



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

May 21, 2012

Dr. Sandra Elman, President
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

Dear Dr. Elman,

Attached is a report to the NWCCU from the University of Oregon. This report, requested as an "ad hoc report" in the Commission's correspondence of August 11, 2011, provides the explicit goals that were previously treated in our first year submission as implicit within each of our four core themes. This ad hoc report is specifically to fulfill recommendation number two that called for such a submission during the spring of 2012.

Our Year Three Self-Study Working Group, established several months ago is preparing the responses to recommendations one and three that will be submitted, as requested by the Commission, along with our full Year Three Self-Study.

As you know, the University of Oregon is a member of the highly selective Association of American Universities. The honor of this membership is important, but of equal importance is the opportunity that membership provides the University of Oregon to participate in the confidential Association of American Universities Data Exchange. The AAUDE allows each of the 61 members, public and private, of the organization to analyze comparator data on a very wide range of educational metrics. The goals within each of the University of Oregon's four core themes are each set within a comparative focus with the 35 AAU public universities. Our goals within our seven year self-study cycle are to be at, or to achieve, a status that is within the upper one half of these outstanding public Universities on each core theme.

We look forward to working with you, the commission, and our colleagues as we engage in the year three self-study and prepare for the visit.

Best Regards,

David R. Hubin

Senior Assistant to the President and Accreditation Liaison Officer

cc: Bob Berdahl, Interim President
Lorraine Davis, Acting Senior Vice President and Provost

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University of Oregon: Ad Hoc Report to NWCCU May 21, 2012

(Revisions to Year One Report in red.)

Section 6. Chapter One: Mission, Core Themes and Expectations

Standard 1.A

INSTITUTIONAL MISSION

The University of Oregon's Mission Statement, as approved by the Oregon State Board of Higher Education in 1995, represents a consultative process of development. At a time of Presidential transition in 1994, the University engaged in a comprehensive review and revision process for the Mission Statement. Drafts prepared initially within the Council of Deans and with the president's executive staff were circulated to provost's staff, the University of Oregon Foundation Trustees, the Faculty Advisory Council, and the Associated Students. Subsequent revisions and drafts formed topics of discussion at a retreat for all university department heads and, following further revision, were promulgated broadly to faculty for comments. The University's mission statement was reaffirmed during the campus-wide self-study process for the NWCCU decennial review of 2007.

The university's mission statement is thus a living document as well as a measure by which the university gauges and evaluates the success of its programs.

University of Oregon Mission Statement

The University of Oregon is a comprehensive research university that serves its students and the people of Oregon, the nation, and the world through the creation and transfer of knowledge in the liberal arts, the natural and social sciences, and the professions. It is the Association of American Universities flagship institution of the Oregon University System.

The university is a community of scholars dedicated to the highest standards of academic inquiry, learning, and service. Recognizing that knowledge is the fundamental wealth of civilization, the university strives to enrich the public that sustains it through

- a commitment to undergraduate education, with a goal of helping the individual learn to question critically, think logically, communicate clearly, act creatively, and live ethically
- a commitment to graduate education to develop creators and innovators who will generate new knowledge and shape experience for the benefit of humanity

- a recognition that research, both basic and applied, is essential to the intellectual health of the university, as well as to the enrichment of the lives of Oregonians, by energizing the state's economic, cultural, and political structure
- the establishment of a framework for lifelong learning that leads to productive careers and to the enduring joy of inquiry
- the integration of teaching, research, and service as mutually enriching enterprises that together accomplish the university's mission and support its spirit of community
- the acceptance of the challenge of an evolving social, political, and technological environment by welcoming and guiding change rather than reacting to it
- a dedication to the principles of equality of opportunity and freedom from unfair discrimination for all members of the university community and an acceptance of true diversity as an affirmation of individual identity within a welcoming community
- a commitment to international awareness and understanding, and to the development of a faculty and student body that are capable of participating effectively in a global society
- the conviction that freedom of thought and expression is the bedrock principle on which university activity is based
- the cultivation of an attitude toward citizenship that fosters a caring, supportive atmosphere on campus and the wise exercise of civic responsibilities and individual judgment throughout life
- a continuing commitment to affordable public higher education

Interpretation of Fulfillment of the Institution's Mission

As noted in the preamble to the University of Oregon mission statement, this University is Oregon's Flagship Association of American Universities institution. This status, affirmed by the Oregon University System Board sets a context for the considerations of institutional mission fulfillment. Founded in 1900 to advance the international standing of U.S. research universities, this invitation-only organization today focuses on issues that are important to research-intensive in their all aspects of their work. The AAU consists of 64 of the most distinguished universities in the United States and Canada; thirty two of those institutions are public. The AAU engages in robust information exchanges of quantitative data and qualitative descriptors relating to success of its member institutions.

A broadly accepted “interpretation of fulfillment of [the University of Oregon’s] is for Oregon to achieve the average of the 32 public institutions in the AAU on all salient measures

An Articulation of an Acceptable Threshold or Extent of Mission Fulfillment

In response to this request by the NWCCU of “an acceptable threshold” mission fulfillment” the University reiterates an acceptable threshold of being in the upper one half of its distinguished AAU public comparators on all salient measures relative to a given core theme when adjusted for a per capita basis,.

Section II. Standard 1.B The University of Oregon Core Themes

The multiple individual statements in the University’s mission statement can be categorized into four broad core themes: 1) providing the teaching and mentoring and supporting the learning and intellectual growth that are the heart of outstanding undergraduate education; 2) preparing future leaders, scholars, and teachers through graduate and professional education; 3) shaping the future through research and artistic creation; and Discovering Knowledge and Creating the Future; and 4) providing service to society and humankind.

These are themes that would be at the heart of any AAU stature research doctoral university. What distinguishes the University of Oregon is a unique context for these themes. The University of Oregon is large enough to engage broadly and intensely with groundbreaking research, but it is also small enough that its sense of community leads to distinctive attention to the individual and to discussion among and across disciplines. This attribute has been described in various ways...”an internationally distinguished university of AAU quality that you can get your hands around”...or “an AAU Public university of moderate size or, most recently (and informally) as an institution that is “Large Enough to be Great and Small Enough to be Greater.” We believe that we are large enough to bring extraordinary intellectual resources to accomplishing our mission and that our modest size allows us the suppleness to provide extraordinary quality in our teaching, our research and our service. An important and intended outcome of this quest to put our size to optimal use is the capacity to create and explore integrated “Big Ideas” that involve large portions of the institutions. Thus, although the strength of our size is not enumerated below as one of our core themes, we continually assess whether this “size factor” is producing the results we seek. An indicator of those results is the integration of the discovery of knowledge and the promulgation of that knowledge in creative ways that address pressing questions for humankind.

Thus, in this submission of the year one report to the NWCCU, the University addresses its four core themes within a context of AAU excellence on a human scale. To make that context clear, we quote now directly from the first goal (and a few of that goal’s subordinate objectives) of University’s academic plan developed in 2009.

To Achieve and Sustain AAU Excellence on a Human Scale

Our first goal is anchored to the University of Oregon's current and distinctive standing as the Oregon University System's flagship institution and only member of the AAU. Our AAU membership is critical to the State of Oregon as it enables a voice in important discussions of the future of research universities nationally and internationally. This goal marks our ongoing commitment to achieve and sustain the excellence embodied and required by AAU standards. However, we also recognize that our academic distinction is singularly and quintessentially Oregon—the "Oregon way" is marked by fierce but respectful independence of thought, a pioneering intellectual and industrious spirit, an unparalleled commitment to rigorous scholarship negotiated by and through an intimate community of scholars, and an institutional flexibility that can render results in a timely manner and, most notably, on a human scale. To achieve and sustain the excellence expected of an AAU institution, while maintaining a human scale and our quintessential identity, we envision a program of managed and marginal growth in line with the following objectives:

AAU Standards. Given the AAU's current ranking system, the UO's lack of certain professional schools puts our institution at something of a numerical disadvantage within that elite group. Nonetheless, our membership in the AAU remains an essential marker of our commitment to world-class excellence, and we intend both to guard and to improve the quality of undergraduate and graduate instruction and research by moving towards the AAU average in such measures as class size, library and IT infrastructure, faculty teaching load, student/teacher ratio, salaries, tenure vs. non-tenure-related faculty ratio and scholarly productivity.

Selective Flagship Institution. We seek to enhance our flagship status within the Oregon University System by attracting and admitting the most promising undergraduate students from Oregon's diverse communities, other states, and the world. To this end, we will develop clear, comprehensive, and more selective admission standards that elevate our current admission criteria consistent with our academic mission and our role as the flagship university in the State of Oregon, while at the same time ensuring unbiased assessment of promise from all student groups. We commit to improving our student retention to the extent consistent with our public mission and to graduating most students within four years.

Access. We are committed to ensuring full access to the University of Oregon for all qualified Oregon high school students, regardless of financial need.

Institution Size. We intend to increase the size of the incoming freshman class and to grow the campus to a total of 24,000 students (from 20,300 students). This managed and marginal growth will provide the critical mass of students and economic self-sufficiency necessary to achieve the distinctive excellence we envision. We intend, however, to remain one of the smallest public flagship universities in the country, holding fast to our core value of liberal education on a human scale.

Graduate Students. We intend to increase the proportion of graduate students (excluding law) from 15 percent to above 19 percent, which is more reflective of our AAU peers. Graduate students enrich both the research and instructional enterprise on campus as they provide the critical support and creative energy that are essential elements of a tier-one research university.

UO NWCCU Core Themes

ONE: Providing the Teaching and Mentoring and Supporting the Learning and Intellectual Growth that are the heart of Excellent Undergraduate Education

The University of Oregon has as its first core theme the provision of an excellent undergraduate program replete with the strengths inherent from intellectual and demographic diversity, the strengths of situating undergraduate learning in a context of an internationally renowned research institution, and the strength of individual attention to the needs of the student learner and the potentials of the teacher.

Specific Goals within Core Theme One:

1. The University of Oregon will engage in meaningful learning outcomes assessment and program review activities at the departmental and general education level. These activities, will reflect—in their quality, their numbers and their participation rates a level that is in the upper one-half of the Public Universities in the AAU.
2. In national and comparative metrics of student engagement, student learning, student satisfaction, the University of Oregon will achieve results that place it in the upper one-half of the public universities in the AAU.
3. In quantitative measures of retention, degree completion rates, the University of Oregon will achieve results that place it in the upper one-half of the public universities in the AAU.

4. In all measures available within the AAUDE of graduate placement, graduate satisfaction, employer satisfaction with graduates, the University of Oregon will achieve results that place it in the upper one-half of the public universities in the AAU.

Applicable Measures for Core Theme One

Applicable measures of the effectiveness of the University of Oregon's first core theme begin with, and focus consistently on assessment of learning outcomes. Beginning with careful analysis of what specific intellectual, personal and social outcomes are sought, the university measures itself in this core theme by the impact it has on students

At the undergraduate level, the University of Oregon gives careful attention to both the breadth and depth of general education, as well as the way in which achievement of an undergraduate degree moves beyond being a process of completing a "checklist of requirements" to being the creation of opportunities for personal exploration—for enthusiasm about learning that serves the academic career and beyond.

- A. Indicators of Faculty Quality (from Program Reviews, Faculty Reviews, and other measures)
- B. Indicators of Teaching Quality (from Program Reviews, Faculty Reviews, Assessment Plans and other measures)
 - a. Teaching Quality and Learning Outcomes
 - b. Faculty Support—Departmental, Interdepartmental, Campus-wide
- C. Indicators of Student Engagement (NSSE and other indicators)
- D. Direct Indicators that Student needs are met effectively
- E. Indicators through internal and external evaluation of effectiveness of support programs
- F. Total Degrees Awarded
 - a. By level
 - b. By Discipline
 - c. By gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background
- G. Access for/Enrollment of Oregonians
 - a. By level
 - b. By gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, and geographic location
 - c. Entering GPA and standardized test scores
- H. Patterns of Retention and Progress toward degrees
 - a. Retention from freshman to sophomore year (comparators to be publics within the AAU)
 - b. Graduation Rates at 4 year, 5 year, 6 year (comparators to be publics within the AAU)
 - c. Time to Degree (comparators to be publics within the AAU)

- I. Success of Graduates (Undergraduate Program)
 - a. Number of graduates employed (1-5 years)
 - b. Number of graduates accepted into graduate/schools
 - c. Earnings of graduates
 - d. Satisfaction of graduates after graduation
 - e. Satisfaction of employers
 - f. Preparedness for job changes

UO NWCCU Core Theme Two: preparing future leaders, scholars, and teachers through graduate and professional education.

The provision of an outstanding graduate and professional education is the second core theme of the mission of the University of Oregon. Graduate education involves an apprenticeship in the methods, skills, practices, history, and current state of a particular discipline or field. A graduate education should also teach citizens to think analytically, critically, creatively, and cooperatively. It is in the combination of these two crucial aspects of our mission that position the UO to prepare future leaders, scholars, and teachers to address the problems, complexities, and conflict in our communities from the local to the global scale.

Specific Goals within Core Theme Two:

1. In participation rates of departments in Program Review for graduate education, the University of Oregon will be in the upper one half of all public universities within the AAU.
2. In summative evaluations and exit interviews with graduate students, the University of Oregon will achieve results that place it in the upper one-half of the public universities in the AAU.
3. In metrics that indicate time to degree, placement, and completion rates for graduate and professional degrees, the University of Oregon will achieve results that place it in the upper one-half of the public universities in the AAU.

Applicable Measures for Core Theme Two

In assessing our graduate programs we need to examine how we assure that our graduate students are being adequately trained in the most current knowledge of their fields and, and the extent to which these programs meets the scholarly, leadership and professional needs of society.

- a. Program review, including internal and external, including NRC and other national reviews
- b. Assessment conducted by the Graduate School through annual Exit Survey data and three-year cycle Graduate Student Experience Survey
- c. Post-graduation placements of doctoral recipients (compared to our AAU comparator institutions)
- d. Post-graduation placements of professional degree recipients
- e. Time to degree rates compared to peer institutions
- f. Completion rates compared to peer institutions
- g. Percentage of doctoral students (receiving support for graduate study)

The Graduate School also has a goal of improving its assessment of graduate education outcomes and will work with the Office of Institutional Research and school/college deans to identify new metrics and data collection methods to achieve this.

UO NWCCU Core Theme Three: Shaping the Future through Research and Artistic Creation

A third primary mission and core theme of the University of Oregon, as a leading public research university, is to sustain and transform society through the creation and dissemination of scientific and humanistic knowledge that addresses the economic, social, and environmental needs of Oregon, our region, our nation, and our world.

Research at the University of Oregon—broadly defined in this core theme to include scholarship and creative activity in its many forms—can be examined in the same terms as the university as a whole: interconnection, pluralism, and a commitment to sustaining future generations through innovations that elevate economic competitiveness, global stewardship, and quality of life. While many universities emphasize diverse research, plural in its interests but isolated in its process, the UO affirms both interconnection and pluralism. Work carried on within the diverse disciplines serves as a starting point for our discussion of research at the UO. Disciplinary research is conducted by tenured and tenure-related faculty members in every academic department. Such scholarship is central to establishing the reputation of Oregon's graduate programs and faculty and significantly affects undergraduate teaching and learning. Faculty members within the UO's schools and colleges are among the leading scholars in their fields and this outstanding faculty forms the basis for Oregon's interconnected research initiatives and programs. These initiatives, in the many forms in which they are presently manifest, have their roots in a long tradition of interdisciplinary research at the University of Oregon. The research enterprise at the UO spans the arts, the humanities, the sciences, and the professions, and addresses the full cycle of innovation, from basic discoveries to technology transfer and societal application.

Specific Goals within Core Theme Three:

1. On a per capita adjusted basis, and, in a manner that reflects the unique disciplinary profiles of individual AAU institutions, the University of Oregon will achieve results that place it in the upper one-half of the public universities in the AAU. (This provides for meaningful comparators that do not include the medical schools and engineering schools present in many AAU publics.)

Applicable Measures for Core Theme Three:

The research quality of the University of Oregon is attested to, again, by its membership in the prestigious, invitation only, American Association of Universities. Measures of research effectiveness for the university would best be couched within the measures of the AAU but should be done so with an emphasis on the per capita measures, to account for our distinctive and purposeful moderate size.

- A. Quality and Impact of Research Programs as determined by institutional ranking systems and other performance metrics
- B. Research Support
 - a. Funding
 - b. Infrastructure
- C. Measures of Disciplinary Research
- D. Measures of Interdisciplinary and Collaborative Research
 - a. Effectiveness of Centers and Institutes

Core Theme Four: Providing Service to Society and Humankind

As a public research university, the University of Oregon's mission includes a core theme of service to the people of Oregon through significant contributions to the economic, cultural, and political environment of the state and the world. The state's economy will become increasingly knowledge-based, and will be driven by a strong high-technology industry and by traditional industries that effectively apply research and technology. This economy will be increasingly global in nature, requiring an effective integration of diverse cultural and societal perspectives, and will be dependent on the work force having access to lifelong learning opportunities for specialized training and retraining. Finally, the health of the state cannot be based solely on the workplace skills of its citizens the university must enrich and broaden the perspectives of all Oregonians through humanistic, culture-based education and experience.

Specific Goals within Core Theme Four:

1. On a per capita adjusted basis, the University of Oregon will achieve public service outcomes that place it in the upper one-half of the public universities in the AAU.
2. On the basis of per capita funding from state governments, the University of Oregon will provide service to the State of Oregon that place it in the upper one-half of the public universities in the AAU.

Applicable Measures for Core Theme Four (For the comparative focus of this core theme, data will be drawn largely from IPED's, not from AAUDE. However, the comparators will be the same cohort as with the other three core themes—the public universities within the AAU.)

- A. Indications of visibility for the State and its educational institutions
- B. Demonstrable enhancement of K-12 education through relationships with the university
- C. Indications of Impact of Outreach activities related to university research and education
- D. Production of Degrees in State Workforce Shortage Areas
- E. Generation of Revenues from out-of-state sources
- F. Indicators of Research expenditures impact on state economy and living standards
- G. Indicators of direct employment and indirect employment opportunities produced by research
 - a. Jobs created through research and professional activities
 - b. Knowledge-based industries supported in region
- H. Licensing, patents, consulting and pro bono benefits to Oregon companies and communities
- I. Degrees/State Appropriation (comparisons to national)
- J. Employment/State Appropriate (comparisons to national)

K. Innovation Index / Contribution to Innovation

Conclusion:

The University of Oregon enters this new cycle of institutional self-evaluation with enthusiasm. We have engaged our institutional broadly in defining the core themes that are at the heart of our mission and we look forward to being measured productively on those themes in this seven year recurring process.