

REPORT OF THE ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF OREGON INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY REGARDING OREGON TECH STUDENTS'S CONFIDENCE IN BOARD OF TRUSTEES LEADERSHIP

June 15, 2022

The Associated Students of Oregon Institute of Technology (ASOIT) has compiled a report outlining examples of grievances against the Board of Trustees from March 2021 to the current date. The contents of this report are the result of the collective input of Oregon Tech's student body at the Klamath Falls and Portland-Metro campuses, carried out in faith by the ASOIT Executive Cabinet and ASOIT Council.

The intent of the report is to articulate how the Board of Trustees leadership has caused persistent and ongoing issues that affect the entire Oregon Tech community, and to enumerate those issues to the best of our ability. We believe that this body of evidence supports the broad and extensive areas of deficiency in the Board of Trustees' leadership.

The Associated Students of Oregon Institute of Technology strongly compels the Board of Trustees to carefully consider the contents of this report, which addresses the Board of Trustees' leadership and management style only and makes no assertions about or judgments on the character of any Board of Trustees members. Each grievance is a violation of clearly defined expectations within the Board of Trustees Resolution 15-2 on Shared Governance. This report will outline the following areas of deficiency:

1. Failure to abide by Board Resolution 15-2 on Shared Governance;
2. Disregard of stakeholder input, especially student voice, including concerns on ethical behaviour, with minimal to no follow-up and communication;
3. Failure to respond to the Vote of No Confidence in President Nagi Naganathan by the faculty in March of 2021;
4. Failure to follow procedure on comprehensive presidential review, the climate assessment, and disregard of these important processes prior to President Nagi Naganathan's contract renewal.

Examples of disregard of stakeholder input, especially student voice:

Board Meeting April 8, 2021

Student Shiloh Castelli gave public comment that called attention to the erasure of union and student input in University Press releases. Shiloh called attention to increasing budget uncertainties and lack of transparency in budgeting and in communications. The Board did not respond to Shiloh's comments.

Student Brie Landis gave public comment that called attention to the increasing budget deficit without transparency into university spending. Brie called attention to the increasing loss of faculty and staff members impacting student learning outcomes, and called for transparency. The Board did not respond to Brie's comments.

Board of Trustees Meeting November 18, 2021

Student body vice president (Klamath Falls campus) Justin Echernacht gave a report that included falling enrollment and continued loss of faculty and staff that impacts student learning outcomes. Within the written submission of this report was a call for adherence to the policy outlining Comprehensive Evaluation of the President. The Board did not respond to the concerns presented verbally or in the written report.

Student body President (Portland Metro campus) Jack Zoucha gave a report calling attention to the lack of institutional support for the PM campus, citing increased demand for the renewable resource engineering degree but with little awareness of the Portland metro Oregon Tech campus to entice future students. The report also called attention to the nearly 3x tuition cost for this program for out-of-state students. The Board thanked Jack for his research efforts but did not respond to his concerns.

Board of Trustees Meeting January 27, 2022

Student body president (Klamath Falls campus) Brie Landis gave a report that included efforts in revising Board Resolution 15-2 on Shared Governance, and concerns that faculty and staff turn-over are negatively impacting student retention and enrollment. The report called attention to a student petition gaining ground since September 2021 that outlines grievances. The report called attention to letters sent by students to ABET and to HECC calling for review and oversight, citing faculty losses and lack of institutional support. The Board did not respond to any of these concerns.

Student body president (Portland Metro campus) Jack Zoucha gave a report that included extensive research efforts and a call to investigate the option of student housing development at the PM campus. The report cited the lack of overall budget support for PM campus and data on the potential for increased retention and enrollment of students, culminating in a proposal for a dorm development at the PM campus. The Board thanked Jack for his extensive research efforts and his proposal. To date, there has been no follow-up from any University leadership on Jack's proposal.

Student Billy Kimmel provided public comment to the Board citing concerns about lack of transparency in University Leadership. Billy also discussed concerns about communication, follow-up and follow-through, and accountability. He noted that retention and enrollment are being affected by the lack of transparency and accountability. The Board thanked him but did not respond to his concerns. To date there has been no follow-up.

Board Meeting April 7, 2022

Student body president (Klamath Falls campus) Brie Landis gave a report that included data and research on funding for state universities in Oregon and other states. Brie's report included a call to action for increased lobbying efforts to the state to increase public spending on higher education, and a call to action for more internal coordination

for lobbying efforts, courting donors and foundation work, etc. The Board thanked Brie for the extensive research and dedication, but to date there has been no follow-up.

Student body president (Portland Metro campus) Jack Zoucha gave a report detailing the advocacy efforts he and his team have been working on for a student housing development at the PM campus. The report also included concerns about the tuition recommendation process, and ASOIT's official tuition recommendation. The report cited concerns about the lack of institutional support for securing state and community support and cited concerns about the focus on industry partnerships not being enough to support Oregon Tech. The Board did not respond to any of these concerns.

Student Billy Kimmel provided public comment to the Board citing concerns about poor communication and lack of a clearly defined "chain of command." He encouraged the Board to be transparent regarding the results of the upcoming climate assessment and urged that they align with their own values on "creating an inclusive, collaborative, and safe environment which respects the diverse perspectives of all stakeholders." The Board did not respond to these concerns and to-date there has been no follow-up.

Board of Trustees Meeting May 13, 2022

Board of Trustees announced that negotiations with the Higher Education Coordinating Committee went in Oregon Tech's favor and congratulated themselves for their work in these negotiations. A press release was sent out shortly after. The press release announcing the tuition increase reduction mentioned Chair Gomez's name six times, just three days before the primary election wherein Chair Gomez was running for Governor of Oregon. Within the meeting and the press release there was no mention of ASOIT efforts and meetings with HECC. ASOIT met with HECC several times and drafted multiple memos regarding tuition recommendation processes and all of these efforts were ignored by the Board.

Board of Trustees Meeting June 2, 2022

Student body president (Klamath Falls campus) Brie Landis gave a report that included a call for attention on the Shared Governance resolution document. The report also included a call to attention on the failure of the Board to adhere to Shared Governance by ignoring ASOIT efforts and student voice regarding the tuition increase reductions. The Board did not respond to either of these concerns.

Student body president (Portland Metro campus) Jack Zoucha gave an extensive report outlining concerns of "questionable ethical behaviour" within the Board. This included the presence of political campaign advisor for Chair Jessica Gomez for two of the five Board meetings. The press release announcing the tuition increase reduction mentioned Chair Gomez's name six times, just three days before the primary election wherein Chair Gomez was running for Governor of Oregon. Questionable ethics concerns also included the obvious internal recommendations of friends rather than experienced community members for Board position appointments, the erasure of ASOIT's efforts in the tuition

recommendation process, the appearance of grooming of impressionable students in Board positions and student government positions by Dr Nagi Naganathan, and the failure of follow-up on concerns and the failure to communicate effectively and in a timely manner. The Board thanked Jack but did not respond to any of the concerns outlined in the report.

Student Billy Kimmel provided public comment to the Board that called on the Board improve communication and address the dropping morale at Oregon Tech. He urged the Board to seriously consider the lack of transparency and accountability as opportunities to improve. He again implored the Board to remain transparent in the reporting/publishing of the climate assessment.

Student William Sell provided public comment to the Board that called attention to the effects of poor staffing on student learning outcomes. He highlighted that Oregon Tech does not provide industry-standard equipment for the degree program it offers, but advertises to students that it does provide this equipment and “hands on learning.” William urged to Board to seriously consider the impacts that budget uncertainties and continued loss of faculty and staff are having on student learning and graduate preparedness for their careers.

Examples of the failure to respond effectively to the Vote of No Confidence in the President by the Faculty Senate:

While the Board of Trustees contracted with ModernThink to complete a Climate Assessment for Oregon Tech in response to the vote of No Confidence, the final report (first announced to be complete in March 2022) has yet to be finished and disseminated to the Oregon Tech community.

In February 2022, against the advice of ModernThink, Chair Jessica Gomez met with approximately 60% of faculty to discuss concerns in small groups of 2-6.

The final report from ModernThink on the climate assessment has yet to be finalized. Preliminary findings were reported at the Board of Trustees April 7 2022 meeting and show “significant leadership concerns with the President, senior leadership, and the Board of Trustees” and “frustration with the commitment and adherence to the Oregon Tech Shared Governance model.” The climate assessment contract is approximately \$100,000.

In Board of Trustees meeting June 2 2022, Chair Gomez verbally reported on her small group discussions with the faculty in February, but did not objectively report her findings, leaving out the extensive feedback and concerns from faculty on Dr Naganathan’s leadership.

Examples of the failure to follow procedure and policy regarding Comprehensive Presidential Review and the climate assessment in order to extend the President's contract:

The Board's Policy on Presidential Evaluation Process states that the President will undergo a Comprehensive Evaluation "periodically (usually every 4-5 years)." The first (and only) time that the university community learned that this Comprehensive Evaluation was in progress was during an emergency Board meeting held on 10am Sunday, May 1st, 2022: a meeting only announced to the public two days earlier, at 4:45pm Friday afternoon.

The Board contracted Casagrande Consulting to perform the comprehensive evaluation of the President, at a cost of approximately \$24,000. Casagrande has not completed the comprehensive review of the President to date, and yet the Board voted to extend the President's contract at the Board of Trustees June 2 2022 meeting.

The Board released a memo announcing the extension of the President's contract on June 3 2022. In the letter, Chair Gomez stated: "in November of 2020, the Board voted unanimously to authorize me, on behalf of the Board, to negotiate an extension of President Naganathan's employment contract." The implication being that the contract extension was likely negotiated during late 2020, but only announced publicly recently. The Chair of the Board of Trustees, in 2020, is *not* the policy-mandated comprehensive review results we are still awaiting in 2022.

The final report from ModernThink on the climate assessment has yet to be finalized. Preliminary findings were reported at the Board of Trustees April 7 2022 meeting and show significant leadership concerns. And yet the results of this finalized report were not considered for the extension of the President's contract.

The facts contained herein are all evidence that shows the Board of Trustees is not adhering to their own document, Resolution 15-2 on Shared Governance.