

## **“To Create a Better World”**

### **The Oregon State University Foundation Strategic Plan, 2017-2021**

#### **Introduction**

In December 2014, the Oregon State University Foundation (OSUF) achieved the bold promise of the University’s first comprehensive fundraising campaign by raising \$1.14 billion from 106,000 donors to realize *“The Campaign for OSU: This Amazing Place, This Historic Moment.”* This unprecedented support from alumni, organizational partners, and other friends has propelled Oregon State’s rise as an internationally recognized public research university. Now, in this pivotal time for the institution, the Foundation seeks to build on this powerful momentum to support OSU’s expanding aspirations, establish industry-leading fundraising growth, further energize donors, and prepare for the next, even larger comprehensive fundraising campaign for the University.

Poised for growth, the Foundation engaged University, donor, and alumni partners in developing a strategic plan that will guide its direction, build further capacity, and increase philanthropic support through priority-setting and investments in key areas. The new OSUF strategic plan is a five-year blueprint for fulfilling its vision: “To create a better world through support of – and for – Oregon State University.” The plan was endorsed by the OSU Foundation Board of Trustees on October 7, 2016.

#### **The Campaign for OSU**

The stunning success of The Campaign for OSU exceeded all expectations. The University was the last of its (then) Pac-10 peers to launch a comprehensive fundraising campaign; its original goal of \$625 million seemed ambitious. Yet an outpouring of donor support exceeded this goal nearly a year ahead of schedule, despite the worst economic recession since the Great Depression. Invigorated by this tremendous momentum and inspired by opportunities presented in the University’s Strategic Plan, the Foundation increased the goal to \$850 million, then \$1 billion. Each time, donors rose to the challenge. When gifts crossed the billion-dollar mark 11 months ahead of schedule, OSU became one of only 35 public universities nationwide to have achieved this milestone. According to industry counting standards, when the campaign began, OSUF’s five-year fundraising average was \$38 million. By the end of the campaign, it was more than \$92 million.

For the University, the impact of this historic campaign was profound:

- Funds donated for scholarships represented the largest such fundraising effort in state history, including the creation of 600+ new scholarship funds – an increase of 45%.
- The University's ability to recruit and retain top caliber faculty increased exponentially through the creation of 79 endowed position funds; only 47 such positions had been established in the rest of Oregon State history.
- The Corvallis campus was literally transformed by more than two dozen major facility construction and renovation projects, in addition to other new facilities at the Oregon 4-H center in Salem and OSU-Cascades campus in Bend.

## **Strategic Approach**

At the heart of the campaign's success was alignment of the University's mission and strategic plan with fundraising priorities, volunteer leadership, and donor interest – a synergy the Provost played a critical role in developing. This emphasis has continued, with development efforts now focused on targeted special initiatives that advance OSU's Strategic Plan – and, ultimately, Oregon State's bold vision of becoming one of the Top 10 land grant universities in the nation. The third phase of OSU's Strategic Plan (2014-2018) has three goals:

1. Provide a transformative educational experience for all learners;
2. Demonstrate leadership in research, scholarship and creativity while enhancing preeminence in the three signature areas of distinction: Advancing the Science of Sustainable Earth Ecosystems, Improving Human Health and Wellness, Promoting Economic Growth and Social Progress; and
3. Strengthen impact and reach throughout Oregon and beyond.

Specifically, OSU President Ed Ray's aspirations for 2020 include raising the first-year retention rate for all undergraduate students from 83.8% to 90% and OSU's six-year graduation rate for all undergraduate students from 63.1% to 70%, while closing the achievement gap. Accordingly, OSUF fundraising efforts are aimed at supporting student success, along with plans to advance signature programs including marine studies and advanced wood products.

The Foundation's disciplined focus on strategic fundraising initiatives like these has sustained the momentum created by The Campaign for OSU. In fact, fiscal years 2015 and 2016 were among the top three years for fundraising in OSU history.

## University Profile

OSU is Oregon's statewide university, created to serve Oregon as one of what President Abraham Lincoln called "the people's colleges." This land grant mission is reflected in OSU's enrollment management plan. The University is educating more students (surpassing 30,000 for the first time in fall 2014) than ever before. It has become the largest university – with the largest share of Oregonians – in the state. In fall 2015, about two-thirds of undergraduates were Oregon residents. Plans call for retaining that market share while increasing diversity and increasing the percentage of high-achieving students and graduate students. Oregon's demographics are shifting, and the University's enrollment of U.S. minorities has grown from 14.5% to 22.8% over the last decade. OSU is also awarding more degrees to low-income students.

To meet rising demand and advance economic growth and social progress, the University has projected a total enrollment of approximately 36,000 by 2017-18. Most of this growth will come through OSU's nationally ranked Ecampus distance degree program as well as the expansion of campuses in Bend and Newport.

These enrollment decisions substantially impact the University's financial and philanthropic landscape, now and for years to come. In contrast to OSU's commitment to educating Oregonians, for example, many public universities across the U.S. are aggressively recruiting higher percentages of out-of-state students: students who are far less likely to demonstrate financial need, and who may pay three times more in annual tuition and fees. The growth of OSU's Ecampus program is also significant. Nationally, online students are the fastest-growing cohort in higher education. Most are enrolled part-time and they may never set foot on campus. Advancement professionals are still in the early stages of discovering what helps these distance-learners build the bonds that predict active engagement as alumni and a lifelong connection to their university.

The remarkable growth of OSU's educational, research, and outreach enterprise over the last few decades has taken place despite a precipitous drop in state support and intense competition for research funding.

## A Culture of Philanthropy

In this environment, the generosity of alumni, friends, and donors is critical for the University. And increasingly, fundraising is recognized as a shared responsibility of the entire OSU community. The Foundation is partnering with the colleges and the Office of the Provost to offer a three-year series of workshops for more than 100 deans, faculty leaders, and other University leaders. Conducted by a leading higher education advancement training group, the sessions are designed to build awareness and provide resources to campus leadership in matters related to fundraising, and specifically around creating meaningful engagement opportunities for alumni and other potential supporters.

Beyond this "all hands on deck" approach, however, it is clear that the Foundation's operations will need to grow to support the University's ambitious goals. A post-campaign analysis by a respected philanthropic consultant noted that OSU's development staff is smaller relative to its peers – yet fundraising productivity is exceptionally high. OSU also has a far smaller alumni base compared to peer

institutions, and it does not have a medical school, which tend to attract significant philanthropic support.

To plan purposefully for accelerating fundraising expectations, OSUF, under the leadership of J. Michael Goodwin, President and CEO, has implemented successive strategic plans since 2004. For OSUF's first strategic plan (2010-2015), the objectives of "The Campaign for OSU" (July 1, 2004 - December 31, 2014) informed its three strategic themes: 1) financial success, 2) collaboration to create a culture of meaningful engagement, and 3) advocacy.

Since then, fundraising tools and methods have continued to become more sophisticated and systems more complex through integrated and collaborative advancement, rethinking of funding models, and the possibilities of big data and diversified technology for enhancing relationship-building and improving business practices. With the success of the first comprehensive campaign and these new opportunities, OSUF began to prepare for its second comprehensive campaign with a new strategic plan that would frame it.

## **Strategic Planning Process**

Facilitated by a nationally renowned strategic planning firm, University, Foundation, and trustee leaders joined for a retreat in July 2015 to develop the project outline and anticipated outcomes. These discussions formally kicked off a year of dedicated planning focus. The goal of the OSUF strategic plan is to create a living, breathing document which will inform the annual planning process and determine unit goals.

**Project leadership.** Eleven executives from the OSU Foundation and OSU Alumni Association served on the Steering Committee, which was led by OSUF Executive Vice President Shawn Scoville.

**Core Audiences.** Three "core audiences" for the planning process (i.e., those most critical to the success of the Foundation) were identified: 1) the OSUF Board of Trustees, 2) the University's academic leadership, primarily the deans, and 3) the OSUF staff. Activities for engagement were specifically designed for these core audiences to ensure they each had a role in the creation of the plan.

The Steering Committee engaged these audiences through planning meetings and feedback sessions, electronic surveys, 26 individual meetings with University leaders, a Foundation SWOT analysis, and analyses of data, trends, and best practice in education, philanthropy, and non-profit and for-profit organizations with a U.S. and global presence.

The updated strategic plan was endorsed by the OSU Foundation Board of Trustees on October 7, 2016.

**Project Timeline.** The yearlong OSUF strategic planning process had five phases.

1. **Phase 1** – Project Framework and Launch (June-July 2015) – Vision, mission, core values, and strategic themes
2. **Phase 2** – Goal Development (August-November 2015)
3. **Phase 3** – Assess, Build Out, and Validate (November 2015-February 2016 – Draft plan developed and broad stakeholder engagement secured
4. **Phase 4** – Goals Finalized (February-July 2016) – Drafts of final plan, business plan, and 5-year implementation plan
5. **Phase 5** – Plan Approved (August-October 2016) – Plans finalized and Year-1 implementation launched



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#### **VISION**

To create a better world by inspiring support of – and for – Oregon State University.

#### **MISSION**

We partner with Oregon State University to engage our community, inspire investment, and steward resources to enhance the University’s excellence and impact.

#### **CORE VALUES**

collaborative • responsible • respectful • inclusive • innovative

#### **GOALS**

- I. Optimize philanthropic support.
- II. Increase the quantity and quality of engagement among our core audiences.
- III. Enhance the University’s brand among our core audiences to increase engagement and philanthropic support.
- IV. Build a “Best Place to Work” environment by developing aspirational recruitment, hiring, and retention strategies in a highly competitive market.
- V. Transform our organizational culture to one that embraces new technologies and uses analytics to drive organizational performance.
- VI. Strengthen existing and pursue new ventures to generate resources in support of the University’s mission.