



Ashland Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

Letter of Support for Southern Oregon University – June 11, 2019

The Ashland Chamber of Commerce, currently representing over seven hundred businesses and organizations, has been deeply connected, supportive and involved as a strong community partner of Southern Oregon University (SOU) for over a century. As our largest employer, SOU is a critical driver of our economy. The viability and sustainability of our university is not only important to our economy but essential to attracting, retaining and developing our workforce. SOU students are our interns, research assistants, employees, prospective employees, and the children, parents and partners of our employees. The faculty provides exceptionally high quality, personal and innovative experiences educating not only our future employees but our business and community leaders so critical to addressing the ever-complex issues in our society.

Our partnership with SOU has grown even deeper this year, as President Schott reached out to the city, Chamber, and major employers to strengthen the town-gown relationship. Together, we are seeking efficiencies and improvements for our citizens and students by working more closely together on areas affecting the broader community such as emergency preparedness, business and community education on issues and the economy.

Of course, the level at which tuition is set matters to us. We and our employees are tuition payers; we don't want high tuition. At the same time, the fiscal stability of the university must be ensured. We have advocated for state investment in higher education throughout this legislative session. The university's board of trustees has established a tuition schedule that corresponds to the level of state investment and we support that decision. It strikes the right balance between ensuring fiscal stability, and continuing this university's lean staffing levels.

We urge you to support the good work being done at SOU, and affirm the decision of its board.

Thank you,

Sandra Slattery
Executive Director

Ashland Chamber of Commerce and Visitor & Convention Bureau

PO Box 1360 • Ashland OR 97520 • 110 East Main St. • PO Box 1360 • Ashland OR 97520 • (541) 482-3486 • Fax: (541) 482-2350

ashlandchamber.com