



ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

Audrey Schlotter, President | Office: SEC 286

Phone: 541-737-6300 | Email: ASOSU.pres@oregonstate.edu

Good morning, members of the Board.

I would like to introduce you to Zach Kowash, my Vice President and president of the senate, Sophia Nowers, our Student Fee Committee Chair, and Madison Jones, our Judicial Council Chair, who will be joining me in solidarity during my somewhat unusual report today.

There have been a number of incredible things that have occurred within ASOSU and at OSU since the last time I gave you a report, but right now, ASOSU is at a tipping point. It is because of this, I want to focus the entirety of my remarks today on the current dynamics occurring within the ASOSU and the student body. I am disappointed that I cannot share this progress because the relevancy of this progress depends on the integrity of ASOSU and shared governance; which has ultimately been systematically threatened.

All of you are familiar with the duty of leadership and know the challenges and responsibilities of such duties. The ASOSU represents 23,000 students granted by the jurisdiction of our shared governance agreement and the power and guidance vested in Oregon State law.

Regardless of whether students are aware of our presence, and whether they agree or understand the depth of our decisions and responsibility, we do not take these roles lightly nor the responsibility to our fellow students.

We believe that student voice is instrumental in the meaningful change that happens at our university, and I hope you agree with us that this is a powerful component of our shared governance agreement and the community at OSU. This community and the potential to embolden students to make change is what encouraged me to run for this position– it is why we stand before you today and why I believe it is fundamental to receive your assistance in preserving the integrity of our student government.

We care about this campus enough to know that there are serious issues, and we care about this community enough to put in the work to improve it. What we are experiencing as student leaders in the ASOSU is unprecedented, and far more extreme than what leaders in past years have faced.

At this moment in time, we believe the university's shared governance structure is in trouble. **ASOSU is at a critical juncture where I, the constitutionally elected voice of the student body– alongside the rest of ASOSU top leadership, are unsure of the integrity of ASOSU to represent all Oregon State University students.** ASOSU works because of the dynamic and extensive procedures that reach a multitude of students. Our checks and balance systems bolster integrity in the fee recommendation we bring before you every year. I cannot with the same confidence say that there will be the same level of integrity in this year's fee recommendation.

Issues at our university have historically been resolved through collaborative problem-solving between shared governance partners, and I am proud of its history of contributing student voices and the change that has come from this voice. This being said- the ASOSU Senate has chosen to ignore this precedent and strip away powers from two of the four bodies within ASOSU, silencing the authority of judicial review and the voice of elected Student Fee Committee members who recommend the allocation of the approximate 38 million dollar student incidental fee.

Our being here was no easy decision. This action I have no doubt will be followed by online attacks, harassment, and bullying– because this has happened before;

however, we wouldn't be doing our job to ensure the representation of all students if we allowed this injustice to go unaddressed. Numerous amounts of new ambiguous governing documents and a handful of key players don't have the right to wholly determine the one Oregon State statutorily mandated job of recommending an Incidental Fee, and yet this is exactly what is happening.

I prioritize being available not only to my staff but to other elected members of ASOSU and to the student body. Last term an ASOSU Senator and an ASOSU Student Fee Committee member took advantage of this. They scheduled a meeting with me and used that time and knowledge of my location to plan a protest in front of the Student Experience Center. People were chanting outside my office window, and after a while, these same two students brought a group of protesting students to my office. My executive staff and I felt endangered and trapped. I could not leave my office; I could not even leave the SEC. I can't help but feel that their goal wasn't just to protest but to provoke me— hoping I'd slam the door in their face so they'd have more fuel for their narrative online. But that's not who I am, and it's not how I lead.

The former ASOSU President Carissa O'Donnell received death threats; ASOSU Senate meetings have been canceled due to anonymous threats. Members within every branch of the ASOSU have come to me in tears because of the ongoing harassment and fear-mongering within ASOSU. Multiple student leaders of color have spoken publicly about how the voices of marginalized communities have been weaponized in order to silence the actual voices of these communities or to be cruel to fellow students. Members of my executive branch have refused to come into the ASOSU office for fear of this harassment and retaliation and I can't blame them. Every obstacle I have mentioned and brought light of today, has been placed on some of the most motivated and genuine changemakers I have worked with. This organization is no longer an opportunity for students to make change, as the environment it currently perpetuates disincentivizes genuine people from joining the ASOSU. Countless incredible ASOSU alums have come out of this organization, as these individuals work in our nation and

state capital spreading the values and mission of both OSU and ASOSU. Despite these achievements and the work from past student leaders in ASOSU, and the status of ASOSU as a paradigm of student-led change, we cannot in good faith encourage nor recommend good-hearted put themselves in a position to endure harassment, retaliation, and threats. This has been highlighted in the lack of student interest in, getting involved in our organization. We lack diverse gallery attendance at public meetings despite the important items discussed, a consistent subpar voter turnout, to now, a lack of interest in registering for this upcoming year's elections.

Those of you who have been with Oregon State University for a while and watched the work of the ASOSU for years have paid witness to a steady decline in good governance and respectful politics. I am here asking what can be done to correct ASOSU's course back to being the paragon of student voice that it was originally conceived as.

In the past few weeks, the ASOSU Senate, our legislative body, has voted to dissolve our Judicial Branch of government. The three branches of the ASOSU are constitutionally designed to create healthy checks and balances. But the ASOSU Senate is acting unconstitutionally and dismissing the work and authority of other branches as they work towards an agenda unfamiliar and unbeknownst to the bulk of our student body

This year's Senate has also attempted to defund a professional staff position that was approved by last year's SFC, Senate, ASOSU President, the University President, and, you, the Board of Trustees. This is just one example of how the ASOSU Senate has refused to work collaboratively and in good faith with the university administration. More recently, the ASOSU Senate refused to honor an ask by your Board of Trustees leadership related to respecting the well-established student fee process and in retaliation dissolving our judicial branch.

This year has been hard. We collectively have been put in impossible positions that no student on our campus should be put in, especially by their peers.

Despite all of this, I am able to put aside my personal experiences and again refocus myself on the fact that I am the elected ASOSU President and that I represent and work diligently on behalf of 23,000 students.

I am concerned about the unethical and unconstitutional behavior that continues to go unchecked in the ASOSU. I am concerned for the integrity of the incidental fee process. I am concerned for the work environment that student affairs faculty are constantly put through. I am concerned for the ASOSU atmosphere and the position student leaders are placed in. I am concerned for how this impacts the shared governance responsibilities you have given us. Most importantly, I am concerned that we are letting a handful of ASOSU student leaders hazardously monopolize student advocacy without acknowledging the far-reaching implications of what they're advocating for.

We, together, are asking that you, members of the Board of Trustees, and the university senior leadership, help us do our job as a partner in shared governance. We ask that you look into our recognition requirements and ASOSU's compliance with them. This isn't working, the governing documents that allowed the ASOSU Senate to remove judicial review were written by people who are now trying to exploit the remnants of their own incompetence. ASOSU is systematically crumbling and we need you to step in.

I know this has been a lot, we have asked you to take unprecedented action and we encourage you to ask questions if not today in the coming days.

Thank you for your time