

Resolution to Enhance Financial Transparency to Support Shared Governance and Budgetary Sustainability

WHEREAS, the University of Oregon’s mission statement identifies its values as including the “success of the students, faculty, and staff who work and learn here,” and “our shared charges to steward resources sustainably and responsibly”¹;

WHEREAS, the University of Oregon’s 10-year institutional “Oregon Rising” strategic plan, as endorsed by the current President of the University of Oregon, specifies the goal of “creating programs, processes, and structures that will make us known as a university that authentically supports the flourishing of our students, faculty and staff,” and further specifies that this goal should be achieved through enhancing “business practices, processes, systems, and tools to support the needs of the university community effectively and efficiently”²;

WHEREAS, the University of Oregon has publicly committed to a model of shared governance with students, faculty, and staff represented by the University Senate, the Associated Students of the University of Oregon, and campus labor groups, which are democratic bodies representing approximately 28,000 students and 10,000 workers;

WHEREAS, the University of Oregon states publicly that leaders have a strong “commitment as a public institution to transparency and accountability”³;

WHEREAS, the University of Oregon has consistently cited budgetary crises as the justification for uncompetitive wages for faculty, staff, student workers, and graduate employees over the past two years of contract negotiations, despite public financial reports in which the UO states that “The 2023–24 fiscal year saw increases in total funds raised, the number of gifts, and total donors over the previous fiscal year”⁴;

WHEREAS, the University of Oregon has recently implemented significant cuts to programs and employment units, including halting multiple search and hire processes across different employee groups, and has threatened further substantial cuts in recent mass communications;

WHEREAS, the University of Oregon is the steward of a total of \$2.9 billion in assets, including hundreds of millions of dollars in student tuition, public funds, and donations, and a \$1.63 billion endowment⁵ stewarded by the UO Foundation;

WHEREAS, the University of Oregon Board of Trustees and administrative leadership currently provide limited transparency into UO operational budgetary decisions and allocations, in the

¹ [University of Oregon Mission Statement](#)

² [Oregon Rising Strategic Plan: Goals](#)

³ [Transparency at the University of Oregon](#)

⁴ [University of Oregon 2024 Annual Financial Report](#)

⁵ [UO Foundation Financial Overview](#)

form of summaries of generalized budgetary categories⁶ and total categories of assets⁷ that omit any detailed breakdown of discretionary funding choices or any explanation of major decisions to prioritize certain operational budgets over others;

WHEREAS, UO leadership does not currently engage in democratic dialogue over budgetary choices in collaboration with representative bodies such as University Senate, the Associated Students of the University of Oregon, and campus labor groups;

WHEREAS, the UO's \$1.63 billion endowment is overseen by the UO Foundation, which has outsourced management of this investment portfolio to Jasper Ridge Partners, a private investment firm;

WHEREAS, the UO Foundation is exempt from public records requests, or any public transparency into its decisions about which funds to invest back into the UO, or any formal deliberation or input from campus stakeholder groups such as students, faculty, and workers;

WHEREAS, the University of Oregon's \$1.63 billion endowment through the UO Foundation is not obligated to comply with public records requests, transparency into specific operations, or any form of democratic deliberation or broader campus dialogue on how endowment and invested funds are managed or returned to the UO's operational costs to ease budgetary strain;

WHEREAS, this absence of detailed transparency in both UO's operating budget and the UO Foundation's operations undermines the UO's public service mission by preventing healthy dialogue, debate, and dissent over budgetary and investment priorities, and by exerting undemocratic control over academic programs, employment services, and institutional investments;

WHEREAS, all campus members, including students, faculty, and staff, hold a direct stake in the University of Oregon's non-transparent budgetary decisions to cut funding for employment and/or academic programs, and/or to raise the cost of public education in the State of Oregon by raising the cost of tuition;

WHEREAS, the preservation of the University of Oregon's and the UO Foundation's financial integrity and effectiveness is of concern for all students, employees, alumni, community members, taxpayers, and donors in the State of Oregon, as "Sixty-four percent of all donors were from Oregon and 75 percent of all donors were alumni" in 2023-2024⁸;

WHEREAS, campus stakeholders including students, faculty, staff, alumni, community members, and taxpayers, as well as the democratic bodies which represent stakeholder groups, would be better able to support and advocate in state legislature for increased funding at the

⁶ [Transparency at the University of Oregon](#)

⁷ [University of Oregon 2024 Annual Financial Report](#)

⁸ [University of Oregon 2024 Annual Financial Report](#)

University of Oregon if they received greater clarity on how the UO's assets, investments, and budgets are currently allocated and prioritized;

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the University of Oregon's allocation of budgets, assets, and investments to reflect the diverse perspectives of the university community in order to ensure alignment of the university's decisions with the stated values and principles that are broadly shared;

BE IT RESOLVED that United Academics urges the President of the University of Oregon to establish enhanced financial transparency and collaborative budgetary dialogue to advance shared governance and institutional democracy by:

- 1) Publicly clarifying the allocation of its current budgets, with a detailed breakdown beyond general categories, as modelled after the University of Oregon's current disclosure of the Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards⁹ in the UO Annual Financial Report;
- 2) Providing detailed data on budgetary allocations versus actual expenditures, and enabling all of this data to be available for systemic extraction and analysis by campus stakeholders by making the information publicly accessible to students, faculty, staff, donors, and taxpayers on the University of Oregon transparency website;
- 3) Publicly disclosing the principles and processes according to which the UO's Board of Trustees and other administrative executives allocate the UO's operational budget and direct discretionary funds, including any and all data used in the evaluation or determination of compensation for executives and officers of administration at Dean level or above, as well as any and all data used in the evaluation or determination of compensation for other employee groups represented by Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs), and making this information publicly accessible to students, faculty, staff, donors, and taxpayers on the University of Oregon transparency website;
- 4) Sharing with the recently launched Senate Budget Committee – a standing committee of the Senate that is empowered to accept, consider, and make recommendations about annual university budgetary allocations, as well as purchasing, contracting, and investment decisions – all information and data that will assist it to thoroughly and comprehensively carry out its charge.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that, United Academics urges the CEO and President of the UO Foundation to establish enhanced financial transparency and collaborative budgetary dialogue to advance shared governance and institutional democracy by:

- 1) Publicly clarifying the allocation of its current assets and its holdings by sector and percent of total investments, and making this information publicly accessible to students,

⁹ [University of Oregon 2024 Annual Financial Report](#)

faculty, staff, donors, and taxpayers on the UO Foundation website;

- 2) Publicly disclosing, at least annually, the purposes and restrictions of the endowments held by the UO Foundation and their allocations to the University of Oregon's operational budget;
- 3) Publicly disclosing, at least annually, the Foundation's reasoning for the distribution of funds in an amount other than the authorized annual Foundation spending policy, via a report publicly accessible to students, faculty, staff, donors, and taxpayers on the UO Foundation website;
- 4) Establishing a representative advisory body or standing committee that is empowered to audit investments made by Jasper Ridge Partners (or other future investment managers) on behalf of the UO Foundation in order to make recommendations about potential changes to investments, as well as to review and make recommendations regarding UO Foundation money that is returned to the University of Oregon's operations.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that United Academics urges the University of Oregon Senate to pass this, or a substantially similar, resolution in order to demonstrate that all bodies engaged in shared governance and the representation of students and workers at the UO support the aforementioned demands for financial transparency, democratic dialogue, and gift fee reform at the University of Oregon.