

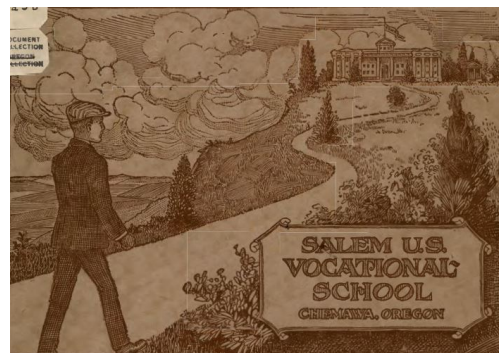
Trail Notes, Spring 2021

Dear Colleagues,

A little known fact in the lore of Oregon higher education is that in 1917, the president of Pacific University, C.J. Bushnell, suddenly resigned after four years, explaining that he wanted more time for his research in sociology. Bushnell was a sociologist of the grand European tradition. His dissertation and first book *The Social Problem at the Chicago Stock Yards* (1902) was a thorough and broad-minded study of the economic and social conditions of workers in the world's biggest meat-packing center which ended with appeals for action not just from government but also from civil society and individuals. Notwithstanding his excellence as a sociologist, the real reason for his resignation, as the scribes at *The Oregonian* reported at the time, was that Bushnell's ambitions for a major expansion of Pacific University had run into financial difficulties and the university's trustees were either unwilling or unable to fulfill the budgetary demands: "This is thought to have been somewhat discouraging to him."

Fast forward over 100 years and the president of Oregon State University, F. King Alexander, resigned in March for wholly different reasons. In the hothouse that is the modern academy, university presidents do not clash with their boards over such

mundane issues as campus expansion, budgetary questions, or educational programs. Those minor issues have been left to lesser minions. Instead, resignations result when university presidents fall afoul of constantly changing cultural norms concerning "appropriate behavior." We are not talking here about molesting the janitor or stealing from the faculty Christmas party fund. Instead, King was ousted for showing a



Salem Indian Vocational School, Chemawa, 1920

lack of zeal and enough public hyper-ventilating for an investigation being conducted by others into the behavior of others while he was president of another university. We were "beyond offended" the board chair at his previous university expostulated.

Slouching off with his \$600,000 severance pay after nine months on the job, King was the emblem of how much has changed. Not

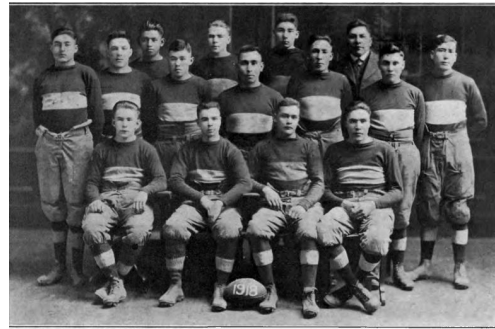
two years earlier, Portland State's president Rahmat Shoureshi was forced out over allegations that he was not very nice to his staff. His \$880,000 severance might have softened the blow.

In both cases, the replacements were chosen for their excellence in virtue-signaling and social justice sirening. New PSU president Stephen Percy has made "racial justice" his main priority, while new OSU president Becky Johnson ushered in her tenure promising to follow "the North Star of inclusive academic excellence" and to direct research towards "climate change, public health, systemic racism and economic inequality."

Meanwhile, at Linfield University as we are writing, a storm is brewing about "Jewish noses." The president Miles Davis is alleged to have made an off-color remark on the topic, and, like a scene from *The Life of Brian*, the Oregon Board of Rabbis is calling for his resignation. "Right! That's your last warning!" Davis, who is not a Christian, has apparently called for the problem to be solved if everyone would only follow that famous Jew named Jesus Christ. I'm not making this up.

It is no wonder that college and university presidents in Oregon as elsewhere these days seem to spend most of their time virtue-signaling about what is perceived to be the latest social justice crusade rather than applying themselves to running their institutions. Enrollment may collapse, revenues spiral downward, and educational quality and outcomes deteriorate. None of that will matter as long as the president remains safely on top of the wave of social activism that now drives the priorities of the modern college. One slip and they are thrown from their boards head first under

the crashing foam and into the undertow. At least the severance is good.



Football Team

No doubt you feel a special connection to the National Association of Scholars as a result of our active chapter in Oregon. As part of our work with the NAS headquarters, we have developed a scheme to make use of the powerful role of state chapters at the regional level. We have divided the country into 15 regional groupings of about 3 states each, in addition to 6 standalone state chapters. Our Oregon chapter has been paired with Washington and Alaska in a Pacific Northwest region. The idea is that by including those areas in some of our work and in encouraging their members to be more active, we will both retain and recruit members in states without active chapters and eventually have active chapters as well.

Washington state is of course a big one for the NAS and has similar challenges to its higher education as we do in Oregon. In February, I was asked by the student newspaper at Western Washington University to comment on a pending state law mandating "diversity" training for all faculty and staff at state universities. Predictably, I did not have anything positive so say about mandated political indoctrination at public universities. The article was subsequently scrubbed from the student newspaper. Sensing that might

happen, I made sure that the NAS ran a full transcript of the interview, “Diversity Training, or ‘How to Throw Fuel on the Fire’: An Interview” which is on the [NAS website](#). Despite valiant efforts by senate Republicans to make the training voluntary, to prohibit disparagement of any race, and to protect freedom of speech (all defeated as amendments) the bill passed on April 19. Our faculty colleagues in Washington will be trooped off for this mandatory training every two years. Please let me know if you have ideas about how to invigorate our regional group and to help our friends in Washington.



Basketball Team

I always love to promote the published works of OAS members: James Huffman’s [article](#) in the *Wall Street Journal* in December 2020 on Oregon’s Jim Crow COVID relief fund; Mary Beth Miller’s [article](#) in *Catholic World Report* in November 2020 on critical race theory in Catholic Schools; and coming soon from [MIT Press](#), *The Bias That Divides Us: The Science and Politics of Myside Thinking* by Keith E. Stanovich. Make sure to send me your scribbles so that I can Tweet them on the OAS Twitter account (@OregonScholars) and then include them in *Trail Notes*.



Boys Literary Society

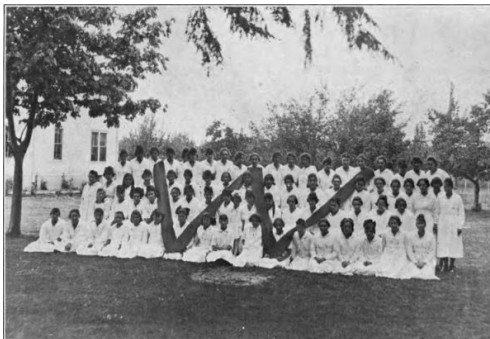
In 2018, we issued a [report](#) on Confucius Institutes in Oregon. In January 2021, Portland State indicated its intention to close its branch, following the University of Oregon’s lead. But in both case, the reasons given have nothing to do with academic integrity, free speech on China, or CCP espionage in the United States. Rather, both universities complained that right-wing McCarthyites had made the hosting of the wonderful institutions too costly in terms of monitoring and threats to taxpayer research funds. Apparently Mao Zedong Thought has not yet percolated deeply enough into the psyche of the American body politic for the liking of the faculty.



Classroom

There is a growing awareness within NAS and like-minded organizations that: (1) the problems in education begin at the K-12 level, so hoping to address them at the university level is often too late; (2) conservatives need

a ground game at the K-12 level because the activists and “social justice educators” who seem to think that ramming their ideology down the throats of vulnerable children is a good idea are far better at organizing the ground game. With that in mind, we are always looking for local school board candidates to endorse. This year we endorsed [Ron Osmundson](#) for Redmond school district and [Jeanette Schade](#) for Beaverton school district. It is a small step, but we hope over time that having the endorsement of the OAS will make a small difference for candidates struggling against the Woke Warriors turning our K-12 system into anti-racist struggle sessions.



Girls Literary Society

In April, the ever-resourceful newspaper Campus Reform [reported](#) that the University of Oregon shelled out \$25,000 to host Nikole Hannah-Jones – the 1619 Project originator – to give an online talk in February. During the talk, Hannah-Jones again recounted her terrible suffering from being an American and said she was embarrassed by her father’s patriotism. Oddly, the university did not livestream the event, nor make a recording of it public afterwards. Apparently the radicals are hoping that no one notices.



Graduating Class of 1919

Pacific University, where we began this newsletter, was in the news when a faculty member, Richard Paxton in the College of Education, was suspended last October for telling a story about cross-dressing men outside a bar in New Orleans. Apparently there were also allegations of anti-Semitism against Dr. Paxton, who is Jewish. *The Life of Brian* again! The villain here is Jennifer Yruegas, legal counsel and Title IX coordinator (aka “gender and race indoctrination chief”). You can read NAS president Peter Wood’s letter to Pacific University [here](#). I love the final notice of public scrutiny as part of NAS’s beefed up efforts to combat cancel culture in American higher education: “We will make it our business to keep Pacific University’s actions in the public eye for many years to come. Whatever happens in the courts with a lawsuit is one thing. What happens in the public assessment of Pacific University and its responsible administrators is something else. We will take it as our duty to make these events known as widely as possible to the general public.” NAS policy director Teresa Manning’s chilling [report](#) on how one student was able to engineer Paxton’s downfall is a warning. We hope Dr. Paxton joins NAS and puts his shoulder to the wheel for others in similar circumstances here in Oregon! That is what brought many of us here and the fight must go on.



Nurses Class

Finally, our major project this Winter/Spring has been an extensive report and accompanying video entitled [*The New Censorship in American Higher Education: Lessons from Portland State University*](#). The remarkable post-Shoureshi transformation of that once respectable place (alas, also my home institution) into a Woke Warrior battlefield where phantom racists and conjured-up systemic racism has become the main focus of the new president, Stephen Percy, is breathtaking to behold. The TV series *Portlandia* has nothing on the comic opera now unfolding at Portland State, and if you don't believe me please watch this [video](#) of an April "equity summit."

After the initial report and video were issued, Portland State issued a copyright takedown notice against the video, obviously embarrassed by the transparency. We will overturn this and re-issue the video, as well as launch an updated version of the report on an NAS webinar on Thursday, May 6 from 10am to 11am Pacific, where we will be joined by Senator Dennis Linthicum, a tireless advocate for free speech and a free society. Please watch for the NAS announcement and join the webinar if you can!



Basketball Team

I would be remiss if I did not rattle the tin can to keep the lights on and the coffee warm at the OAS command center (aka my home office in Portland). Our yearly costs are mainly to maintain our website and business registration. But if you would like to underwrite specific projects, I am all ears.

Until then,
Thanks for all you do!
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