Naming Practices for Major Academic and Organizational Units

BACKGROUND

The naming of University buildings, landmarks and academic units represents an important opportunity to honor Oregon State’s history and to acknowledge individuals or organizations whose service or contributions have special significance to OSU.

The naming and re-naming of buildings and places throughout Oregon State’s statewide footprint is guided by a University Architectural Naming Committee as set forth in OSU policy. This committee is chaired by the Vice President for University Relations and Marketing and includes the Provost, Vice President for Finance and Administration, President of the OSU Foundation, Director of Governmental Relations, and the Vice President of the Associated Students of OSU. The committee receives and considers naming opportunities proposed by University constituents. The committee’s decisions on names associated with University buildings ultimately take the form of recommendations to OSU’s President, who has final authority for naming or renaming of any building, street, structure or other landmark managed and owned by the University.

DISCUSSION

OSU’s naming policy, however, does not address who has authority for the naming of academic or organizational units after an individual or organization. There are a few examples of such naming to date (e.g., Linus Pauling Institute, Hatfield Marine Science Center). A review of practices at other universities shows a range of approaches, with the authority residing with the president or the governing board or a combination, depending on the level of the unit (e.g., colleges named by the governing board, departments by the president). It would be helpful to get a sense from Trustees on where the authority for naming major academic units or organizations should reside.

NEXT STEPS

Based on input from the Executive & Audit Committee, staff will prepare policy recommendations and report back to the Committee.