15, 1951 - February 25, 2021

Arrangements: Arrangement entrusted to Redmond Memorial Chapel. 541-548-3219. Please leave condolences at redmondmemorial.com
Services: A Celebration of Life is being planned for this summer.
Contributions may be made to: Memorial contributions may be made to Special Olympics Oregon at https://soor.org

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