Oregon State University Board of Trustees

Oregon State University Mission

As a land-grant institution committed to teaching, research and outreach and engagement, Oregon State University promotes economic, social, cultural and environmental progress for the people of Oregon, the nation and the world. This mission is achieved by producing graduates competitive in the global economy, supporting a continuous search for new knowledge and solutions and maintaining a rigorous focus on academic excellence, particularly in the three Signature Areas: Advancing the Science of Sustainable Earth Ecosystems, Improving Human Health and Wellness, and Promoting Economic Growth and Social Progress.

Oregon State University’s Vision

To best serve the people of Oregon, OSU will be among the Top 10 land-grant institutions in America.

Goal 1: Provide outstanding academic programs that further strengthen performance and pre-eminence in the three Signature Areas of Distinction: Advancing the Science of Sustainable Earth Ecosystems, Improving Human Health and Wellness, and Promoting Economic Growth and Social Progress.

Goal 2: Provide an excellent teaching and learning environment and achieve student success through graduation and beyond that matches the best land-grant universities in the country.

Goal 3: Substantially increase revenues from private fundraising, partnerships, research grants and technology transfers while strengthening our ability to more effectively invest and allocate resources to achieve success.

As the university approaches its sesquicentennial, it has distinguished itself as a national leader. Recent accomplishments include:

• One of only two universities in the country designated as a land-grant, sea-grant, sun-grant and space-grant institution;
• Oregon’s only university to hold both the Carnegie Foundation’s top designation for research institutions and its prestigious Community Engagement classification;
• Nationally recognized as top tier programs in microbiology, nuclear engineering, ecology, forestry, public health, biochemistry, zoology, oceanography, food science, conservation biology, and pharmacy;
• A College of Liberal Arts, the cornerstone of the University, that has grown significantly in distinction and continues to prepare students to embark on a lifetime of learning and to adapt to a rapidly changing world;
• Home to more of Oregon’s high school valedictorians and salutatorians than any other school;
• A research program that competes for and secures more grants than all other Oregon University System universities in Oregon combined;
• An Oregon State Ecampus program that reached more than 13,000 students in 2012-13 and was recognized as among the top four programs nationally among public universities;
• A more than $2 billion economic footprint in 2011 through university, business, research and other economic activities; and
• A Campaign for OSU that raised more than $946 million (as of June 30, 2013) toward a goal of $1 billion by the end of 2014 through the hard work and leadership of the Oregon State University Foundation and the good will and high expectations of alumni, faculty, and friends.

Guided by our mission and vision, OSU is seeking leaders from across the state and the nation to join in furthering these efforts as the university establishes its first Board of Trustees as authorized by changes in state statutes adopted by the Legislative Assembly and signed into law by Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber. Later this summer, OSU President Ed Ray plans to recommend individuals to Governor Kitzhaber whom he will then nominate to serve on the board. The Governor’s nominees must be confirmed by the Oregon Senate in an executive appointments session scheduled to occur in September.

**Brief Overview and History**

With the passage of SB 253 in the 2011 legislative session, Oregon affirmed a clear and ambitious “40-40-20 goal,” which states that by the year 2025, 40% of adult Oregonians will hold an associate’s degree or a meaningful postsecondary certificate, 40% will hold a bachelor’s or advanced degree, and 20% will have achieved a high school diploma or equivalent as their terminal degree. Governor Kitzhaber called the 40-40-20 goal “our North Star: a compass, a heading that we can be guided by.” He went on to say, “I don’t underestimate the difficulty of achieving that. But together, I am confident that we can translate that aspirational vision into some tangible actions that will benefit Oregon and our children for years and years to come.”

Also in 2011, the Legislature adopted two other bills – SB 9 and SB 242 – which established the Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB) and the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to oversee and direct a comprehensive education program coordinated along the entire education continuum from early childhood and pre-kindergarten programs through elementary and high school, community college, university and graduate degree programs. Under SB 9 and subsequent legislation passed during the 2012 session, Oregon’s 197 K-12 school districts, 17 community colleges and seven public universities – Oregon State University, University of Oregon, Portland State University, Western Oregon University, Southern Oregon University, Eastern Oregon University, and Oregon Institute of Technology – are now guided by “achievement compacts” with the state. The compacts, developed and administered by the OEIB, seek to move beyond historic funding metrics driven by enrollment levels toward student-focused progress across the education continuum. By moving away from a purely enrollment-driven funding model, the OEIB seeks to increase emphasis on achieving educational competencies at a pace that maximizes each student’s capacity for progress and growth.

Historically, seven universities comprise Oregon’s public university system with oversight by the State Board of Higher Education and central services provided by the Chancellor of the Oregon University System (OUS). During the 2013 legislative session, Oregon took additional steps to address its post-secondary education system with the passage of SB 270, which authorizes institutional governing boards at the University of Oregon, Portland State University, and Oregon State University and establishes those institutions as legal entities separate from each other and from OUS. The legislature also passed HB 3120, which further defined the duties of the HECC to retain the benefits of a coordinated state system of higher education, while addressing the future needs of Oregon’s four regional and technical universities.

**SB 270: A Summary of the Authorities of the Board of Trustees of Oregon State University**

• A university with a governing board is an independent legal entity separate from the other public universities in the state and from OUS. It is a governmental entity performing governmental functions, with coordination and oversight in some areas by the HECC and the OEIB. The Board of Trustees of Oregon State University will manage the affairs of the university by carrying out all the powers conferred on it by law. Those powers are broad and provide a significant degree of autonomy. For example, a governing board may establish policies for all aspects of university business; establish tuition and fees (subject to oversight by the HECC for annual increases of more than 5%); establish, supervise and control academic programs;
approve the university’s legislative budget for submission through the HECC to the Governor; and buy, sell and finance real and personal property. The Board of Trustees appoints and employs the president of the university, in consultation with the Governor.

• Service as a trustee requires confirmation by the Oregon Senate. Trustees are subject to Oregon’s government ethics statutes, including the requirement to file an annual statement of economic interest. Meetings and proceedings of the Board of Trustees are subject to Oregon’s public meetings laws.

• SB 270 recognizes the economy of scale benefits of a coordinated university system. For the coming biennium, the state’s public universities will continue to share certain services, such as risk management and employee benefits, under existing delivery structures. The bill establishes a work group of the seven public universities that will make recommendations for a shared services model going forward.

Summary of the General Characteristics of OSU Trustees

The President of Oregon State University is in the process of recommending candidates for the Governor’s consideration for appointment to the Board of Trustees. We are looking for civic and business leaders as well as educators and other citizens of stature who:

• understand the broad role public higher education plays in our society;
• have the knowledge base to craft effective policy in a rapidly evolving environment;
• demonstrate the leadership—and listening—skills to acknowledge and work with a diverse array of internal and external stakeholders;
• recognize the importance and value of faculty and students within the practice of shared governance;
• make the necessary time commitment to board service associated with preparing and participating in quarterly meetings and the activities of committees affiliated with the board;
• bring a broad perspective to the issues at hand; and
• have the skill mix, ethical grounding, good judgment, institutional memory, and gender, geographic and ethnic diversity required to oversee today’s increasingly complex and diverse higher education institutions and systems.

The Basic Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees

The fiduciary role of the governing board of a public university has many facets. Most notably, a board should recognize and accept these basic responsibilities:

1. Ensure that the institution’s mission is aligned with the vision and public purposes of higher education in Oregon as established by the Legislature and the Governor;
2. Select a chief executive to lead the institution;
3. Support and periodically assess the performance of the chief executive and establish and review the chief executive’s compensation;
4. Charge the chief executive with the task of leading a strategic planning process, participate in that process, approve the strategic plan, and monitor its progress;
5. Ensure the institution’s fiscal integrity and preserve and protect its assets for posterity;
6. Ensure the educational quality of the institution and its academic programs;
7. Preserve, advance and protect institutional autonomy and academic freedom and the public purposes of higher education;
8. Ensure that institutional policies and processes are current and properly implemented;
9. In concert with senior administration, engage regularly with the institution’s major constituencies; and
10. Conduct the board’s business in an exemplary fashion and with appropriate transparency, in compliance with applicable open-meeting and public-records laws, adhering to the highest ethical standards; ensure the currency of board governance policies and practices; and periodically assess the performance of the board, its committees, and its members.

Responsibilities of Individual OSU Trustees

1. Seek to be fully informed about the University;
2. Understand the responsibilities of the institution in addressing the public interest and public good;
3. Understand where the institution fits into the overall state higher education policy agenda;
4. Support the mission of the institution;
5. Support positive change and responsiveness of higher education while cognizant that preserving tradition, culture, and long-term stability is tantamount;
6. Speak one’s mind at board meetings, but support policies and programs once established;
7. Understand that the board’s responsibility is policymaking and not involvement in administration or the management process;
8. Strengthen and sustain the chief executive while being an active, energetic, and probing board member exercising critical judgment on policy matters;
9. Communicate promptly to the chief executive and board chair any significant concern or complaint;
10. Defend the autonomy and the independence of the university;
11. Maintain an overriding loyalty to the entire university rather than to any part of it or constituency within it;
12. Represent all the people of the State and no particular interest, community, or constituency;
13. Help enhance the public image of the university and the board;
14. Recognize that authority resides only with the board as a whole and not in its individual members;
15. Recognize that the president is the primary spokesperson for the institution, and the chair of the board is the only other person authorized to speak for the board;
16. Foster openness and trust among the board, the administration, the faculty, the students, state government, and the public;
17. Maintain a decent respect for the opinions of one’s colleagues and a proper restraint in criticism of colleagues and officers;
18. Recognize that no board member should make any request or demand for actions that violates the written policies, rules, and regulations of the board or the institution, or make inappropriate requests for special perks or privileges that may embarrass the board, president or institution; and
19. Maintain the highest ethical standards, and never allow any personal conflict of interest to exist.

In summary, by doing their best to understand and to be informed about the unique institution they hold in trust for posterity and by committing themselves to service to the people of Oregon and to this University, OSU trustees will leave their Board and Oregon State University stronger, more vital, and more consequential than they were when their term as trustee first began.

Qualities Sought in Individual Trustees

Personal

• Integrity, with a code of personal honor and ethics above reproach
• Wisdom and breadth of vision
• Independence
• An inquiring mind and an ability to speak it articulately and succinctly
• An ability to challenge, support, and motivate the university administration
• An orientation to the future with an appreciation of the university’s heritage
• The capability and willingness to function as a member of a diverse group in an atmosphere of collegiality and selflessness
• An appreciation of the public nature of the position and the institution, including the open process of decision-making and service

**Professional/experiential**

• Knowledge and experience that can bear on university problems, opportunities, and deliberations
• A record of accomplishment in one’s own life
• An understanding of the board’s role of governance

**Commitment**

• A commitment to education
• An enthusiastic understanding and acceptance of the university’s mission
• An understanding of the role of the university within the broader higher education system of the state
• A willingness to commit the time and energy necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of a board member
• A willingness to forego any partisan political activity while a board member that could be disruptive or harmful to the university
• The capability to foresee eight to ten years of constructive and productive service
• An overriding loyalty to the institution and to the public interest rather than to any region or constituency

**What Oregon State University Commits to Provide to the Board of Trustees**

• The historic, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to serve on and shape -- by your actions, discussions and decisions -- Oregon State University’s first institutional governing board
• The opportunity to interact with other exceptional individuals who are committed to Oregon State University, its vision to become one of this nation’s Top 10 land-grant universities, and its mission to serve the people of Oregon, the nation and the world
• A commitment from the University’s President to strive to ensure that trustees are substantially engaged in strategic and other fiduciary matters that bear on the University
• A commitment from the University’s President to exert his best efforts and those of his leadership team to help trustees use their time as University trustees effectively and find the intellectual stimulation and personal satisfaction that they should expect from their time as trustees

**Initial Action Items for the New Board**

• Selecting a chair and vice chair;
• Developing bylaws, including how a quorum is constituted and when a quorum is necessary, and operational policies and procedures;
• Developing board committees and their missions;
• Adopting a University mission statement and submitting it to an office designating by the HECC;
• Overseeing the development of an achievement compact, approving it, and submitting it to the OEIB; and
• Overseeing the development of the University budget for the 2015-17 biennium, approving it, and submitting it on or before April 1, 2014, to an office designated by the HECC as being responsible for university coordination.

Issues the OSU Board of Trustees Is Likely to Consider during the First Two to Four Years

Once it has addressed organizational issues such as board leadership, committees and other procedural matters, the OSU Board of Trustees will likely address a range of campus-based and statewide issues and questions important to OSU’s future. A number of these issues are addressed in OSU’s strategic plan.

• **Determining Shared Services.** As anticipated in SB 270, the Trustees will face a series of issues involving what services – risk management, payroll, and information technology, among others – will be shared among some or all of the public four-year universities (and, potentially, the community colleges).

• **Maintaining a “System”**. In concert with the shared services discussion, the OSU Board of Trustees will consider how the attributes of a state system of higher education can be retained under independent governing boards and whether new models of collaboration and affiliation can help serve Oregonians across the state more effectively and efficiently.

• **Developing OSU-Cascades.** With help from the Governor and the Legislature over the last two biennia, OSU-Cascades has developed new facilities and new programs and is on track to become a full-fledged 4-year university. The campus faces a number of opportunities and challenges as it continues to serve the Central Oregon Region.

• **Developing a Marine Campus.** Recent reviews of the research and educational capacity at Hatfield Marine Science Center in Newport, expansion of programs in ocean observing and marine renewable energy, and increasing attention to the state’s 40-40-20 goal have stimulated discussions about the opportunities for increasing residence-based education services on the HMSC campus and building up our collective marine research, outreach and educational capabilities.

• **Reimagining Our Learning Environment.** OSU is on a trajectory to engage students more often through a virtual, rather than a solely physical environment. Advances in how and where education occurs will mean increased focus on renovating and retrofitting existing structures, particularly on the Corvallis campus, and on upgrading and enhancing our IT infrastructure.

• **Elevating the OSU Statewide Public Service Programs.** Over the last two legislative sessions, the OSU Extension Service, Agricultural Experiment Station and Forest Research Laboratory – the “OSU Statewides” -- have faced an uphill battle as they seek to recover funding. These programs provide important natural resource-based research and extension programs that bridge the gap between urban and rural Oregon. The Board of Trustees can be instrumental in helping to forge a course that elevates these programs from a biennial exercise in recovering budgets towards stable funding that furthers their impact across all 36 counties in Oregon.

• **Broadening Our Student Profile and Success.** OSU is working towards broadening its student profile (diversity, undergraduate/graduate) that is reflective of a premier 21st century research institution and towards ensuring that student preparation, retention and graduation match the very best institutions nationally and globally.

• **Developing Future Models for Campus Housing.** OSU’s growth over the last decades has created significant housing impacts on the Corvallis community. OSU faces increased local pressure to house more students on campus while more students seek to move away from traditional dormitory-style living situations. OSU needs to consider its role in developing appropriate models for developing housing opportunities to meet these pressures.