

# THE RAIDER

NEWS FROM SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

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## President Linda Schott announces retirement

Southern Oregon University President Linda Schott, who has positioned SOU for the future since taking office in August 2016, announced to campus yesterday that she will retire at the end of 2021 - capping a 36-year career in higher education. Schott pledged to continue putting all of her energy into serving SOU and will do her best to prepare the university for her successor.

“I intend to stay fully engaged in leading the university until a new president is hired,” President Schott said, “Our leadership team is strong, and all have indicated their willingness to continue in their roles throughout the presidential transition.”

Paul Nicholson, chair of the SOU Board of Trustees, praised the work Schott has done at SOU and said she will leave the university on firm footing.

***“Linda Schott has been a force for change at SOU; her vision, energy and leadership have transformed the university in a positive way.”***

- Paul Nicholson

Chair, Board of Trustees

“The board is deeply appreciative of her work and what she accomplished - all of which has laid a powerful foundation for the challenging work ahead of us. We also thank Dr. Schott’s husband, Tom Fuhrmark, and their family for their tremendous support during her tenure. The board wishes Dr. Schott much happiness in the next stage of her life,” said Nicholson.

The SOU community developed a new vision, mission and strategic plan that has been integrated into the university’s daily operations during Schott’s tenure. The university also opened several new facilities during the past five years (the Student Recreation Center, Lithia Motors Pavilion, Thalden

Pavilion and the Theater/JPR Building) and garnered additional state funding for the campus and its infrastructure. The university reshaped academic offerings for both traditional students and the growing number of adult learners who are returning to SOU to complete bachelor's and/or master's degrees. Graduation rates for SOU students increased 13 percent over seven years ending in 2019, and the percentage of graduates working in fields related to their majors has reached 68 percent - 10 percent above the national average.

Using national data to help align academic offerings with emerging workforce needs, the university also developed a menu of 18 new microcredentials - with more on the way - that enable both undergraduates and those who have already graduated to pick up extra skills.

President Schott also played leading roles in the creation of the Southern Oregon Higher Education Consortium and the Southern Oregon Education Leadership Council.

Schott came to SOU from the University of Maine at Presque Isle, where she served as president from 2012 to 2016. She previously taught at three Texas universities and held administrative positions in Michigan and Colorado. She received her bachelor's degree in history and German from Baylor University, and her master's degree in history and Ph.D. in history and humanities, both from Stanford University.

SOU's Board of Trustees plan to discuss the president's retirement and a presidential search during its regular meeting on April 16, 2021. A search committee is expected to be formed in the coming weeks to begin the process of finding Schott's successor. Nicholson said the board looks forward to engaging the campus community during the search for SOU's 14th president.