

**BYLAWS  
OF  
SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY**

**ARTICLE I**

**Name**

The legal name of this independent public body is Southern Oregon University ("University").

**ARTICLE II**

**Purposes of Organization**

The purposes for which the University is organized are to carry out and exercise the powers, rights, duties and privileges, within and outside the State of Oregon, that are expressly conferred upon the University, or that are implied by law or are incident to such powers, rights, duties, and privileges.

**ARTICLE III**

**Board of Trustees**

**1.0 Business and Affairs.** The University shall be governed and the business and affairs of the University shall be managed by the Board of Trustees of Southern Oregon University ("Board"), which may exercise all such powers, rights, duties, and privileges as are expressly conferred upon the University, or that are implied by law or are incident to such powers, rights, duties, and privileges. The Board may delegate and provide for the further delegation of any and all such powers, rights, duties, and privileges subject to limitations expressly set forth in law.

**2.0 Membership and Voting.** The membership of the Board is established by Oregon Law. The President of the University shall serve as an ex-officio, nonvoting member of the Board. With the exception of the President of the University, the Trustees are appointed by the Governor of the State of Oregon and are subject to confirmation by the Oregon Senate in the manner prescribed by law. All members of the Board of Trustees of Southern Oregon University shall serve terms and have voting privileges in accordance with Oregon Law.

**2.1** Pursuant to Oregon Law, the Board shall include two persons who are undergraduate students enrolled at the University. One undergraduate student shall be a voting member of the Board and one undergraduate student shall be a nonvoting member of the Board. The term of office for undergraduate students shall be two years and be staggered, such that, to the degree practicable, a student serves as a nonvoting member of the board during the first year of the student's term of office and as a voting member of the board during the second year of the student's term of office.

2.2 The Board shall include one person who is a graduate student enrolled at the university if the university has more than 400 graduate students, or if graduate students comprise more than 15 percent of the total number of students enrolled at the university, based upon certified enrollment data of the fall term prior to the nomination. The term of office for the graduate student member is two years and this member shall be a voting member of the board.

2.3 The Board shall include one person who is a member of the faculty, and one person who is a member of the non-faculty staff of the University. The term of office for, the faculty and non-faculty staff members of the governing board is two years, and each shall be a voting member of the board.

The term for all other Board members appointed by the Governor is four years.

A member of the governing board may not be appointed to serve more than two consecutive full terms.

**3.0 Vacancies.** A vacancy on the Board shall exist upon the death, resignation, removal, termination of eligibility, or expiration of the term of any trustee. A trustee may resign at any time by delivering written notice to the Governor, the Chair of the Board, and the President of the University. Resignation shall take effect at the time specified in the letter of resignation or within 30 days of the date of its receipt. When a vacancy exists, the Board Chair, in consultation with the other Trustees, including the President, shall contact the Office of the Governor with a recommendation concerning the filling of the vacancy.

**4.0 Removal.** The Governor may remove a Trustee other than the President as provided by law. The Board may terminate the status of the President as a Trustee by terminating the President's appointment as President of the University, subject to the rights, if any, of the President under a contract of employment.

### **5.0 Officers of the Board.**

5.1 The Board shall select by majority vote one of its members as Chair and another as Vice Chair, who shall be Board Officers. Thereafter, a vacancy in the position of Chair for reasons other than a term expiration, shall be filled by the Vice Chair, unless the position of Vice Chair is vacant in which case the Board shall elect the Chair. A vacancy in the position of Vice Chair for reasons other than a term expiration, shall be filled by an election of the Board. A vacancy in either position shall be filled consistent with the Board Statement on Officer Elections and for the remainder of the unexpired term.

5.2 The Chair and Vice Chair shall hold office for two years, or until a successor shall have been duly elected or until death, resignation, expiration of the

appointment as a Trustee, or removal. The Chair and Vice Chair may be elected to serve up to two consecutive terms. The Chair and Vice Chair shall not be employees or students of the University and shall not, as Chair and Vice Chair, be authorized to bind the University except as authorized by law or the Board. The Board may appoint such other Board Officers with such duties as the Board determines necessary or appropriate.

5.3 The Chair shall establish the agenda for and preside at all meetings of the Board. The Chair shall perform such other duties as assigned by the Board. In the absence of the Chair or in the event of the Chair's inability to act, the Vice Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair, and when so acting, shall have the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the Chair. The Vice Chair shall perform such other duties as assigned by the Board. Other officers of the Board, if any, shall be subject to the authority of the Chair and Vice Chair.

5.4 Notwithstanding the appointment of a Chair, Vice Chair, and other officers, authority is vested in the Board collectively and not in any individual Trustee. Individual Trustees do not speak on behalf of the Board or University unless authorized to do so by the Board or Chair. The Chair may speak on behalf of the Board and University, unless otherwise determined by the Board.

5.5 A Board Officer serves at the pleasure of the Board. A Board Officer may be removed from office by a two-thirds majority vote of Trustees eligible to vote.

**6.0 Compensation; Reimbursement of Expenses.** A Trustee performing their official duties is not acting as an employee of the University and shall not receive a salary for Board service. In accordance with University policy and upon approval by first the Board Secretary and then the Vice President of Finance & Administration of the University, a Trustee may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred in connection with the performance of official duties.

**7.0 Faculty and Non-faculty Staff Trustees.** The Faculty Trustee and Non-faculty Staff Trustee are each hereby granted reasonable leave with pay at their regular compensation as employees of the University to attend meetings of the Board and other official Board functions that occur between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Pacific Time, Monday through Friday. Nothing in this section 7 shall be deemed to alter the compensation of the faculty member or staff member for the performance of their duties as a University employee.

## **ARTICLE IV Meetings of the Board**

**1.0 Public Meetings.** A "Public Meeting" of the Board is the convening of the Board for a purpose for which a quorum is required in order to make a decision or to

deliberate toward a decision on any matter. All Public Meetings of the Board shall be conducted in compliance with Oregon Public Meetings Law. A Public Meeting does not include any statutorily exempted meetings, including on-site inspection of any project or program or the attendance of at any international, national, regional, state, or local association.

**2.0 Quorum of the Board.** Except as otherwise specified herein, a quorum of the Board or a Board Committee is required to conduct Board business. A quorum of the Board or the relevant committee shall be a majority of the member Trustees (including the President) or on the relevant committee at the time of the meeting.

**3.0 Manner of Acting.**

3.1 Except as otherwise specified herein, action upon a matter for which a quorum is required shall be taken upon the approval of a majority of the Trustees present.

3.2 All Trustees present must vote affirmatively or negatively on any matter on which a vote is called by the Chair, except that a Trustee may not vote if the Trustee is disqualified from voting under law, these bylaws, or applicable Board action. Abstentions may be permitted by the Chair.

3.3 The Board may permit any or all Trustees to participate in a meeting by, or conduct the meeting in-person or through use of, any means of electronic communication by which all Trustees participating may simultaneously hear each other or otherwise communicate with each other during the meeting. Participation in such a meeting by a Trustee shall constitute such Trustee's presence in person at the meeting. Voting by proxy or by absentee ballot is not permitted.

**4.0 Quorum Not Required.** A majority of the voting Trustees present at a meeting that is subject to the quorum requirements of this Article, although less than a quorum, may:

- A. Adjourn the meeting from time to time to a different time or place before the date of the next regular meeting without further notice of any adjournment. At such adjourned and rescheduled meeting at which a quorum is present, any business may be transacted that might have been transacted at the meeting originally held.
- B. Set a time for adjournment.
- C. Call a recess.
- D. Take any measure necessary or appropriate to assemble a quorum.

E. Absent a quorum, the Board may meet for the purposes of gathering information and making public announcements but no formal action may be taken.

**5.0 Waiver of Notice by Trustee.** A Trustee's attendance at or participation in a meeting waives any required notice of the meeting to the Trustee unless the Trustee at the beginning of the meeting or upon immediate arrival objects to the holding of the meeting or the transaction of business at the meeting and does not subsequently vote for or assent to action taken at the meeting. A Trustee may at any time waive any notice required by law, these bylaws, or other Board action, with a writing signed by the Trustee and specifying the meeting for which notice is waived. Any such waiver of notice shall be filed with the minutes of the meeting for which notice is waived.

**6.0 Procedural Rules.** Procedural disputes shall be resolved by traditional procedural rules, as interpreted by the Chair. Any Trustee who disagrees with a procedural decision may introduce a motion to amend or reverse the procedural decision.

## **ARTICLE V Public Meeting Procedures**

**1.0 Regular Meetings.** Regular Public Meetings of the Board shall be held at least four times per calendar year on such dates and at such times as specified by the Chair.

**2.0 Special Meetings.** Special Public Meetings of the Board may be called at any time by the Chair, President, or a majority of the Board and must be called by the Chair no less than seventy-two (72) hours prior to the meeting.

**3.0 Emergency Meetings.** Emergency Public Meetings of the Board may be called at any time by the Chair, President, or a majority of the Board in instances of an actual emergency and may be called with less than twenty-four (24) hours' notice. Such notice as is appropriate to the circumstances shall be given for the meeting. Notice and minutes of emergency Public Meetings shall describe the emergency justifying the emergency Public Meeting.

**4.0 Place of Meetings.** All regular Public Meetings and special Public Meetings of the Board shall be held in the State of Oregon at a location owned, controlled, leased, rented, or licensed by the University. Emergency Public Meetings necessitating immediate action may be held at other locations.

## **5.0 Notice of Meetings.**

5.1 Notice of all regular Public Meetings shall be given in a manner reasonably calculated to give interested persons actual notice of the time and place of the meeting and principal subjects anticipated to be considered at the meeting. Notice of special Public Meetings shall be given to the news media which have requested notice and to the general public at least 24 hours prior to the hour of the meeting. Notice of an emergency Public Meeting shall be such as is appropriate to the circumstance.

5.2 Notice of a regular or special Public Meeting must be given to each Trustee at least 48 hours prior to the hour of the meeting, but longer advance notice as set forth in other Board action is preferable. Notice to each Trustee of an emergency Public Meeting shall be such as is appropriate to the circumstance. Notice of all such meetings may be given to Trustees orally either in person or by telephone or may be delivered in writing, either personally, by mail, by electronic mail, or by facsimile transmission. If provided other than by electronic mail, facsimile machine, or a telephone number on file with the Board Secretary, notice shall be deemed to be given three (3) days after deposit in the United States mail addressed to the Trustee at the Trustee's address on file with the Board Secretary for the purpose of receiving Board correspondence, with postage prepaid. If notice is provided by electronic mail to the Trustee's institutional email address, telephone, or facsimile transmission, notice shall be deemed given immediately if the notice is provided to the Trustee's Southern Oregon University electronic mail address or, as applicable, the Trustee's telephone number or facsimile number on file with the Board Secretary for the purpose of receiving such correspondence. Notice by all other means shall be deemed to be given when received by the Trustee.

**6.0 Minutes of Meetings.** The Board shall provide for the taking of written minutes of all Public Meetings, which minutes shall give a true reflection of the matters discussed and actions taken at the Public Meetings. In addition to written minutes, the Board may provide for an audio recording, an audio and video recording, streaming audio, or streaming audio and video. A record of each recording or transmission shall be retained in accordance with applicable records retention requirements.

## **ARTICLE VI Officers of the University**

**1.0 Officers.** The officers of the University shall be a President, Vice President for Finance & Administration, Provost, General Counsel, Board Secretary, and such other officers as may be deemed necessary by the President to conduct University business. The officers shall have such authority and perform such duties as set forth in the law and these Bylaws and as may be prescribed by Board action or by the

President.

**2.0 President.** The Board shall appoint a President. The President of the University is the President of the Faculty. The President is also the executive and governing officer of the University, except as otherwise provided by statute or action of the Board. Subject to the supervision of the Board, the President of the University has authority to direct the affairs of the University. The President shall, from time to time, report to the Board all significant matters within the President's knowledge related to affairs of the University. The President shall perform such other duties as assigned by the Board. The President may appoint other officers and employees of the University, who shall have such powers and duties as may be prescribed by the President. The President is authorized to accept legal process on behalf of the University.

**3.0 Vice President for Finance & Administration.** The President shall appoint a chief financial officer, who shall be the Vice President for Finance & Administration. The Vice President for Finance & Administration of the University shall properly account for all monies collected, received and expended by the University and all real and personal property of the University. The Vice President for Finance & Administration will keep and maintain, or cause to be kept and maintained, adequate and correct records of the assets, liabilities, and business transactions of the University. The Vice President for Finance & Administration will disburse the funds of the University as may be provided for by the Board, may settle and pay all claims against the University, and will render to the President or the Board, upon request, an account of the financial condition of the University.

**4.0 Provost.** The President shall appoint a Provost who shall have such powers and duties as assigned by the President. In the absence or incapacity of the President, the Provost shall assume the duties of the President. In the absence or incapacity of the President and the Provost, the Vice President for Finance & Administration shall assume the duties of the President.

**5.0 General Counsel.** The President shall appoint a General Counsel. The General Counsel to the University is the chief legal officer of the University and represents and advises the University, including the Board, officers, and employees, in all matters related to the affairs of the University. The General Counsel is authorized to accept legal process on behalf of the University.

**6.0 Board Secretary.** In consultation with the Board Chair and Vice Chair, the President shall appoint the Board Secretary. The Board Secretary shall cause the required notices of meetings of the Board to be sent to each Board member, and the preparation of the minutes, any audio recording, audio and video recording, streaming audio, or streaming audio and video of meetings. The Board Secretary is

the custodian of and shall cause the minutes and any recording or transmission to be maintained in accordance with applicable records retention requirements. The Board Secretary is authorized to accept legal process on behalf of the University.

## **ARTICLE VII Board Committees**

Subject to the requirements of applicable law, the Board may establish such committees as it deems appropriate or necessary from time to time and shall define the duration, existence, duties, composition, and reporting requirements of such committees. Members of the Board Committees shall be appointed by the Chair.

## **ARTICLE VIII Conflicts of Interest**

**1.0 In General.** Subject to the requirements of law and of this Article VIII, the Board may take any action involving either a potential conflict of interest or an actual conflict of interest as defined by Oregon Law. Prior to taking any action in an official capacity on any matter involving a potential conflict of interest or an actual conflict of interest for a Trustee, the Trustee shall publicly announce the nature of the potential or actual conflict of interest. Any Trustee having an actual conflict of interest in a transaction with the University shall in addition (i) refrain from participating in any discussion or debate on the issue out of which the conflict arises, and (ii) refrain from voting on the issue, unless the Trustee's vote is necessary for Board action on the issue and is otherwise not prohibited by Oregon Law.

**2.0 Labor Negotiations.** The faculty and non-faculty staff members of the governing board may not participate in any discussions or action by the Board or attend any executive session of the Board involving collective bargaining issues that affect faculty or nonfaculty staff at the University. The graduate student and undergraduate student members of the governing board may not participate in any discussions or action by the board or attend any executive session of the board involving collective bargaining issues that affect graduate students or undergraduate students at the University.

**3.0 Other.** The Board may take such actions pertaining to conflict of interest and ethics as the Board determines to be appropriate.

## **ARTICLE IX Indemnity**

**1.0 Indemnification and Defense in General.**



1.1 The University shall defend and indemnify any Trustee or Officer ("Party") against any claim, whether groundless or otherwise, arising out of an alleged act or omission occurring in the performance of official duties. The University shall not provide indemnification and defense in case of malfeasance in office, willful or wanton neglect of duty, or criminal conduct. The University may cease to provide indemnification or defense upon a determination by the University, in its sole discretion, that an act or omission may constitute malfeasance in office, willful or wanton neglect of duty, or criminal conduct.

1.2. The University may choose to defend a Party under a reservation of rights. Any Party to whom the University is providing a defense shall cooperate fully with the University in the defense of such claim. If the University determines, in its sole discretion, that such Party has not so cooperated or has otherwise acted to prejudice the defense of the claim, the University may at any time terminate its defense and indemnity or proceed under a reservation of rights.

## **2.0 Legal Expenses when Claim is by a Governmental Entity or Professional Licensing Authority.**

2.1 Reasonable expenses incurred by a Party in the defense of a civil claim by a governmental entity or a professional licensing authority may be advanced or reimbursed by the University if the University, in its sole discretion, determines that the civil claim arose out of the Party's performance of official duties. Such advancement or reimbursement constitutes part of the Party's official compensation package for purposes pursuant to Oregon Law. The University may decline to reimburse a Party for any expenses incurred prior to the University's written commitment to provide reimbursement.

2.2. Expenses shall be paid by the University in advance of the final disposition of a civil claim described in this section 2 at the written request of the Party if:

- A. The University determines, in its sole discretion, that the conduct of such Party was in good faith, and the Party reasonably believed that such conduct was in the best interests of, or not opposed to the best interests of the University.
- B. The Party furnishes the University a written undertaking to repay such advance to the extent it is ultimately determined by the University, in its sole discretion, that such Party is not entitled to be indemnified by the University under this Article or under any other indemnification rights granted to such Party.
- C. Such advances shall be made without regard to the person's ability to repay such advances.

**3.0 Legal Representation.** The President or designee shall have the exclusive authority to select counsel and to defend against any claim. The President will consult with the Party regarding any term of a settlement agreement that affects the legal rights of the Party.

**4.0 Definition.** The term "claim" means any threatened, pending, or completed investigation, action, suit, or proceeding brought by a party other than the University.

**5.0 Non-Exclusivity and Continuity of Rights.** This Article: (i) shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which those indemnified may be entitled under any statute, agreement, general or specific action of the University or otherwise, both as to action in the official capacity of the person indemnified and as to action in another capacity while holding office, (ii) shall continue as to a person who has ceased to be a Party, and (iii) shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of such person.

**6.0 Amendments.** Any repeal of this Article shall only be prospective and no repeal or modification hereof shall adversely affect the rights under this Article in effect at the time of the alleged occurrence of any action or omission to act that is the cause of any claim or complaint.

## **ARTICLE X Miscellaneous Provisions**

**1.0 Principal Office.** The principal office of the University is located at the Office of the President, Southern Oregon University, 1250 Siskiyou Boulevard, Ashland, OR 97520.

**2.0 Email Addresses.** Each trustee will be provided with an institutional electronic mail address. Trustee email addresses will be clearly and publicly posted on the University website.

**3.0 Fiscal Year.** The fiscal year of the university begins on July 1 of each year and ends on June 30 of the succeeding year.

**4.0 Severability.** Any determination that any provision of these Bylaws is for any reason inapplicable, invalid, illegal, or otherwise ineffective shall not affect or invalidate any other provision of these bylaws. The headings in these bylaws are provided for convenience and shall not be considered in the interpretation or construction of these bylaws.

**5.0 Authority.** Because the Board is the final University authority, these


Bylaws and Board actions have precedence over other actions of the University and its constituent parts without regard to whether such actions have the force of law. Any such actions shall be consistent with these Bylaws.

**6.0 Nondiscrimination.** The University and the Board do not discriminate in educational, employment or other practices against any person on the basis of age, disability, national origin, race, color, marital status, veteran status, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, or any other basis protected by federal, state or local law.

**7.0 Amendment of Bylaws.** These Bylaws may be altered, amended, restated or repealed and new Bylaws may be adopted by the Board at any regular or special Public Meeting.

Approved on October 20, 2023

  
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 Sabrina Prud'homme  
 University Board Secretary

  
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 Daniel P. Santos  
 Chair, Board of Trustees

Revision	Change	Date
	Initial Version	January 30, 2015
1	Membership, Vacancies, Quorum of the Board and Manner of Acting sections made more specific; Quorum Not Required, Emergency Meetings and Place of Meetings sections expanded; fiscal year defined; statement of nondiscrimination added; basic edits and corrections	January 18, 2019
2	Duration of officer terms limits, elections when vacancies occur.	April 22, 2022

3	Basic edits and corrections	January 20, 2023
4	Membership, Labor Negotiations updated; Email Addresses added; Basic edits	October 20, 2023