



June 15, 2022

The Associated Student Body of Oregon Institute of Technology (ASOIT), as a governing body acting in the interests of its constituents, has drafted a Resolution of No Confidence in regards to the leadership of the Board of Trustees for Oregon Tech, with a statement of supporting facts. This letter is to inform any interested parties of our grievances and the processes that we have taken to attempt to address these grievances. The Executive Cabinet of both the Klamath Falls campus ASOIT and the Portland-Metro campus ASOIT voted unanimously in favour of the Resolution.

The Board of Trustees is to act as a fiduciary authority over the Oregon Institute of Technology, and ASOIT believes that the Board is failing in their roles such that the entire university community is being negatively impacted. The Board Resolution 15-2 on Shared Governance, though outdated, outlines specific roles, responsibilities, and expectations for each governing body at Oregon Tech, and ASOIT has determined that the Board is failing to adhere to its own document. The attached documents outline examples and details of these deficiencies. While concerns have been raised within the university community and to the Board prior to the scope of these documents, the statement of facts details concerns from March 2021 to June 2022.

In summary, in just the last year the Board of Trustees has:

- Disregarded stakeholder input, especially student voice, including concerns on ethical behaviour, with minimal to no follow-up and communication;
- Failed to respond to the Vote of No Confidence in President Dr Nagi Naganathan by the faculty in March of 2021;
- Failed to follow procedure on comprehensive presidential review, the climate assessment, and disregarded these important processes prior to President Dr Nagi Naganathan's contract renewal.

Students have been present to give reports, either as public comment or acting as duly elected representatives of the student body, at each Board meeting from April 2021 and forward. Each of these reports, without external coordination, has called attention to budget uncertainties, failing morale among students and faculty, increasing faculty losses, negatively impacted student learning outcomes, failing retention and enrollment, and a unanimous call to action for increased transparency and accountability from the Board and the University President. These concerns have been repeated, echoed from other concerned parties, and have been left unacknowledged and unheard.

In spring of 2021, after the faculty led the first University faculty strike in Oregon's history, the Board responded by commissioning a study to assess the climate of the institution. In December

2021, ModernThink was contracted. The assessment was to be finalized by March 2022. In lieu of a comprehensive report, ModernThink provided a preliminary assessment review at the April 7, 2022 Board meeting. Preliminary findings that were reported 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.

Concerns of questionable ethical behaviour from the Board and the University President include:

- The presence of political campaign advisor for Chair Jessica Gomez for two of the five Board meetings in the 2021-2022 academic year;
- 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;
- The apparent 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 student Board positions and student government positions by Dr Nagi Naganathan (promises of internships and scholarships, treats to private dinners).

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 students of Oregon Tech are deeply concerned about the failure of leadership from our Board of Trustees. Ultimately, it is clear that the significant and costly efforts to gather community input were not meaningfully used to inform the decision to extend the President’s contract. Given this as well as the obvious facts of falling student retention and enrollment, numerous budgetary uncertainties, and a decline in morale across the university, it is clear that the Board is not taking their fiduciary responsibility seriously. This decision to disregard university stakeholder input in extending Dr Nagi Naganathan’s contract is the most recent instance in an ongoing pattern of disregard for the university community’s concerns. As long as this pattern is allowed to continue, the existential issues Oregon Tech is facing will continue as well.

The Associated Students of Oregon Tech call upon the Board to do better, and we call upon the community at large to hold the Board accountable for their deficiencies in leadership.