



May 12, 2023

Dear Members of the University Senate,

We are writing in response to senate legislation, [US22/23-12](#), Concerning the Timing and Manner of Graduation Ceremonies, passed by the senate on March 15, 2023.

We share the first goal that the senate puts forth in the motion, specifically that the purpose of our graduation ceremonies is to recognize and honor our students' academic experiences at our university.

You will recall that in March, in response to the challenges created by this year's commencement decision and in recognition that since the pandemic UO commencement has taken various forms, the Office of the President appointed a commencement advisory work group. This group, consisting of representation from the senate and other constituencies—including students, parents, alumni, and staff, was asked to review available information about past commencements and best practices; to survey constituents about preferences by the end of June; and to make recommendations for how and when to hold commencement events, 2024 through 2028.

The work group met several times, and it was helpful to learn of the issues discussed among that team. However, given the feedback of senate leadership and senators on the work group, and in consideration of the student-led petition, we have decided to implement an alternative plan, instead of continuing forward with the work group's drafted survey. The plan includes the following components:

- This year's commencement will proceed as has been communicated as planning is well underway.
- Department ceremonies will be permitted as part of June 2024 commencement.
- For 2024 through 2028, commencement activities will take place over two consecutive days, rather than one day. The specific dates will align with those currently published in the five-year academic calendar on the Registrar's website in that activities will take place on Sunday and Monday.
- The work group will be discontinued. We remain appreciative of the time and effort of the work group's members, including the four senators who lent their expertise and input.
- After we have completed both the 2023 and 2024 commencement ceremonies, both configurations will be reviewed, as well as our students' and families' experiences, in order for the University to put in place a long-term plan that best meets the shared commencement goal of recognizing and honoring our students.

We appreciate the time that senate leadership and the senators on the work group have spent with us to provide input into this plan.

Given this new direction, we respectfully suggest that the legislation be withdrawn. One of us will be available to attend the next senate meeting should you wish to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

Jamie Moffitt  
Interim President

Janet Woodruff-Borden  
Interim Provost and Executive Vice President