

Dear President Scholz, Provost Long, Senior Vice President Moffitt, and University Trustees,

As a group of over 150 University of Oregon alumni spanning seven decades, we are writing to express our hopes that our alma mater will help identify solutions to the crisis currently impacting Oregon Forensics: a program that has brought renown to the university for 149 years.

The abrupt and unexpected withdrawal of CHC support for Oregon Forensics immediately impacts hundreds of UO forensics students directly and others indirectly as well as nearly 400 high school students across the state, with minimal savings to the CHC in the 2026 fiscal year. If nothing is done to remedy this action, students will lose irreplaceable travel competitions, scholarship opportunities, and the educational benefits of participation in events they have prepared for for months. **This harm will leave a deep and lasting mark on the members of our community and to the reputation of the university should no action be taken to remedy this abrupt decision and the instability it has created.** Many students came to Oregon or plan to matriculate here because they were attracted to forensics.

There are several steps you could take to help solve this crisis over the short and long term. We urge the university administration to recognize the unique value of a robust and professional Forensics Department so that: 1) current students can participate in fall-quarter competitions; and 2) a stable institutional home can be found where forensics can serve all students and continue to help the university realize its mission.

Switching forensics to a student club is unsustainable given the professional training required, the complexities of hosting tournaments, and the need to manage the complex and dynamic legal and regulatory challenges of national and international travel and tournaments. Student clubs drift from year to year, are reliant on the variable abilities of young scholars, and are unlikely to attract future support from alumni. The student club model is also manifestly inappropriate for the logistical management of one of the largest and best-regarded high school tournaments in the state, which has brought hundreds of prospective freshmen to the UO campus annually since the 1930s, as well as the largest collegiate mock trial tournament in the Pacific Northwest.

The success of professional leadership explains why the *majority* of our fellow Big 10 equivalents have full time, professional, forensics staff and the majority of those have a faculty director, with either the Department of Communications or the Honors College as the most common departmental home. **Big 10 Universities with professional leadership for their Forensics department include:** Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska, Northwestern, Penn State, Purdue, USC, Michigan, Michigan State, Rutgers, and, up to now, the University of Oregon. Notably, programs without such professional staff, like the

University of Washington, inconsistently support any forensics activities and do not share the history of competitive success that the University of Oregon does.

We understand that these are challenging times within the University and beyond, both economically and sociopolitically. And yet, it is precisely because of the nature of these trying times that the survival of student activities firmly grounded in inquiry and public debate — of Oregon Forensics — is so deeply important. There is an enormous body of educational outcomes research that identifies the uniquely powerful educational value of forensics participation, helping students graduate on time and achieve more as undergraduates, acquire and refine life-changing professional abilities and career opportunities, provide opportunities to flourish as individuals, and enhance their leadership abilities and societal impact after graduation.

First, we request that you work with CHC Dean Stabile to effect restoration of Forensics' fall tournament calendar. The marginal cost of support for this fiscal year is virtually nothing. The funding for competition and travel is already allocated through ASUO and the Director of Forensics position is contractually funded through December 3rd. Forensics needs only logistical support and approval to spend these funds. We alumni are motivated to cover any additional expenses and would request an estimate of any unique additional burden of logistical support.

Restoring the fall schedule helps UO students, the University, and student programs across our entire state. Tournament registration deadlines and travel arrangements cannot be further delayed. Any delay in restoring a stable foundation for forensics planning this year will cause irrevocable damage to the educational opportunities of current students, and for only marginal budgetary saving, if any, this fiscal year.

Second, we seek your support connecting Forensics to a new departmental home. We also ask for your assurance that Forensics' endowed funds will remain at the full disposal of participating students and dedicated staff members, as per the alumni donors' intent. As Forensics departs the CHC, we continue to emphasize the importance of finding a departmental home for Forensics. We call for the creation of a Working Group comprised of the ASUO President or other student leaders, members of the DFC, the Director of SGES or their delegate, the Director of Forensics, current forensics students from mock trial and debate, a full professor familiar with forensics, and one or more alumni, tasked to produce a report making recommendations regarding an appropriate institutional home. We alumni wish to support the University in providing long-term professional staffing and coaching for the Oregon Forensics program in a manner that advances the University's broader mission and that of the Forensics department. Such a home is necessary to assure alumni that their support will directly benefit current and future forensics students.

Forensics is deeply rooted in research, scholarship, free speech, and civic engagement. To see it extirpated from the UO campus would result in immeasurable losses for the student body.

Following the simple step of making immediate forensics activities possible, **we look forward to collaborating with you on how best to preserve the Department of Forensics** – and its critical mission, well-aligned with the UO's own – on the UO campus for years and decades to come.

Respectfully, but urgently,

Jean Ward, UO '60

George J. Tichy II, UO '64

Charles Hillestad, UO '67

David Force, UO (JD) '68, '82

Gregory Mowe, UO '68

Rebecca Nobeles Mowe, UO '69

Julie Stevens, UO '70

Scotty Abbott, UO '75

Denyse C. McGriff, UO (MS) '78, (MURP) '79, Mayor, Oregon City

Bruce Lundy, UO '81

Christine Miller, UO '82

Kris Moore, UO '83

Tom Birkland, UO '84

Connie Doyle, UO '84

Dr. Edward Inch, UO (MA) '84, President of Minnesota State University, Mankato

Sheila R. Larson, UO '84

Betsy Boyd, UO '85

Lori Lieberman, UO '85

Lisa Nuss, UO '85, UW Law & Public Policy '95

Robert Taylor, UO '85

Karin Yorke, UO '85

Alex Gardner, BA '86, MS '88, JD '91

Dr. Michael Lee, UO '86

David Long, UO '86

Lisa Cornwell, UO '87

Diana Harker, UO '87

Danielle Morris, UO '87

Kevin Boyer, UO '88
Lisa Cornwell, UO '88
Greg Oakes, UO '88
Dr. Michael Siström, UO '88
Erik Conrad, UO '89
Jerry McIntire, UO '89
William Messer, UO '89
Josh King, UO '90
Peter Messer, UO '90
Angela Muniz, UO '90
Matthew Taylor, UO '90
Frances Stern Dudley, UO '91
S. Amanda Marshall, UO '92, Former Oregon US Attorney
Michael Buseman, UO (JD) '92, '06
Tina Roe, UO '92
Robynne Whitney, UO '92
Brooke Cates, UO '93
Shawn MacDonald, UO '93
Geneiva McNeale, UO '94
Gabriel Scott, UO '94
Tisha Oehmen, UO (MBA) '94, '07
Nicholas Lougee, UO '95
Erik Sheldrake, UO '95
Jesse Simons, UO '95
Danielle Endres, UO '97
Isaac Gottesman, UO '97, (MEd) '02
Kevin Kerwien, UO '97
Rick Peacor, UO '97
Carmen Voilleque, UO '97
Kathleen Bauer, UO '98
Jay Lininger, UO '98
Teri Patapoff, UO '98
Joe Patrice, UO '98
Jeff Shaw, UO '98
Ashlee Sorber, UO '98
Robert Withycombe, UO (Ph.D.) '98
Matthew Clifton, UO '99
Annie Marges, UO '99
Noah Bean, UO '01
Alan Mygatt-Tauber, UO '01

Jessica Bradley, UO '02
Chris Crew, UO '02
Jingjun Yang, UO '02
Heath Hutto, UO '03
Kara Borden, UO CHC '05
Charles Everett, UO '05
Bradley Krupicka, UO CHC '06
Levi Curran, UO CHC '07
Kathryn Morris (Krenecki), UO CHC '08
Benjamin Dodds, UO '09
Jon McCabe '09
Matt Gander, UO '11
Travis Mann, UO '11
Aaron Marineau, UO '11
Amelie Rousseau, UO CHC '11
Whitney Wilson, UO CHC '11
Nicholas Hayman, UO CHC '12
Zoe Hayman, UO CHC '12
Aloura DiGiallonardo-Garcia, '12
Shelby Malstrom, UO '12
Dennis O'Connell, UO '12
Daniel Gardner, UO '13
Megan Bauer, UO '13
David Ross, UO '13
Andrew Coyle, UO '14
Marlaina Isbell, UO '14
Tom Schally, UO (MPA, MNM) '14
Michael Sugar, UO CHC '14
Garrett West, UO CHC '14
Liz Van Winkle, UO '14
Kehl Van Winkle, UO '14
Mahkah Wu, UO CHC '14
Steve Clemmons, UO '15, Former Associate Director of Forensics '13-'15
Dylan Curran, UO '15
Alyson Escalante, UO '16
Christian Geddes, UO '16
Phillip Kreigel, UO CHC '16
Greg Mina, UO CHC '16
Johanna Murphy, UO '16
Daniel Silberman, UO '16

Charles Steenkolk, UO CHC '16
Micah Canal, UO '17
Erin Casini, UO '17
Chase Geddes, UO '17
Clay McKean, UO '17
Sean McKean, UO '17
Madison Moskowitz, UO '17
Alex Payne, UO CHC '17
Jacob Viales, UO '17
Sophie Joslyn, UO '18
Michaela Kurinsky-Malos, UO '18
Niharika Sachdeva, UO CHC '18
Gabriel Cutter, UO '19, UO Law '21
Aviva Diamond, UO CHC '19
Blake Gesik, UO '19
Alexandra Jansky, UO CHC '19
Sadie Kavalier, UO CHC '19
Bri Lehr, UO '19
Sophia Penrose, '19
Sravya Tadepalli, UO '19
Morgan Wilkes, UO '19
Drew Betts, UO '17, UO Law '20, Former Associate Director of Forensics '17-'20
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Talon Kennedy, UO '20
Julia Mueller, UO CHC '20
Gracia Dodds, UO CHC '21
Emily Fowler, UO CHC '21
Sumit Kapur, UO CHC '21
Siobhan Nolan, UO '21
Annie Borgen, UO '22
Gabriel Graville, UO '22
Clare Hamblen, UO '22
Pieper James, UO '22
Alex Li, UO '22
Brendan Randall, UO '22, '27
Thomas Douglass, UO CHC '23
Sebastian Duffy, UO '23
Peter O'Konski, UO '23 (MS) '25
Logan Robinette, UO '23
Jadon Schmitt, UO '23

Garret Simmer, UO '23

Eli Wiles, UO CHC '23

Rose Gbaanador, UO '24

Ryan Iness, UO '24

Taylor King, UO '24

Brooke Kuhn, UO '24

Rohan Menon, UO '24

Seth Seagoe, UO '24

Ben Snead, UO '24

Nikolay Andreyvich Morgun, UO '25

Kyla Schmitt, UO CHC '25

Kaydilayne Weikel, UO '25

Judy Nobles, widow of Dr. W. Scott Nobles, Director of Forensics at UO from '51-'70