

Memorandum

To: Kody Kelleher, UO Secretary

From: Dr. Gerard Sandoval, UO Faculty Trustee

Subject: Summary of Themes from Joint UO Campus Board Trustees Office Hours

Date: March 3rd, 2026

Overview

This memorandum summarizes the key themes that emerged during the recent Joint UO Campus Trustees Board Office Hours session. The discussion reflected broad concerns about governance, administrative accountability, financial transparency, faculty and staff treatment, and the university's budgetary priorities.

Governance, Transparency, and Board Functioning

Participants expressed significant concerns about transparency and communication in university governance. Questions were raised about how Trustee Board members communicate with one another outside formal meetings and about the lack of dialogue at Trustee meetings. Several attendees noted a perceived lack of openness across the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and the broader university, including doubts about the accuracy of financial information shared by administrators. In addition, some participants felt that the Tuition and Fee Advisory Board (TFAB) process appeared predetermined, particularly regarding the decision to increase undergraduate tuition. Concerns were also raised about limited dialogue during public board meetings and a desire for more deliberation in those settings. Questions were further raised about how at-large board members are selected, reflecting broader interest in representation and decision-making structures.

Administrative Accountability and Evaluation

A recurring theme was calls for improved accountability among university administrators, particularly within CAS. Participants emphasized the need for stronger evaluation mechanisms for Deans, including 360-degree evaluations and greater transparency in how Associate Deans are assessed. There was also a belief that the Board should play a more active role in establishing more robust accountability systems for Deans, Vice Presidents, and other senior administrators.

Financial Transparency, Budget Priorities, and Administrative Pay

Budget priorities and financial transparency were central concerns. Participants noted that the Oregon Short Term Fund (OSTF) has increased substantially over the past year and questioned why available cash and unrestricted funds could not be used to offset budget shortfalls. The conversation also highlighted concerns about administrative compensation and its alignment with institutional values during periods of financial strain. Several attendees suggested that high-level administrators take a 10% salary reduction to demonstrate shared sacrifice, particularly when staff earning far less are being laid off. Additional comments argued that the university maintains too many administrative

positions and that cutting these roles would ease budgetary pressures and improve optics for the campus community.

Tuition Increases and Student Impact

Attendees expressed concern about the impact of tuition increases on students, especially out-of-state undergraduates. They noted that new federal borrowing limits, combined with the university's already high non-resident tuition rates, risk pricing students out of attending the institution and undermining the university's competitiveness relative to other public universities. This is especially the case since federal changes to financial aid now limit the amount of money parents can borrow.

Faculty and Staff Treatment, Morale, and Potential Retaliation Issues

The situation involving Dr. Mike Urbanic was a significant focal point of discussion. Students emphasized his excellence as a teacher and expressed confusion about his termination, while faculty members described the decision as poorly justified, noting that his large-enrollment courses generated revenue and that he mentored PhD students. Concerns were explicitly raised that the termination may appear retaliatory given his prior leadership in the faculty union. Staff members also discussed disparities among Officers of Administration (OAs), highlighting challenges faced by "invisible" OAs who lack adequate compensation, upward mobility, and professional development opportunities, prompting discussion about potential unionization.