

Dear Colleagues:

This is an open letter from the Deans to the UO community regarding this historic moment for our university. Legislation aimed at creating a public governing board for the University of Oregon continues to move forward in Salem, and we see this development as the most promising way to address the challenge of shrinking state support for our mission and our institution. Simultaneously we are engaged in creating an historic collective bargaining agreement between the University and a new faculty union, one that will establish guidelines for labor practices for years to come. With this letter we are reaching out to the entire university community to call for a positive, respectful and inclusive debate about the UO's future.

We believe that a fully informed and constructive dialogue will best serve the future of our institution. We want you to know that we collectively see great potential in the UO's advance toward institutional governance and toward a fair collective bargaining agreement, and have high hopes for the future under the leadership of President Michael Gottfredson.

The legislative process that will determine the future of our governance is at a delicate and critical stage. Establishing a public governing board solely dedicated to the UO, with the ability to generate much-needed investments from outside sources is critical to the future success of the university.

Key legislation now being considered in Salem – SB 270 – is fully congruent with the UO's commitment to shared governance, as President Gottfredson has affirmed on a number of occasions. On Monday, the President posted a statement on his website elaborating how his commitment to shared governance will be sustained and honored going forward under a public institutional board. We urge all members of the campus community to review these comments at <http://president.uoregon.edu/content/president-gottfredson%E2%80%99s-comments-shared-governance>.

The university's collective commitment to shared governance is exemplified by recent actions. Many members of the Provost's search committee were nominated by the Senate, members of the elected Senate Budget Committee were key participants in this year's budget setting process, and the President meets regularly with the elected Faculty Advisory Committee and the elected Undergraduate and Graduate Councils exercise control over development of new curricular proposals.

As Deans, we strongly support the tradition of shared governance at the University of Oregon and acknowledge its vital role in promoting academic excellence. As we move forward we do not think it should be narrowly redefined solely within the context of a collective bargaining agreement. As other institutions of higher learning with faculty and staff unions demonstrate,

the commitment of Deans and faculty to shared governance cannot and should not be limited to labor contracts between a union and the university. We know all faculty at the UO (both represented and non-represented) share a commitment to academic excellence. Our mission requires that we continue to work together collaboratively to promote the highest possible quality of teaching, learning and research at the University of Oregon.

We are engaged in a major effort to attract and retain the very best faculty and we see the quality of the public discourse among the entire UO community as a key factor in attaining this goal. In addition, as we prepare to launch a major capital campaign, we hope to engage potential donors and supporters in a positive, constructive and respectful dialogue about the future of the University of Oregon. We need your help in this endeavor because it is truly a shared vision that depends on our collective efforts.

The bottom line: We urge the UO community to come together so that we can build one of the strongest and most creative research universities in the nation. We trust that you will join President Gottfredson and us in promoting this noble and exciting endeavor by working together as we move forward. We value your commitment to excellence and believe that the future of the university is dependent on the strength of the entire UO community.

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Brad Foley, Dean

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Michael Bullis, Dean

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David Frank, Dean

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