

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Focused Interim Report

April 27, 2009

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Introduction

The University of Oregon submits this Focused Interim Report to convey fulfillment of the eight recommendations that stemmed from the decennial full-review in April 2007. The institution found the recommendations of the visiting team and the NWCCU to be helpful and in alignment with institutional priorities and activities. In some areas, the recommendations gave focus to specific, discreet actions; in others, the recommendations gave additional energy to ongoing actions and activities. We look forward to the visit of the evaluation team and to discussion of each of these responses to the recommendations.

Recommendation Responses

Recommendation 1

1. Commission Policy 2.2 *Educational Assessment* requires that institutions develop and maintain an assessment plan that is responsive to their mission and needs. Apart from externally mandated programmatic assessment for some specialized programs, the University has not developed a plan or strategy systematically to assess student learning across the campus. However, the new provost and her managerial team are aware of this need and are committed to the implementation of systematic assessment on the Eugene campus and wherever the institution offers academic programming. The Committee recommends that the University of Oregon develop and implement an assessment plan in accordance with Policy 2.2 *Educational Assessment* as quickly as feasible.

INTRODUCTION

Public research universities engaged in efforts to improve assessment of student learning outcomes face a peculiar dilemma—a dilemma stimulated by complementary external and internal commitments to improving assessment. External to campus, whether reflected in accreditation reviews, or Federal efforts like the Spellings commission report, or in state legislatures, there is considerable and appropriate interest in understanding what we expect students to have accomplished and what the empirical evidence looks like that demonstrates we have been successful. Internal to campus, especially among individual faculty and their departments, there is considerable commitment to student success and programmatic excellence and this is reflected in regular and in some ways routine efforts to articulate what students can do and how we can be confident in the quality and effectiveness of our efforts. Everyone is therefore interested in assessment, and indeed, is committed to it, and the University of Oregon is embarked on a process to upgrade and codify its assessment strategies, both ongoing and new. The dilemma is that that which is external can seem intrusive to faculty while that which is internal may not seem innovative enough for external audiences.

It is important to understand, even to appreciate, that the UO approaches its assessment plan consistent with an institutional culture that values de-centralized academic authority distributed into the hands of individual faculty and departments. Our assessment plan is situated in this cultural setting and takes its measured strength from identifying, expanding, and codifying those departmental and program-focused assessment practices that permit the UO to know more explicitly how we measure our learning success and how this in turn addresses external interests in assessment.

The Progress Report submitted to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) in November 2008 presented a comprehensive plan for assessment across three principal areas—accountability, student engagement, and outcomes-based assessment—throughout both the curriculum and co-curriculum. It is our understanding that the NWCCU will focus on outcomes-based assessment during its April 2009 visit. Consistent with that focus, this document elaborates our outcomes-based assessment efforts and plans, focusing on those elements of the comprehensive plan that have developed since the submission of the prior Progress Report. This is followed by a brief discussion of accountability and student engagement measures.

The University of Oregon has integrated its campus efforts with larger efforts within the Oregon University System (OUS). The Provosts' Council, composed of the provosts from the seven member institutions, formed a Learning Outcomes and Assessment group (LO&A), under the direction of former

Southern Oregon University President Elizabeth Zinser and composed of the key assessment officers from each of the OUS institutions, to develop by 2010 a set of learning outcomes for general education for the OUS system. The UO has played a central role in the LO&A effort, supporting OUS participation in AAC&U assessment projects including participation as a LEAP state. The UO helped sponsor OUS participation in AAC&U summer programs in building assessment teams. We are in active partnership with our sister institutions in producing a coordinated system of general education assessment.

OUTCOMES-BASED ASSESSMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

The University of Oregon recognizes that assessment ensures the highest quality educational experience for our students, and our assessment efforts are distributed intentionally throughout the academic and co-curricular units comprising the university, consistent with an academic culture of distributed responsibility and authority. In this way, we embed a psychology of assessment within the units best able to assay student learning and best able to tailor their programs in response to these assessments. Our overall plan for outcomes-based assessment includes:

1. An inventory of conventional activities, historical contributions, and particular innovations to assessment that preceded our NWCCU self-study and accreditation visits,
2. Codification and extension of best practices we have garnered within the UO or have discovered working with our colleagues within OUS and elsewhere, with deliberate bottom-up efforts with key departments like English, Mathematics, and History.
3. Incorporation of assessment in key institutional processes including 10-year program review, new program approval, and new course approvals, as well as professional accreditation,
4. Development of an infrastructure to capture and coordinate UO assessment activities.

An inventory of conventional activities, historical contributions, and particular innovations to assessment. The University of Oregon has assembled an inventory of numerous efforts to assess student learning success and the contributions of our faculty and programs to that success.

For example, the Lundquist College of Business (LCB) began a systematic review of its undergraduate curriculum in 2005¹ in response to a new 2002 standard by the AACSB that addressed the assessment of learning. LCB constructed a faculty-driven process to articulate specific learning goals for each degree program, that learning objectives be rooted in the mission statement for each program, and that goals be measured using direct measures of student learning. LCB has developed goals, objectives, and rubrics to measure learning with particular emphasis on key courses that comprise the undergraduate experience. The LCB effort addresses both assessment of student success and the incorporation of what is learned about student success into curriculum revision and reform.

A second example is found in the activities of our Teaching Effectiveness Program (TEP). TEP provides extensive support to faculty for the improvement of their teaching, both through formative evaluation of classroom efforts and through workshops and trainings on improvements to course design, articulation of objectives and goals, and their assessment. Recent workshops from TEP have included: “Participation rubrics workshop” [Winter 08], “Learning Goals and the Meaningful Classroom” [Winter 08], “Creating Outcomes and Assessments” [each Spring], and “Grades and Grading” [regularly offered].

A third example is found in a systematic effort to review grading policy and practices at the UO. Led by Karen Sprague, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, and supported by empirical studies by faculty in Economics, the UO is examining how to invigorate significance in UO grades. Historically, grades

¹ The Dean of LCB at that time was Jim Bean, who serves now as Provost for the UO.

represent the principal means by which assessment of student learning was carried out, and the importance of grades and grading practices to undergraduate success should be seen as a key component of ensuring significant mutual engagement of students and faculty in learning success.

These three examples illustrate well that the University of Oregon has engaged in significant assessment practices on an ongoing basis. The University has also convened an Assessment Inventory Working Group, tasked with completing a comprehensive inventory of current assessment practices campus-wide. This group will also complete its review of assessment efforts at AAU Comparator Institutions, with this information made available to the university community through the assessment plan web site.

Codification and extension of best practices we have garnered within the UO or have discovered working with our colleagues within OUS and elsewhere. Through the work of Ken Doxsee, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and the key officer heading UO assessment efforts, the University of Oregon has put together a process for the cultivation of faculty-driven assessments in the majors. Doxsee has solicited assessment plans from six model departments, selected to represent the widest possibility diversity of academic offerings – the School of Music and Dance, the School of Journalism and Communication, Art (School of Architecture and Allied Arts), Mathematics (College of Arts and Sciences – Sciences), English (College of Arts and Sciences – Humanities), and History (College of Arts and Sciences – Social Sciences). These departments were chosen quite deliberately for variety in the student experience, differing kinds of pedagogy, and the kinds of students served and courses and programs offered. Careful work with this group is expected to create models for assessment that can be promulgated throughout the university as our effort expands.

He has also developed a web site providing academic units with access to the assessment plans from the model department and representative assessment plans for other academic units, serving as models for other units in the development and refinement of their own assessment plans. And he has developed a campus-wide assessment planning document, designed to engage the remainder of the academic (and co-curricular) units in the development of assessment plans.

Incorporation of assessment in key institutional processes including 10-year program review, new program approval, and new course approvals, as well as professional accreditation. Doxsee has revised the university's 10-year Program Review and Program Approval processes, adding a new requirement to address specifically the issue of assessment. The text of this revision, provided as endnote [i], reveals the importance placed on outcomes-based assessment and the value it is felt to carry.

Development of an infrastructure to capture and coordinate UO assessment activities. The University has taken several concrete steps to develop an appropriate infrastructure to capture and coordinate UO assessment activities. As an administratively lean organization (administrative expenditures at 38% of our AAU peers), it is essential to build cost-effective and value-rich infrastructure in support of assessment. UO actions include the appointment of an Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs whose portfolio includes responsibility for our assessment plans. Dr. Kenneth M. Doxsee, Professor of Chemistry, has been named Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and head of the University Assessment Council. Doxsee was recognized by the Oregon Academy of Science as the State of Oregon's Outstanding Educator in 2003 and is currently a Williams Fellow, one of the University of Oregon's highest teaching honors, in recognition of his long-standing commitment to excellence in undergraduate education. Doxsee's appointment represents the commitment of a respected member of the tenured faculty to this endeavor, lending considerable credibility to UO assessment efforts among faculty campus-wide.

The University has convened a new, permanent advisory council group, the University Assessment Council. The Council has been tasked with central coordination of the University's assessment effort. The Council's membership includes:

- Ken Doxsee, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs [chair],
- Karen Sprague, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies,
- Marian Friestad, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies,
- Larry Singell, Associate Dean for Social Sciences,
- Robin Holmes, Vice President for Student Affairs,
- Dave Hubin, Executive Assistant President and liaison to the NWCCU,
- Russ Tomlin, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs,
- Two tenured faculty [TBA].

The University has appointed a new Director of Institutional Research, JP Monroe, who has been charged with providing increased support to overall UO assessment efforts to permit academic departments and programs to obtain critical data for their assessment efforts. Monroe also manages our participation in the NNSE and planned participation in SERU.

These actions represent a considerable investment of UO expertise and faculty and administrative resources to assessment. The Council will play an increasing role in examining general issues in assessment, helping assure consistency across academic and co-curricular units and linking work at the department and program level with larger institutional and OUS considerations. At the same time, Doxsee will connect with and support the assessment efforts of individual departments and programs and their constituent faculty.

IMMEDIATE PLANS FOR ADVANCEMENT OF OUTCOMES-BASED ASSESSMENT

With an effective infrastructure and considerable momentum established, the UO anticipates rapid movement into additional avenues of outcomes-based assessment, with the following activities slated for immediate attention.

- Extend content of assessment plan web site to co-curricular units.
- Formalize assessment efforts for the general education learning outcomes presented in the self-study document [ii].
- Expand the ongoing TEP workshop series for faculty, staff, administrators, and students on learning outcomes and outcomes-based assessment.
- Encourage exploration of currently available data representing a valuable potential source of direct outcomes-based assessment.
- Course sequences, particularly in the sciences, represent progressions of courses, success in each of which is dependent on achievement of learning outcomes (stated or unstated) of the preceding course(s). Success rates as students move "up the ladder" provide a key observable; these data should be available, yet have most likely not yet been examined or analyzed.
- Both professional examinations (GRE, etc.) and student placement in graduate and professional programs potentially provide key information about achievement of student learning outcomes.

PLANS FOR APPLICATION OF THE OUTCOMES-BASED ASSESSMENT EFFORT TO INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

The University of Oregon is firmly wedded to the belief that effective assessment is carried out with the express purpose of informing and improving the academic mission of the University. This belief is at the heart of the University's insistence that assessment efforts be embedded throughout the curriculum and

co-curriculum, thereby avoiding the artificial separation between educational practices and their assessment. Assessment-informed decision-making at the department and program level is already an integral element of our approach to academic program planning, development, and modification. As an illustrative example, taken from the self-study document, analysis of outcomes of two separate high-impact practices, our Freshman Interest Group (“FIG”) program and the Pathways Program, led to the decision to subsume the Pathways program within a substantially expanded and modified FIG program. As noted above, development of a specific outcomes-based assessment plan is now an essential element in regularly scheduled program reviews and in the new program approval process. Assessment planning has been included in these processes as we believe it represents perhaps the simplest and most central means of evaluating the effectiveness of our programs and, when indicated by this evaluation, of developing effective strategies for their improvement.

Mechanisms for assessment of learning outcomes for specific academic programs are either now in place or, as described above, are under active development. In our call for development of assessment planning documents, and we have assisted departments in this process, the message has been and will remain clear that the intent is for outcomes-based assessment to represent the opportunity for dynamic change and improvement. We are not gathering data to satisfy external demands for data, but rather we are gathering data that will be *used*.

CONCLUSION

Since receiving the recommendation from the NWCCU that “the University of Oregon develop and implement an assessment plan as quickly as possible,” the University has taken purposeful and effective steps to meet that requirement. The University of Oregon’s progress on this recommendation reflects a genuine commitment to the spirit and the principle that underlies the recommendation. The University has developed the requisite infrastructure and has carried out a critical internal analysis of on-going assessment practices. Building from this analysis, the University has identified a strategy for forward-going assessment that is both responsive to the NWCCU’s call and supportive of the University’s core academic mission. We are doing so in a way congruent with our faculty-driven institutional culture, thereby satisfying internal expectations regarding assessment, and we do so with a clear eye to how our efforts align with those of peer institutions in the AAU, with our OUS compatriots, and with our colleagues in the NWCCU, thereby contributing to external conversations about the value and nature of assessment in public research universities.

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- i *[Excerpt from the UO Program Review document]* **Assessment** – Before compiling information in the self study, each unit must create its own statement of standard assessment practices relative to its own discipline and field. These practices should include defined methods for measuring success and/or other outcomes. This procedure is part of a university-wide effort to gather information for institutional assessment and review processes, and is also consistent with the recognition that assessment can and does enhance academic efforts. To that end, assessment documents that pay particular attention to the enunciation of specific essential learning objectives and the identification of “high impact practices” (including research, internships, service learning, writing-intensive courses, senior capstone projects, first-year seminars, learning communities, and study abroad) will be of particular assistance, both to the university and to the unit preparing the document. Considerable latitude is permissible and expected in these assessment statements. The Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs is available for consultation regarding unit-specific models and/or templates if desired.

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- ii The self-study (page 77) identified as desired outcomes of our General Education curriculum the development of an understanding of and appreciation for the following:
- The centrality of effective communication and language facility
 - oral and written communication
 - group, interpersonal, and technological communication
 - The moral foundations of human interaction
 - ethical judgment, personal and social responsibility
 - the increasing interdependence and diversity of world cultures
 - the consequences of current actions and policies
 - The nature of the historical past and its relationship to the present
 - the common concerns and diverse responses of societies, past and present
 - historical approaches to understanding contemporary issues
 - The diversity of human experience through the study of various cultures
 - culture and its tangible achievements
 - creative expression
 - critical approaches
 - aesthetic standards • oral and written histories
 - The importance of modern sciences and technology
 - science as an interrelated body of knowledge, rather than a collection of isolated facts
 - scientific methods of discovery
 - scientific perspectives on major problems facing society
 - quantitative reasoning and computational skills
 - The fundamentals and interrelationship of the human mind and body
 - Human behavior
 - Perception and cognition
 - Diverse modes of thought and creativity
 - Health and physical activity

Recommendation 2

2. The University of Oregon has taken several essential steps to generate alternative sources of revenue to help maintain its instructional and research quality at the AAU level, including increasing its external research support, attracting private funds, and increasing its proportion of out-of-state students. But it must identify its particular strengths and the ways it will continue to serve the state. The Committee recommends that the University of Oregon undertake an academic planning process to identify what research, instructional and state services areas it will be known for in the future and use that process to concentrate its capital and operating resource allocation decisions (Standard 1.B).

THE ACADEMIC PLANNING PROCESS

In July 2008, the Senior Vice President and Provost began a process to develop an Academic Plan. The Deans researched plans of many other research institutions and suggested a structure and tone for the plan. The Leadership Council expanded the discussion to the broader academic enterprise and developed an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and barriers. The Advancement professionals joined the discussion to elaborate on how the University engages external constituencies. In August 2008, a small group was tasked with taking that volume of input and delivering a first draft of a formal document. A preliminary draft was discussed at the Department Heads Retreat and their input incorporated into the first full draft. <<http://academicplan.uoregon.edu/welcome/academic-plan/>>

The next phase was campus-wide discussion. The small group was tasked with defining a direction and beginning the formation of goals and strategy to embark on that direction. The campus-wide discussion ratified the direction, expanded on the goals and strategy, and helped to refine a document that focused the University's efforts for the coming years.

PHASED FOCUS STRATEGY

All current disciplines at UO must be excellent or have the opportunity to become excellent. There are no second class groups. Because there are not the resources to move everyone forward at the same time, a phased focus strategy was implemented. The strategy developed was to pick a few crosscutting themes (listed in the document as Big Ideas <<http://provost.uoregon.edu/content/big-ideas>>) and use them as levers to enhance a subset of areas. After three to five years, the University will repeat this process and pick new themes with new areas on which to focus. The first set of themes will be expected to remain excellent on their own during a second phase. In this strategy, at any given time, some faculty are engaged in the focus areas while others are exploring for new areas to be considered for the next phase with seed funding for the latter process. This cycle can be repeated indefinitely.

The drafting committee was instructed to include too many goals and themes in order to seed a broad community discussion. They have succeeded. The generation of more goals and themes of the style presented in this draft plan during broader discussion was encouraged. At a later step, goals and themes will be chosen as initial phase priorities. A financial analysis of many goals in the plan was also posted.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT

A discussion blog <<http://academicplan.uoregon.edu/archived-academic-plan-blog/>> was created that allowed for comment on the direction in its entirety or specific sections.

Three fora were held for open community discussions in November 2008.

Input was also invited through conventional means in the form of discussions conveyed to the academic deans and discussions among groups of faculty across disciplines conveyed through the deans or through the centers and institute directors.

REFINING THE FOCUS

The revised Academic Plan <<http://provost.uoregon.edu/content/academic-plan-20>> was submitted to the Presidential Search Committee for distribution to candidates and was also discussed with the Foundation Trustees and external communities. Each unit was invited to hold community discussions of the revised Academic Plan and pass the consensus comments back to the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost through deans, vice-presidents, or vice provosts. The Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost has received minor edits to incorporate. Subsequent to these minor edits, the report will be reviewed by the incoming President during the summer and submitted to the University Senate in the Fall with the goal of promulgation by the end of Fall 2009.

Simultaneously, as part of the Phased Focus strategy to systematically raise the quality of all aspects of the University, a Request for Posting (RFP) <<http://provost.uoregon.edu/content/big-ideas>> was sent out on February 2, 2009, to develop and choose the first set of foci (i.e. Big Ideas). The RFP process allowed for a more formal refinement and submission of existing Big Ideas as well as for submittal of new additional Big Ideas. The nature of the online RFP process encouraged campus-wide online discussion of ideas and funding models for the idea. Following are the criteria for the Request for Posting:

1. Aligns with UO's mission and the general goals in the Academic Plan.
2. Addresses the core missions including teaching and learning, impact on general education, the student experience, research and engagement.
3. Builds on existing UO academic strengths, including disciplinary or interdisciplinary programs. Demonstrates a "critical mass" of faculty interest and participation.
4. Fosters new cross-institutional collaboration and partnerships with other units at UO.
5. Strengthens some existing disciplines.
6. Links to fundamental societal opportunities, challenges or needs. Incorporates assessment and communication strategies to articulate benefits and impact.
7. Proposes a viable funding model from a combination of revenues such as private fund-raising, General Fund dollars, and/or competitively awarded grants or contracts (budgets not necessary, just discussion, workshop available on this one). Include infrastructure investments needed.
8. Is sustainable beyond the three to five year "focus phase."

NEXT STEPS

The RFP opportunity for Big Ideas was extended through March 16, 2009. Twenty-eight submissions were received. A committee comprised of a broad spectrum of campus stakeholders is currently being formed by the Senior Vice President and Provost to review all submissions and blog discussions. The committee will evaluate each submission against the criteria set forth in the RFP and will provide quantitative and qualitative ratings of each proposal against each criterion. By May 2009, the committee will recommend three to five emerging themes that warrant further development and support as the first round of Big Ideas. Implementation of the first round of Big Ideas is to begin as soon as appropriate but not later than Fall 2009.

Recommendation 3

3. The University of Oregon prides itself on its status as an AAU institution. However, with the expectations for research, concern is expressed that the University may not have funds for needed laboratory and research space; therefore, the Committee recommends that the University take the necessary steps to ensure that facilities are planned and resources identified to support essential continued research growth (Standards 4.B.4; 8.A.2; 8.A.3; 8.A.6).

The University of Oregon just completed (Dec 31, 2008) an extraordinary six-year fund-raising campaign totaling \$853 million, far exceeding its goal of \$600 million. This represents the most successful campaign in Oregon's history for any philanthropic purpose. <http://campaign.uoregon.edu/>

Included in the campaign totals are private funds of \$138 million raised in support of academic facilities devoted to teaching/ learning and research, many of which leveraged the private gifts through provision of state bonds for construction or federal support for programs and instrumentation. Total capital costs for recently completed and current academic and research facilities projects total approximately \$250 million. http://giving.uoregon.edu/z/achievements_cornerstones_conn.php

The following lists provide summaries and links to detailed information about the individual capital projects relevant to the UO's academic and research mission.

Completed Capital Projects

- Robert and Beverly Lewis Center for Neuroimaging <http://lcni.uoregon.edu/>
 - Total cost \$1.5m (funding from private gifts and federal grants)
- Lorry I. Lokey Laboratories <http://pmr.uoregon.edu/current-uo-news/archive/2008/february/current-uo-news/archive/2008/february/lokey-feb-2008/about-the-capabilities-of-lorry-i-lokey-laboratories> <http://camcor.uoregon.edu/>
 - Total cost \$15.6m (\$9.5m from state bonds, \$6.1m private gifts)
- Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art renovation and expansion <http://uoma.uoregon.edu/> http://giving.uoregon.edu/z/achievements_cornerstones_conn_6.php
 - Total cost \$12.2m (\$6.4m in state bonds, \$5.8m in private gifts)
- MarAbel B. Frohnmayer Music Building renovation and expansion <http://comm.uoregon.edu/archive/news-release/2009/3/newly-expanded-music-building-opens-march-6>
 - Total cost \$18.8m (\$7.6m in state bonds, \$10.2m in private gifts, \$1m other)
- Lillis Business Complex <http://lcb.uoregon.edu/ribboncutting/index.html>
 - Total cost \$37.3m (almost all in private gifts)
- Peterson Hall renovation, phase two of the Lillis Business Complex http://uplan.uoregon.edu/projects/Project%20Sums%20for%20Web/Gil-Pet_proj.htm
 - Total cost \$6.6m (\$3.3m in state bonds, \$3.3m in private gifts)
- Museum of Natural and Cultural History, new core exhibit <http://www.uoregon.edu/~mnh/> <http://campaign.uoregon.edu/newsitem1.php>
 - Total cost \$1m (all in private gifts)
- James F. Miller Theatre Complex <http://www.uoregon.edu/~theatre/>
 - Total cost \$7.8m (\$3.95m in state bonds, \$3.85m in private gifts)

Capital Projects in Progress (as of March 2009)

- HEDCO Education Building
<http://uplan.uoregon.edu/projects/Project%20Sums%20for%20Web/ColEdu.htm>
<http://pmr.uoregon.edu/current-uo-news/archive/2007/October/uo-celebrates-groundbreaking-for-hedco-education-building/>
 - Total cost \$50.5m (\$19.4m in state bonds, \$27m in private gifts, \$2m in parking revenue, \$2.1m other funds)
- Robert and Beverly Lewis Integrative Science Building
<http://uplan.uoregon.edu/projects/Project%20Sums%20for%20Web/LISB.htm>
<http://pmr.uoregon.edu/current-uo-news/archive/2008/october/uo-raises-matching-funds-needed-for-65-million-science-building/>
 - Expected total cost \$65m (\$30m in state bonds, \$35m in private gifts)
- Museum of Natural and Cultural History renovation and expansion
http://uplan.uoregon.edu/projects/Project%20Sums%20for%20Web/OSMA_proj.htm
<http://pmr.uoregon.edu/current-uo-news/archive/2008/august/mnch-groundbreaking/uo-museum-of-natural-and-cultural-history-breaks-ground-for-new-wing/>
 - Expected total cost for three phases \$9.5m (combination of private gifts, state and federal funding)
- Allen Hall renovation and expansion
http://campaign.uoregon.edu/achievements_cornerstones_conn_18.php
 - Expected total cost \$18m (\$8m in state bonds, \$10m in private gifts)

NEW RESEARCH AND LABORATORY FACILITIES

The University of Oregon surpassed \$100 million in research expenditures for the first time in Fiscal Year 2008. Three major federal agencies continue to provide most of the competitively awarded research grants to the UO: the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Department of Education. These investments reflect UO's tradition of research excellence in the natural sciences and education disciplines.

Recommendation #3 of the NWCCU report focused specifically on the need for planning and funding of research and laboratory space to support continued research growth. It is especially noteworthy that there has been dramatic progress, even since the 2007 NWCCU evaluation, in developing the facilities and laboratory infrastructure for UO's research enterprise involving the natural sciences and education. Most relevant examples from the above capital projects lists include the Lorry I. Lokey Laboratories dedicated in 2008, the HEDCO Education Building to be completed later in 2009, and the Lewis Integrative Science Building that will begin construction in 2010. Together these investments will total over \$130 million in new facilities and laboratories that will house "cutting-edge" educational and sponsored research programs crossing disciplinary boundaries. These will be critical in maintaining UO's competitiveness for federally sponsored research programs.

The \$15 million Lokey Labs facility has already received national and international acclaim as one of the finest facilities in the world to pursue science and technology research on materials at the nanometer scale. The associated Center for Advanced Materials Characterization in Oregon <http://camcor.uoregon.edu/> has been greatly expanded to serve as Oregon's "High Tech Extension Service" and leverages UO's investment in advanced instrumentation to the benefit of other research institutions and the private sector. The value of equipment is estimated to be more than double the construction cost of the Lokey Labs. The facility provides a unique resource for materials fabrication and characterization, thereby enhancing the UO's ability to garner major research funding, and to attract and retain exceptionally talented graduate students and faculty in the sciences. Lorry Lokey recently pledged

an additional \$75 million to the UO, largely in support of programs and facilities related to the “Scientific Advancement and Graduate Education” initiative.

The \$65 million Lewis Integrative Science Building will connect to the Lokey Labs and the existing Science Complex and will provide unique collaborative research facilities emphasizing UO’s strengths in the neurosciences, from molecular biology to systems neuroscience to the cognitive/ behavioral sciences. It will house expanded core facilities, including vivaria, imaging and informatics tools, which will promote scientific interactions across the life and physical sciences disciplines. The federal stimulus package just announced in 2009 includes significant new funding (~\$1.5 billion total) within NSF and NIH for academic research facilities modernization and expansion. The UO is preparing proposal submissions to expand the upgrading and renovation of the Science Complex, including teaching and research laboratories to address the emergent goal of “Bench Level Integrative Science”. Finally, for new faculty additions in disciplines such as biology, chemistry, and physics, the UO Office of the Vice President for Research provides an average approaching \$500,000 for lab renovations and upgrades, as a critical component of start-up packages needed to launch successful faculty research programs.

The \$50 million HEDCO Education Building will catalyze new areas of collaboration by providing space to bring together the college's clinical, teaching and research efforts. It will provide specialized facilities for teaching, assessment and therapeutic services, along with a faculty research hub, student services center and learning commons. Integrative clinic facilities will serve the college's three clinical programs: communication disorders and sciences, couples and family therapy and counseling psychology.

EXPANDING FACILITIES FOR RESEARCH CONNECTIONS TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the above capital projects directly supporting UO-based research, the Riverfront Research Park (RRP), directly adjacent to the UO campus, provides complementary facilities supporting UO research centers and institutes and their associated spin-offs in the private sector.

<http://researchpark.uoregon.edu/index.html> Private tenants are engaged in the fields of neuroscience, biotechnology, behavioral science research, software, health care, language learning and assessment tools, and policy and program development for people with disabilities.

<http://researchpark.uoregon.edu/html/tenants.html> These firms enjoy synergistic relationships with UO researchers, faculty, as well as access to University facilities.

In addition to the 111,000 square feet of existing RRP space, the UO is currently planning a University-owned building of at least 50,000 square feet. It will provide additional research and incubator facilities supporting university research and its translation into products and services supporting regional economic development. State bonds of \$19 million were recently authorized to support the capital project, and the current plan is to begin construction within the next two years.

(See Appendix 3A “1700 Millrace” for preliminary schematics.)

Recommendation 4

4. Standard 8.C *Physical Resources Planning* requires that the institution plan for and identify resources for remedying deferred maintenance. However, the evidence suggests that the level of deferred maintenance at the University of Oregon is high and that necessary building renovations are problematic given the unavailability of resources to address the needs of the physical plant. The Committee recommends that the University undertake a planning process that addresses the physical plant of the institution and that the process include constituencies from across campus to develop a building renewal agenda (Standard 8.C).

STRENGTHENED PROCESS

The University of Oregon has made significant progress in strengthening the process by which campus renewal needs and capital repair projects are identified and undertaken. Beginning in 2008, the associate vice president for campus operations initiated conversations with campus deans and department heads. These conversations have proven valuable in improving awareness of campus physical plant needs and identifying priorities for available funding. The resulting, broad-based knowledge from these conversations has been put to good use in guiding projects. Campus Operations will continue to solicit input and feedback from campus constituencies to achieve maximum effectiveness with available deferred maintenance and capital repair funding.

In addition to its increased outreach to campus constituencies, Campus Operations has enhanced its preventive maintenance efforts. A Preventive Maintenance Manager has been hired to oversee preventive maintenance efforts for all campus systems. This position will help the campus identify and address facility issues before they become more expensive.

DEFERRED MAINTENANCE PROGRESS

The university has accomplished meaningful reductions in its total deferred maintenance. With a capital repair appropriation nearly double the size of the appropriation in the previous biennium, the university has been able to undertake a comprehensive list of projects (Section I below). The 2005-2007 capital repair appropriation was \$6.48 million. The 2007-2009 capital repair appropriation is \$12.75 million.

Further aiding the university is the presence of \$2.9 million for deferred maintenance contained in Oregon's \$176 million state economic stimulus package which became law in early February 2009. A breakdown of projects funded with the stimulus amount is provided below (Section II below).

Finally, the university recently concluded the most successful private capital campaign in Oregon history – raising more than \$853 million. Through the generosity of more than 90,000 individual donors, the university will be able to make major strides in the quality of its physical plant. Projects will result in additional square footage to existing buildings and entirely new buildings. Examples already completed include the new MarAbel B. Frohnmayer Music Building and the renovation of Beall Concert Hall. In 2004, the 1920s era music school building and co-located Beall Concert Hall had over \$5 million accumulated deferred maintenance. This deferred maintenance has now been completely eliminated.

Section I (Projects Funded with 07-09 Capital Repair Allocation)

Project	Costs to Date
RC8054 - McKenzie Hall Reroof	663,867
RC8014 - Susan Campbell Hall Restoration	586,231
RC2038 - UO Theatre Expansion Villard	574,651
RC2055 - School of Music Addition & Alt	560,000
RC3078 - College of Education Addition/Alter	550,000
RC7037 - Huestis Reroof 07	469,354
RC8033 - Johnson Hall 1st & 2nd Floor HVAC Upgrade	310,735
RC7019 - Huestis Elevator Modernization	239,942
RC8034 - Pacific Fire Sprinkler Infrastructure	172,768
RC8055 - School of Music Reroof	154,744
RC8007 - 08-09 University Wide Sidewalk Improvements	151,859
RC8082 - PV Solar Panels on Bldg 130	99,900
RC8012 - Northsite Utilities Upgrade	86,455
RC8019 - CPS - Tunnel Insulation Repair	83,888
RC8110 - Condon 260 Renovations	81,487
RC8077 - Agate Hall Exterior Refurbishment	61,496
RC8025 - CPS - Tunnel Steam Isolation Valves	59,150
RC8006 - 08-09 University Wide Street Improvement	58,698
RC9004 - Johnson Hall Cornice Restoration	56,989
RC9040 - Susan Campbell Hall 2nd Floor Painting	50,806
RC8089 - PLC - Coil Replacement - DDC Upgrade	50,290
RC8081 - Cascade Window Replacement	48,154
RC8087 - CPS - Boiler FWT Pump	46,406
RC8017 - CPS - Tunnel Steam Expansion Replacement	44,668
RC9013 - CPS - Tunnel Piping Alignment	44,491
RC9027 - East Campus Infrastructure Upgrades	39,882
RC8093 - Baker Downtown Center Improvements	36,458
RC8016 - CPS - Quincy Air Compressor	30,288
RC9009 - MISC CAPITAL RENEWAL PROJECT WK'S	27,697
RC9023 - Esslinger Hall-Halliwell HVAC Replacement	25,458
RC8118 - Electrical Stand-by System Upgrade	21,664
RC8018 - CPS - New Tunnel Water Intrusion	20,648
RC8037 - Onyx 3rd Floor Hood Upgrade	16,534
RC8011 - Jessica Green Lab	15,919
RC8044 - Johnson Hall Suite 3 Remodel	15,781
RC8088 - Big DA Tank Overhaul	14,730
RC8111 - Campus Street Light Replacement	12,923
RC8075 - Egress Lighting Upgrades	179
RC7065 - Volcanology 2nd Flr - Remodel	10,500
RC8063 - Pacific Hall Elevator Modernization	10,218
RC8013 - CPS New Make-up System Upgrade	9,847
RC9022 - Onyx Bridge- Hallway Monitoring	8,755
RC8114 - New Tunnel Condensate Upgrade	7,877
RC9037 - Oregon Hall IAQ HVAC Code Upgrade	6,722
RC8045 - Johnson Hall Suite 7 Remodel	6,288
RC8091 - Strom & Sanitary System Replacement	5,300
RC8078 - Utility Monitoring Upgrades	4,601

RC7004 - CAMPUS MISC CAPITAL REPAIR 06-07	16,985
RC9028 - Straub Hall 2nd Floor Painting	4,232
RC8098 - Bowerman Renovations	3,192
RC8053 - Cascade Reroof	1,230
RC8056 - 13th Street Vault Repairs	732
RC9049 - Huestis Piping Replacement – Roof	624
RC9051 - Condon Hall 360 Renovation	566
RC8117 - AAA-Art Studio Sprinklers	517
RC8092 - Columbia Hall Reroof	214
RC8094 - Solar Awning Project	183

Total Costs to Date \$5,683,773

Section II (Projects for \$2.9M State Economic Stimulus Package Funding)

Mechanical Upgrades and Replacement Projects	\$600,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pacific Hall Sprinkler System • Steam and Chilled Water Control Valves 	
Electrical Upgrades and Replacements	\$500,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace 7 Obsolete Transformers in Central Electrical System • Options for remaining funding include enhancement of fiber optics infrastructure, PV panel installation, other network infrastructure 	
Exterior Building Repairs	\$300,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly Hall historic preservation renovation (part of overall \$600,000 project) 	
Programmatic Modification	\$500,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities Services Building reconfiguration 	
Deferred Interior Finish Replacements	\$800,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carpet/paint/ceiling replacements in multiple buildings on campus 	
Code and Safety Compliance Improvements	\$200,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalk Replacements • Options for remaining funding include exterior lighting and cemetery walk 	

Recommendation 5

5. Commission criteria assume that there will be a commonly understood and uniformly employed set of institutional policies, rules, practices, and procedures that are employed at every level of administration. These policies should foster open communication and goal attainment. However, the Committee is concerned that the University of Oregon does not currently have these operational policies in place and that campus based decision-making procedures appear to be idiosyncratic and not uniformly applied. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the University of Oregon take steps to enhance internal communication and to review its operating policies in regard to Standard 6, *Governance and Administration*; Standard 4.A, *Faculty Selection, Evaluation, Roles, Welfare and Development* and Standard 7.C, *Financial Management*.

As a means of enhancing internal communication, and in direct response to this recommendation, the President created a workgroup in February 2008 to formulate recommendations for the University of Oregon on approaches to consistent policy development, review, promulgation, and implementation. In July 2008, the workgroup presented recommendations to the President's Small Executive Staff (PSES) for consideration and approval. Subsequent to the review and approval by PSES, the following actions have been initiated under the guidance of the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost:

1. The development of an online policy library to provide a universally accessible and uniformly employed set of institutional policies, rules, practices, and procedures linking to every level of administration in one website. The online Policy Library will migrate into production and be available in April 2009. The *draft* online Policy Library is currently available at: <http://vpfa-prod.uoregon.edu/vpfa-drupal/policy-library/>.
2. The creation of a University of Oregon Policy on Policy Statements that will serve as a policy guidance document to help ensure University-wide consistency in the formulation, review, approval, and implementation of policies.
3. The development of a communication plan to ensure faculty and staff are informed of University policies and how to use the Policy Library.
4. The conversion of existing University of Oregon Policy Statements into a consistent format that aid individuals in recognizing policy and knowing where to look within a policy for key information.
5. The designation of policy liaisons in each vice presidential area to communicate and collaborate with the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost to ensure regular updating and review of policies in a decentralized, yet consistent fashion.

In addition, the Academic Affairs website has recently undergone a significant redesign (<http://academicaffairs.uoregon.edu/>) that integrates academic policies in a more fluid, transparent, and readily accessible manner. Further work is currently underway to integrate the online Policy Library and the Academic Affairs website in order to provide a coherent and consistent source for policies of interest to faculty, staff, and students.

Recommendation 6

6. Commission criteria state that faculty workloads reflect the mission and goals of the institution. Student enrollment at the institution is at a record high but the institution has not responded with any concomitant increase in instructional resources, particularly full-time, tenure track faculty. The faculty is concerned at the prospect of growing enrollments and greater use of non-tenure instructional faculty while some students report limited access to faculty as a hindrance to their education. The Committee recommends that the institution should more closely monitor faculty teaching obligations and provide greater instructional resources to facilitate student learning (Standard 4.A.3).

The University of Oregon has undertaken several concrete steps to address NWCCU concerns with faculty workload issues. First, the Academic Plan put forward by the Provost calls for the addition of up to 100 additional tenure-related faculty and corresponding efforts to increase average faculty salary and compensation to match long-term plans for enrollment growth. Second, consistent with this direction, the University has begun hiring additional (not simply replacement) tenured and tenure-related faculty (10-12) during the past two years, with additional hires anticipated to address our enrollment surge. Third, the University has worked with the academic deans to transform some non-tenure track faculty appointments (NTTF) from NTTF status to tenure-related. Such transformations require new searches and some NTTF incumbents have been successful in competition for the upgraded appointments. Fourth, the University has completed a significant revision to its policies and practices for all NTTF, with a resulting increase in the clarity and stability of NTTF appointments, including the definition of a clear career track for many of these key instructional colleagues. Fifth, the University has extended considerable discretion to the deans and department heads to adjust and adapt faculty workloads to ensure equitable engagement among departmental colleagues across teaching, research, and service, along with appropriate reductions for untenured colleagues.

Recommendation 7

7. Despite the extensive use of interlibrary loan, Standard 5 requires a core collection adequate in quality, depth, diversity and currency to support graduate curricula and research in a number of programs. The Committee recommends that the University take steps to address the sufficiency of core library holdings needed to support the institution's instructional and research missions (Standard 5.A.1; 5.A.2).

The University has taken several steps to protect the core research collection. The Library received three one-time allocations: \$225,000 in FY08, \$100,000 in FY09, and an additional \$300,000 in FY09 which is forthcoming as of March 6, 2009. In addition to these allocations, the provost has, up to this point, protected the Library from any rescission. Unfortunately, these steps have not been sufficient to stave off another deep cancellation in library databases and journals or to prevent a 25% reduction in monograph expenditures in FY08. In fact, the Library would need an additional \$350,000 recurring funding every year to address the problem associated with inflation. The impending serials cancellation will amount to nearly \$1 million in the next biennium, and that is *before* any budget reductions are implemented. The planned cancellations in serial subscriptions and database licenses are entirely due to rising costs that exceed total budget allocations. Any real cuts to the Library's budget will exacerbate the problem. The faculty across the campus have voiced strong opposition to the anticipated cancellations.

The UO Library continues to invest heavily in its resource sharing operation. The latest Association of Research Library statistics shows that the UO Library ranks 7th (among 112 institutions), in what it borrows from other institutions. At the same time, the university ranks 106th in total expenditures for serials. While this gap indicates that local demand far outstrips local availability, the Library has made a strong commitment to providing excellent and expedited interlibrary loan services. (Note: successful resource sharing is reciprocal, and the Library must also make lending to partner institutions a priority).

The Library is attempting to mitigate the damage of the cancellation project by working closely with Oregon State University as they wrestle with the same dilemma. Both libraries are sharing information regarding cancellations, and attempting to approach the problem in a way that protects content availability as much as possible. In addition to collaborations with OSU, the Orbis-Cascade Alliance is investigating shared purchasing plans that will provide better access and less duplication across the consortia. On campus, the faculty are voicing increased support for other models of disseminating research, e.g. open access publishing, which is more of a long-term solution.

Recommendation 8

8. Commission Policy A-2 *Substantive Change* mandates that major substantive change proposals be submitted to the Commission for review and approval prior to implementation. The Committee recommends that the University work closely with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities regarding its intention to expand off-campus academic offerings in Portland and elsewhere (Policy A-2).

On receipt of this formal recommendation of the Commission, the University of Oregon took immediate steps in collaboration with the executive leadership of the NWCCU to clarify its intentions in possible “off-site” programming and to apprise the Commission of formal plans and-- even informal aspirations-- regarding new programs in Portland.

These steps included submitting to Dr. Al Johnson and Dr. Sandra Elman the full text of a presentation that President Dave Frohnmayer made, on September 19, 2007 to the Oregon University System Board regarding possible plans. (See Appendix 8 “The University of Oregon and Portland”).

The steps then included a careful review, in consultation with Dr. Al Johnson, of any possible areas where a “substantive change proposal” would be required or appropriate. Collaboration determined that one specific area required a “substantive change proposal,” the new Professional Master’s Degree in Strategic Communication. This proposal (see Appendix 8 “Prospectus to NWCCU for Substantive Change by the UO”) was submitted to the Commission on September 12, 2008, (see Appendix 8 “Letter from Dr. David Hubin to Dr. Al Johnson”) and received full approval in correspondence of February 27, 2009 from Dr. Sandra Elman to Dr. David Hubin. (see Appendix 8 “NWCCU Approved Substantive Change Letter”)

The University of Oregon will continue its close collaboration with the NWCCU and its executive leadership to ensure that all substantive change requirements continue to be met.

Conclusion

The preceding responses to each of the eight recommendations, conveys the significant progress that the institution has made in each of the prescribed areas. The first recommendation, that on assessment of student learning outcomes, led directly to the formalization and codification of administrative structures to expand and make consistent across the campus the many individual assessment efforts that were highlighted in our 2007 self-study. In short, responding to this particular recommendation on Commission Policy 2.2, the University of Oregon has developed a strategy to implement a systematic assessment of student learning in all units of the academy.

The University's responses to recommendations two, three, four, five, and eight, also convey successful activities and, in several cases completed actions. The University has engaged in a broad-based academic planning process, has expanded its capacity to support laboratory and research space, has attended, with significant affect, to deferred maintenance needs, has completely redone its methods of communication and promulgation around policies and decision making procedures, and has worked closely with the NWCCU to make necessary substantive changes regarding new programming in Portland. In recommendation six, regarding faculty workload, the institution continues to monitor effectively the teaching obligations of its faculty and, indeed, when faced with record enrollments in Fall 2008, it moved quickly to ensure that the surge in students would be met with a concomitant surge in faculty resources. Recommendation number seven, regarding taking steps to address sufficiency of library resources, presents an ongoing challenge for the University of Oregon as it does for all AAU institutions as the cost of publications outstrips inflation by dramatic margins. This university's response to this widespread issue in higher education, has been significant and meaningful; the Provost not only made the Library budget immune from general cuts that the current economic crisis impose on higher education, but he also generously supplemented—with the help of funds generated by intercollegiate athletics—the budget for the library.

The University of Oregon appreciates the specific recommendations of the Commission and the broad shared commitment between the institution and the commission to the effective achievement of its mission.