



Welcome SOU's next president, Richard J. Bailey, Jr.

“I am honored to have been selected as the next president of Southern Oregon University,” Bailey said. “With a 150-year history, SOU is a vital regional institution and its best days are yet to come. I am honored to be entrusted to lead SOU forward, particularly given the tremendous opportunities available to us.

Our world has changed over the past two years and I am convinced SOU will be on the leading edge of ushering higher education into its next phase. I look forward to being of service to SOU’s impressive faculty and staff to empower the students and communities we are fortunate to support.”

- Richard J. Bailey, Jr.



Richard J. Bailey, Jr., Ph.D., has been appointed as the next president of Southern Oregon University following an extensive national search and a unanimous vote today by the SOU Board of Trustees. Bailey has served as president of Northern New Mexico College (NNMC) in Espanola since October 2016, following a 24-year career in the U.S. Air Force. His presidency at SOU will begin January 15.

Bailey holds a doctorate in government from Georgetown University, a master's degree in international affairs from Washington University in St. Louis and a bachelor's degree in engineering sciences from the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Under Bailey's leadership and with a focus on student success, NNMC increased its enrollment by over 20 percent, cut its student loan default rate by more than 50 percent and more than doubled its student graduation rate – all without an increase in tuition rates.

He also brokered an NNMC partnership for the construction of a 1.5 megawatt solar array, which will lower utility costs for the college for the next 30 years. In 2020, Bailey led the creation of the Northern New Mexico College Eagle Corporation (the first of its kind in the history of the college), allowing the institution to partner with business entities for the purpose of diversifying the college's revenue streams.

Prior to his presidency at Northern New Mexico College, Bailey served as associate professor of strategy and security studies at the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies at Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. He was the school's first-ever dean of students.

He served as a military liaison and defense trade analyst at the U.S. State Department after completing his doctorate in 2006. He later served as chief air operations officer at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Joint Force Command Brunssum, in The Netherlands, where he oversaw air operations efforts for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan. Bailey retired from the Air Force as a colonel and command pilot.

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