

## Student Life and Success Briefing

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this briefing we highlight significant initiatives to enhance student life and support both academic and personal growth and success. Top takeaways include:

- One of the key focus areas of Every Student Graduates is improving New Student Onboarding. Implementation of the New Student Onboarding initiative, centered around five key pillars aimed at improving the student experience, is in its implementation stage with launch of initial elements in summer 2025.
- In spring 2025, a Mental Well-being Improvement Plan that includes evidence-based recommendations for all campuses will be completed. The plan will be a central focus of the newly established Health Promoting University initiative, with working groups collaboratively advancing these recommendations.
- The Corvallis Campus Housing and Dining Vision is designed to transform the housing and dining experience and address the need to quickly grow on-campus housing capacity in response to existing and future demand. An architect and contractor have been selected and phase one of the vision is in design.

### PROGRESS AND METRICS RELATED TO PROSPERITY WIDELY SHARED

#### Every Student Graduates Update

The Every Student Graduates (ESG) initiative aims to improve retention, persistence, and graduation rates by addressing all elements of the student experience. For Academic Year 2025 (AY2025), ESG focuses on improving New Student Onboarding, enhancing applied learning experiences, and increasing financial accessibility. These efforts emphasize data-driven decision-making, cross-campus collaboration and integrating student success initiatives. The Office of Institutional Diversity supports these goals by developing strategies and implementing best practices to achieve targets of increasing 6-year graduation rates to 80% and equalizing graduation rates across different student communities.

College Leadership Team (CLT) meetings, now in their second year, provide valuable insights into supporting students and identifying challenges. Key themes include fundraising needs, varied student services approaches, interdependence among colleges and closing opportunity gaps.

Six stakeholder engagement sessions held during winter terms contribute to strategic development, with input from university colleagues. The ESG Student Success Summit on April 22 will allow the OSU community to reflect on progress, discuss emerging priorities and shape future strategies.

#### New Student Onboarding

The New Student Onboarding (NSO) efforts are designed to provide a comprehensive experience for incoming students. The design phase began in June 2024 with a taskforce

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consisting of over 50 faculty and staff from various departments across the university. The structure of the design is centered around five key pillars: CONNECT, NAVIGATE, PREPARE, ENGAGE, and BALANCE. These pillars aim to establish relationships and an inclusive community, assist students in navigating OSU's support systems, develop academic skills, engage in new experiences, and adopt strategies for personal and community well-being. The NSO scaffold outlines the framework for design, implementation, and assessment of the NSO experience. It takes into account the distinct onboarding experiences and needs of different student populations, including adult learners, online learners, and transfer and international students.

Following the conclusion of the design phase, implementation commenced in December 2024, with the goal of launching initial elements in summer 2025. The implementation structure is led by an NSO core team, which includes the steering committee and leads for specific workgroups, responsible for providing leadership and guidance throughout the process. NSO programming incorporates several key components aimed at improving the student experience. For summer 2025, the focus includes online modules to guide students through their onboarding experience; virtual advising and registration; new traditions for in-person orientation elements during both the summer and pre-first term; and applied learning experiences to help students build connections to OSU and explore the various learning opportunities available. The implementation process is iterative, involving continuous collaboration among relevant stakeholders, including students, faculty and staff.

### **Mental Health**

Over the past year, OSU has embarked on an initiative to develop a mental health improvement plan aimed at enhancing well-being at OSU-Corvallis, OSU-Cascades, and for Ecampus students. This project involved reviewing existing data on mental well-being outcomes and services, as well as creating tailored surveys for students and employees. More than 2,300 students and over 400 employees completed these surveys, and 100 participants attended focus groups to assess experiences and perceptions, providing recommendations on improving mental well-being for all OSU students. In spring 2025, this information will be used to formulate a Mental Well-being Improvement Plan that includes evidence-based recommendations for both campuses and the online modality. The plan will be a central focus of the newly established Health Promoting University initiative, with working groups collaboratively advancing these recommendations.

Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) has also ensured that all undergraduate students receive foundational mental health education and have opportunities for peer-to-peer support. CAPS contributed to the creation of a mental health module within the Transitions course in the new Core Education curriculum. This module will cover education, skills development, and resource awareness to support mental well-being throughout the student experience and beyond. Starting spring 2025, the [Beavers Belong Support Network](#) will offer three weekly drop-in sessions (two for undergraduate students and one for graduate students). These sessions will foster an inclusive community where students support each other's identity, mental well-being, and daily lives through peer-facilitated spaces and community events. Six paid student leaders,

trained in group facilitation and well-being resources, will lead these supportive spaces to ensure welcoming environments and facilitate inclusive dialogue.

### **Beaver Hub: Enhancing Student Engagement and Success**

Beaver Hub is OSU's comprehensive Student Experience Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool, designed to provide an in-depth understanding of the student journey. By centralizing essential functions and resources, Beaver Hub empowers students with personalized content and support, supporting them in achieving their academic goals. Advisors and student support staff benefit from seamless access to comprehensive student data, including academic information, messages, tasks, alerts and appointments. The case management feature assists students in resolving queries and locating assistance, while appointment management allows staff to efficiently manage their schedules.

Over the past year, OSU has focused on refining and expanding Beaver Hub's capabilities. Enhancements include access to new data, leveraging the student portal for targeted marketing campaigns, and integrating event communications and registration. The Office of the Registrar, in collaboration with Student Affairs and campus stakeholders, has developed a new communication policy to inform best practices for the platform. Additionally, Beaver Hub is being expanded as an onboarding tool for new students. After completing a new student module in Canvas, incoming students will be seamlessly transitioned into Beaver Hub, where they can complete a series of onboarding tasks and connect with an advisor.

### **Academic Advising Renovation**

Effective academic advising is critical to fostering student academic progress and overall success. Recognizing this importance, OSU initiated an Academic Advising Renovation (AAR) review and design process in fall 2022. Concluding in spring 2024, this initiative aimed to evaluate OSU's undergraduate advising programs to ensure they provide valuable and equitable experiences for students across all colleges and throughout their academic journey. The review resulted in a proposed structural model and set of recommendations designed to enhance the experiences of both students and the advising community. These proposals were vetted with the Provost's Council of the Deans (PCOD) in April 2024. The AAR implementation process then began with a webinar for the OSU community later that month.

Since spring 2024, OSU has successfully completed two out of four AAR implementation phases. Phase 1 involved establishing University Advising within Undergraduate Academic Affairs; hiring the inaugural executive director of University Advising, who assumed the role in November; appointing the director of New Student Advising; developing standardized advisor position descriptions; and collaborating with colleges on their specific AAR implementation plans. Phase 2, completed in mid-February 2025, encompassed finalizing the remaining advising position descriptions, gaining approval from HR Classification & Compensation, and creating the Advising Agreements and Standards of Practice document for academic advisors responsible for student caseloads.

During Phases 3 and 4, colleges are submitting their final AAR implementation plans to University Advising and HR Classification & Compensation by mid-April. Additionally, University

Advising will support the development of an advising community learning and development plan and enhance the availability and utilization of academic advising data and technological systems. The completion and launch date for the AAR is scheduled for July 1, 2025.

### **Housing and Dining Vision**

As presented in spring of 2024, we have developed a comprehensive Corvallis Campus Housing and Dining Vision to transform the housing and dining experience. The vision calls for diversifying the housing unit mix to better serve upper-division and graduate students, building new residence halls, modernizing and upgrading existing residence halls, and investing in enhanced dining facilities to create vibrant community hubs. Recognizing the need to quickly grow on-campus housing capacity to respond to existing and future demand, we aim to increase the bed count from 5,000 to 7,500, helping to support student recruitment and success and allowing for sustainable enrollment growth that is currently constrained by the Corvallis housing shortage. Woven throughout the vision is a commitment to providing consistently high-quality residential experiences and offering developmentally appropriate living options to foster student engagement, community, and well-being.

Since last year, we have selected an architect and contractor and we are designing phase one of the vision. University Land Use Planning is actively working with the City of Corvallis on Land Development Code changes to support future development. University Housing & Dining Services and the Division of Finance and Administration continue to evaluate financing options to ensure sufficient institutional debt capacity. We anticipate returning to the Board of Trustees in May 2025 to seek approval for stage gate one, marking a key milestone in the implementation process. If approved, the first building in the first phase is expected to begin construction on schedule, with anticipated openings in 2027.

### **Access OSU**

Access OSU is an initiative aimed at improving OSU's interaction with pre-college students, community-based organizations, and youth programs. This year, the initiative work is focused on strengthening partnerships by mapping out processes, systems, communications, and user experiences. This effort will help the leadership team identify and address areas for enhancement. One proposed solution from this mapping is the creation of a CRM with an interactive portal where community-based organizations can engage with OSU staff, schedule experiences, track participant information, publicize events, etc. The data generated from this system will be used for Community Based Organization (CBO) reporting, and internally, we will consider how to best use these data to promote a sense of belonging among youths who interact with OSU. Additionally, this mapping initiative will guide us in creating more opportunities for early exposure to campus life and connections to programs that support success at OSU for those who attend.

### **Early Childhood Education Plan**

We continue to actively address the statewide early care and education (ECE) crisis through strategic engagement and advocacy initiatives. The university leads the Higher Education Early Learning Partnership of Oregon (HEELPO), a statewide partnership focused on demonstrating

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quality ECE and advocating for publicly funded programs. This partnership supports academic research, career pathways, and community collaborations. Additionally, we are involved in national and state-level organizations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Oregon Association for the Education of Young Children (ORAEYC) to further advocate for ECE quality and accessibility. The Office of Government Relations is also instrumental in increasing public funding for ECE programs and campus centers.

In terms of operations, our ECE centers are facing a severe workforce shortage, impacting their ability to provide quality care. The ECE Explore program, which focuses on career exploration and degree pathways, has been developed to address this issue and is in its second year of implementation. We are also undertaking renovation and construction projects to improve facilities and increase capacity at the Azalea ECE Center in Corvallis and the Little Kits ECE Center in Bend. Advocacy efforts include the development of legislative initiatives such as HB 3011, aimed at securing stable operational funding for ECE centers. We continue to pursue federal and state funding streams to support its ECE programs, ensuring that parenting students and young families have access to quality early care and education.

### **Accessible Campus Map**

The Accessible Campus Map Project is a bold step forward in our ongoing commitment to inclusivity and accessibility, aligning with OSU's ADA31 Taskforce recommendations, our newly adopted Digital Accessibility Policy, and the upcoming ADA compliance changes set for 2026. This project is a cross-university effort with key contributors from various departments, including Student Affairs, UIT Digital Experience, Division of Finance and Administration IT, Public Safety, University Relations & Marketing, Equal Opportunity and Access, and Disability Access Services.

The Accessible Campus Map will ensure that the university provides a fully accessible and compliant map that meets the diverse needs of our community while consolidating various mapping solutions into a single, user-friendly platform. This initiative highlights our proactive approach to digital accessibility, solidifying our leadership in fostering inclusive campus experiences for all. The map will feature a mobile-first, user-friendly design, searchable locations with accessibility filters, event integration, and consistent branding with real-time updates.

### **Student Employment**

Last year, the Career Development Center, in partnership with University Human Resources, developed a position that focuses on transforming student employment opportunities into professional development learning experience, rather than a part-time job. The position has been filled, and the team has been getting to work on integrating National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) career-readiness competencies into student employee roles and enhancing support tools for both students and supervisors. This includes developing a tailored career toolbox, a supervisor support toolbox, and boilerplate language for job descriptions, all aimed at improving feedback mechanisms and training. Additional efforts are

underway to guide students on balancing school and work, and creating a template for student evaluation of supervisors, ensuring flexibility in job structures and contributing to overall positive employment experiences.

### **Student Success Fundraising**

Significant fundraising in support of student success has been made over the past year, raising \$145,000 during Dam Proud Day in April 2024 and securing major gifts throughout the year. For this year's Dam Proud Day, 80% of the programs will focus on student success, showcasing student clubs with 57 participating groups to boost engagement and cultivate philanthropy. Donor and alumni participation has increased, exemplified by the formation of the Student Success Campaign Cabinet, which supports funding for student success and the Finish in Four initiative to provide financial aid and academic support for students to complete their degrees on time. Over \$7M has been raised for the OSU Foundations' \$1.75B Believe It campaign, with student success as the largest goal. Additionally, we have launched a recognition society for donors who contribute \$50,000 or more towards scholarships, fellowships, or student programs. This society celebrates over 750 donors and was inaugurated on March 6th with a virtual event featuring President Murthy and OSU students.

### **AI @ OSU: Supporting Student Success**

Generative AI is revolutionizing the landscape of higher education, and OSU is at the forefront of this transformation. We are committed to leveraging the ethical and thoughtful use of artificial intelligence to advance its mission and values. By integrating AI into policies and addressing critical issues such as bias, access, security, and ethics, we can ensure the responsible deployment of AI systems.

AI at OSU is tailored to enhance educational experiences by personalizing learning paths and resources to meet individual student needs, preferences, and learning styles. This approach significantly improves student engagement and outcomes. Tools like Microsoft Copilot are now available to all enrolled students, providing a secure and equitable environment for learning and education. Additionally, AI virtual assistants offered by ECampus and Admissions deliver valuable information to current and prospective students, whether they are exploring programs, seeking admission information, or making general inquiries.

## **NEW PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES**

### **Health Promoting University**

The Health Promoting University (HPU) initiative aims to prioritize the health and well-being of students, staff, and the broader community. This initiative integrates physical, mental, and social well-being into the university's culture, policies, and practices. The HPU initiative will be supported by a peer-led education program that focuses on promoting health literacy among students on topics such as mental health support, substance use, sexual health, nutrition, physical wellness, and hazing prevention. By creating a peer-driven model for promoting well-being, the program ensures that health information is relatable and impactful, aligning with the HPU's goal of fostering a healthy campus culture.

The HPU initiative will involve collaboration across several departments to ensure a comprehensive approach to health and well-being. Key departments involved include the Division of Student Affairs, the College of Health, Extension & Engagement, Finance & Administration, and the Department of Human Resources. We are embracing this initiative due to the alignment of current efforts within these departments and the university's commitment to *Prosperity Widely Shared*.

### **Student Health Insurance Plan**

The Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) run through Student Health Services saw a reduction in premiums this academic year and anticipates the same for this upcoming year. Student Health Services will begin billing for most services as an in-network provider for most major insurance companies during the 2025-2026 academic year. We have started the contracting process with insurers and aim to have contracts signed by the end of this academic year, giving us time to set up our billing practices. We expect to see revenue from this process by the end of the 2026 academic year, extending into 2027-2028.

### **Hazing Prevention**

In December 2024, a new federal hazing law came into effect. Student Health Services and the Office of the Dean of Students will expand the hazing prevention program for all new students starting in the 2025-2026 academic year. With a new coordinator to lead campus-wide hazing prevention efforts, they will target groups that could be at higher risk for hazing incidents and increase the understanding of hazing among students. Additionally, all new students will complete an online module on hazing prevention before starting their courses.

## **TRENDING AND EMERGING ISSUES**

### **Growth in Corporate-Sponsored OSU Students**

Through the Division of Educational Ventures' Corporate & Workforce Education Unit (CWE), more working adults across the country can access OSU education online. This year, over 2,100 OSU students benefit from employer tuition support, a 19% increase from last year. Corporate-sponsored students now make up nearly 14% of all online learners, with growth expected from new collaborations.

Recent partnerships in Oregon include the Oregon Association of Chiefs of Policy (OACP) and the Technology Association of Oregon (TAO), representing 90,000 tech professionals. OSU's high-quality online programs drive workforce development in computer science, data analytics, business, and cybersecurity.

### **Online Higher Education Market Update**

Amid declining residential enrollment at many US colleges, online education has become mainstream and is growing. Between 2019 and 2023, fully online enrollments increased significantly. Online education now plays a crucial role in higher learning, adapting to student needs and demographic changes. Nationally, undergraduate online enrollment grew by 35%, adding nearly 1.5 million students, while graduate online enrollment rose by 17%, adding

243,000 students. In 2023, 54% of US institutions offered online programs, with public two-year and four-year colleges enrolling many online students.

OSU began offering fully online degrees in 2002. Modern learners prioritize flexibility, affordability, and career outcomes over traditional campus experiences. They seek personalized, accessible, and relevant educational pathways.

### **Academic Readiness**

As students transition into higher education, it remains imperative to acknowledge and address how previous learning loss affects the preparedness of incoming students, as well as accounting for the lower K-12 success rates in Oregon. In response, we have implemented strategic interventions that bridge educational gaps, including partnerships with K-12 educators and integrating innovative teaching methodologies, such as AI-assisted learning. These efforts are ongoing and require continuous adaptation to ensure students are adequately prepared for the rigors of higher education.

### **Educational Pathways**

Flexible learning pathways remain a top priority for higher education systems globally. Both college students and adult learners are increasingly seeking educational experiences that deviate from traditional, rigid structures, prompting us to assess our response to evolving expectations. Furthermore, learners now demand customization in their educational experiences. Technology plays a crucial role in this shift, enabling personalized learning. Through online platforms, blended approaches, or competency-based programs, students seek tailored content that aligns with their individual goals and interests. OSU is taking these expectations into account as it develops new academic programs and curricula.

Through our DPP (Degree Partnership Program) 2.0 initiative, we are actively updating the Memorandum of Understanding with LBCC to ease enrollment and support degree pursuits across both institutions. Key priorities include ensuring advising support for students with records at two institutions, optimizing academic program usage, and integrating LBCC students into OSU innovations. These actions are in support of our commitment to creating accessible and comprehensive educational opportunities.

### **Impact of Federal Grant Funding on Programming**

The current uncertainty in the federal funding landscape significantly impacts grant funded programs, creating a ripple effect across various aspects of higher education. With potential reductions or delays in federal grants, we face the possibility of financial instability in some spaces, particularly in programs that support traditionally underrepresented students. This environment of financial unpredictability has caused an uneasiness within our grant funded programs and forces us to examine our priorities, explore alternative funding sources, and develop contingency plans to sustain their programming and support services.

### **Incidental Fee Taskforce**

The incidental fee setting process has become an annual point of contention and requires a comprehensive review to ensure transparency, predictability, cost containment, and shared governance. As we continue to evolve our educational offerings and support services, it is imperative to clearly define what constitutes an incidental fee and what programs and services should be baseline university offerings. Additionally, the current fee setting process may not fully comply with state regulations, and there may be opportunities to streamline operations and improve process and governance. A taskforce has been charged by the OSU President's delegate, Vice Provost for Student Affairs, Dan Larson, to complete a comprehensive review of the current process. The taskforce will produce a comprehensive report that includes the following: definition of incidental fees and identification of programs and services that should be considered baseline university offerings or incidental to the delivery of education and support services; review of Oregon Revised Statutes and their implications for the incidental fee setting process and OSU and Recognized Student Government Commitment on Student Engagement in Shared Governance; recommendations for improving transparency, predictability, cost containment, and shared governance; and a detailed process and timeline for implementing the recommended changes.

### **ASOSU Comprehensive Review**

In response to concerns about the functioning of the ASOSU student government, leadership has temporarily paused certain activities to facilitate a comprehensive review of the ASOSU's governance, employment practices, legislative procedures and organizational culture. The goal is to address issues related to intimidation, hostile work environments and other performance concerns, ensuring that student leadership remains a positive and developmental experience. Advisors and Student Affairs leaders will guide this process, aiming to reestablish a healthy and inclusive environment for all student leaders, with the process expected to be completed by early May. Specific areas that are under review include governing documents, employment standards, and culture and wellbeing. Additionally, an After Action Review of the most recent student fee process will be conducted as part of this process.

### **NEXT STEPS**

The Academic Strategies Committee will discuss the Student Life and Success briefing at its May 8, 2025, meeting.