



August 4, 2025

Dear Campus Community:

I hope this message finds you well, and I also hope you are finding some moments over the summer to enjoy the beautiful weather and spend some quality time with friends and/or family.

I want to address recent developments in our higher education landscape, particularly in light of Southern Oregon University's [announcement](#) last Friday of financial exigency and their plan to reduce costs by at least \$10 million. Despite budget cuts two years ago, they are in a significant structural deficit that demands they take sudden and deliberate actions, actions that will drastically affect programs and positions.

As you know, higher education is facing unprecedented challenges due to federal legislation and reductions in state and federal support. Universities are operating on very thin margins in a time of uncertainty, and expenses can quickly outpace revenue. Institutions across Oregon, including Portland State University and the University of Oregon, are also grappling with budget shortfalls; The University of Oregon is facing a \$23 million deficit, and Portland State anticipates over \$10 million in further cuts. This year, Oregon fell from 44th to 46th in state support for higher education.

I want to reassure you that SOU's announcement does not mean that Western Oregon University is in a state of financial exigency. As I outlined in my communication to you in May (see [attached](#)), we will have to make shifts this year in order to balance our budget, and I have asked leaders to come up with plans over the next few months.

Thanks to your collective efforts and past actions, we have built a vibrant learning environment that emphasizes support, belonging, and empowerment. Our [strategic plan](#) is designed to guide us through these turbulent times, focusing on innovative changes and operational improvements that will lead us toward financial stability and long-term sustainability.

But we still have to make changes in order to achieve our goals. We must continue being pro-active in order to avoid a situation like the one SOU is facing.

It is crucial that we all come together during this time. Your input and willingness to adapt will be fundamental as we navigate necessary budgetary decisions. Our university's stability hinges on our ability to reimagine how we leverage our strengths, particularly our



strong community, even in challenging circumstances. As I have said many times, perhaps our greatest strength is a vibrant campus experience that personalizes student support.

Above all, we must keep our students at the forefront of our decision-making. Their success and well-being remain our top priority, and we are committed to ensuring that they continue to receive the support they need, even amidst financial challenges.

Thank you for your dedication and resilience. Together, we will navigate this landscape and emerge even stronger.

Jesse Peters, President
Western Oregon University