



**Oregon State**  
University

The Board of Trustees of Oregon State University

Regular Meeting of the Academic Strategies Committee

**January 23, 2020**

**Horizon Room, Memorial Union  
Corvallis, Oregon**

**MINUTES**

**Committee Members Present:** Mike Bailey, Michele Longo Eder (*vice chair*), Ed Feser (*ex officio*), Lamar Hurd, Paul Kelly (*chair*), Julie Manning, Preston Pulliams, and Irem Tumer (*ex officio*)

**Other Trustees Present:** Patty Bedient, Julia Brim-Edwards (*phone*), Darry Callahan, Ed Ray (*ex officio*), Kirk Schueler, and Mike Thorne

**University Staff Present:** Charlene Alexander, Jennifer Almquist, Anita Azarenko, Peter Betjemann, Jon Boeckenstedt, Susan Capalbo, Steve Clark, Debbie Colbert, Becca Gose, Mike Green, Andrew Ketsdever, Geoff Raynak (*phone*), Keith Scribner, Lauren Skousen, Patti Snopkowski, Nicole von Germeten, and Rebecca Webb (*phone*)

**1. Call to Order/Roll/Declaration of a Quorum**

Committee Chair Paul Kelly called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m., asked the assistant board secretary to call the roll, and noted a quorum.

**2. Provost's Report**

**a. Status Report: New and Existing Academic Program Reviews and Professional Accreditations in Progress**

Provost and Executive Vice President Ed Feser noted the summary of new academic programs and program reviews in TAB N, offering to answer any questions from the committee. He reported that Alix Gitelman, vice provost for undergraduate education, now also serves as the university's accreditation liaison officer. He also provided an update on the dean searches in the colleges of Business and Education and said a search would be launched to fill the position of vice provost for extension and engagement. Feser next moved to an update on several items that he said highlight the alignment between the work of the Academic Strategies Committee and the projections and strategies outlined in the university's Ten-Year Business Forecast. He spoke first about fall 2020 enrollment, reporting that freshman, transfer, and graduate applications are up. He then described a number of enrollment management efforts, such as considering whether to adopt a test-optional admission policy for freshman students, implementing an improved customer relationship management tool (Slate), improving data analytics and enrollment forecasting, testing systems for net tuition revenue optimization, exploring strategies for scholarship and aid optimization, expanding agreements with community colleges to help support transfer students, exploring opportunities to raise funds for scholarships, and focusing on improving retention rates. Feser provided an update on the work of Andrea Ballinger, the new vice provost for university information and technology. Upon her arrival, Ballinger held numerous meetings with members of the

university community, and Feser said she would be using her findings to revise the IT strategic plan to contribute to executing the actions in Strategic Plan 4.0. Feser described work underway in the Office of Faculty Affairs, including coordinating with University Human Resources to align support for employee and labor relations and exploring with the Research Office ways to support innovation and entrepreneurship by academic faculty. He said a faculty-student mentor program implemented as a pilot was shown to generate a significant improvement in student retention and is now being considered for expansion. Feser reported on efforts between the Faculty Senate and the Office of Undergraduate Education to organize stakeholder listening sessions to solicit input on revisions to the Baccalaureate Core. He discussed the university's budget model as a tool for inspiring good resource use and innovation in academic programming, noting efforts to develop an infrastructure for unit leaders to enhance their understanding of the budget context and support their decision-making. Feser concluded by announcing the 2020 Distinguished Professors: Yuji Hiratsuka, Distinguished Professor, College of Liberal Arts; and David Williams, Distinguished Professor, College of Agricultural Sciences.

Following the report, Trustee Preston Pulliams expressed his appreciation for the university's strong connections with community colleges. In response to a question by Trustee Lamar Hurd about the increase in transfer applications, Feser said it was likely due, in part, to the increased number of students accessing the Oregon Promise Grant who are now seeking to transfer to four-year colleges and universities. Feser also noted efforts by OSU to become more transfer friendly. In response to a question by Trustee Julie Manning, Feser confirmed that students who participate in the Degree Partnership Program are considered transfer students. Kelly asked about the increase in freshman applications, which Feser said could be a result of the university's move to accept applications via Common Application.

### 3. Consent Agenda

#### a. Minutes of the October 17, 2019 Academic Strategies Committee Meeting

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2019, Academic Strategies Committee meeting. The motion carried.

### 4. Action Items

#### a. New Academic Program: BS in Engineering Science

Kelly invited Andrew Ketsdever, associate dean at OSU-Cascades, and Rebecca Webb, an instructor and program lead for the energy systems engineering program, to present this item. Ketsdever said the proposed Bachelor of Science in Engineering Science at OSU-Cascades would provide students with a strong, broad foundation in engineering fundamentals. The curriculum will have a common core built from select courses across several engineering disciplines, required science and mathematics courses, and discipline-specific technical electives. Ketsdever added that the program would complement the existing energy systems engineering program at OSU-Cascades and would be in a strong alignment with OSU's continued focus on serving students in Central Oregon. Three of the seven public universities in Oregon offer engineering programs, but none offers an engineering science program. Ketsdever noted that the program would serve the needs of both students in Central Oregon and students among the entire engineering body at OSU who are seeking a broad engineering foundation.

In response to a question by Pulliams, Ketsdever clarified that students in the program could either gain exposure to several different fields by taking an assortment of discipline-specific technical electives, or they could specialize in a particular area by taking technical electives focused in one concentration. Pulliams also asked whether graduates of the program were likely to pursue graduate degrees, and Ketsdever said that approximately half of the graduates from the existing energy systems engineering program continued their education while the remaining graduates went directly into the workforce. Kelly asked about trends among employers, and Ketsdever described an increased demand for graduates with a broad foundation in engineering fundamentals. In response to a question by Trustee Darry Callahan, Ketsdever confirmed the program would be a path to licensure as a professional engineer.

Following discussion, a motion was made to approve the establishment of a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Science, effective fall 2020, pending support of the Statewide Provosts Council and the approval of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. The motion carried.

**b. New Academic Program: BS in Outdoor Products**

Kelly asked Ketsdever and Geoffrey Raynak, executive director in residence at OSU-Cascades, to present this item. Ketsdever said the proposed Bachelor of Science in Outdoor Products, to be offered at OSU-Cascades, combines a systems approach to product design, development, manufacturing, and supply chain logistics with product commercialization, land resource stewardship, and experiential learning to educate future leaders in the outdoor industry. He added that the curriculum includes elements of sustainability throughout and develops an understanding of natural resources and public lands. Ketsdever said that, in addition to key courses developed for the degree, existing courses from other programs and colleges would be leveraged to make up the core of the program. Students will specialize their program through selection of experiences in internship and practicum courses. Housed within the College of Engineering, the program would be unique to OSU-Cascades and would be designed in partnership and consultation with industry leaders and innovators. Ketsdever noted that the program will not be an Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) accredited program. Ketsdever said that there are currently no Oregon institutions that offer a bachelor's degree in outdoor products specifically. He concluded by stating the proposed program directly responds to the educational needs of an important economic sector.

In response to a question by Kelly about a similar program at Utah State University, Raynak said the degree had been available for over four years, with the first cohort graduating in spring 2019. Hurd asked why more schools have not developed similar degrees. Ketsdever said that many people have found their way to the outdoor industry through other sectors, and the focus on providing a direct path is only just emerging. Callahan asked whether it would be problematic to not have an ABET accredited program, and Ketsdever said although the program is housed within the College of Engineering, it is designed to be a multidisciplinary degree.

Following discussion, a motion was made and seconded to approve the establishment of a Bachelor of Science in Outdoor Products, effective fall 2020,

pending the support of the Statewide Provosts Council and the approval of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. The motion carried.

**c. New Academic Program: BA in Creative Writing**

Kelly asked Peter Betjemann, director of the School of Writing, Literature, and Film and Professor Keith Scribner to present this item. Scribner said the proposed Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing would complement the school's existing Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Creative Writing and would draw from the faculty and curriculum already in place. He said the foundations of the creative writing major would be the study of the craft of creative writing combined with the rigorous study of literature, an approach Scribner said would offer students a well-rounded degree. Graduates of the program would be prepared for graduate work in a range of fields or for the job market. Scribner summarized the need for the program, spoke to the demand for the undergraduate degree, and described the contributions of the program to advancing a commitment to diversity.

In response to a question by Trustee Mike Bailey, Scribner and Betjemann described the curriculum for the undergraduate and MFA programs, noting that there are enough distinct courses between the two that a student could both complete their bachelor's degree and apply to the MFA program at OSU. Kelly asked about the decline in English majors nationally, and Betjemann said the creative writing program was, in part, a response to that decline as students increasingly tend toward programs that include a focus on the craft of writing rather than those with a greater emphasis on analysis. Kelly also asked whether faculty had instead considered adding creative writing as a minor to the English degree, and Scriber spoke to the robust creative writing curriculum that is more conducive to a major and said English students could pursue a number of other writing minor options. Trustee Michele Longo Eder expressed her support for the program and noted its broad applicability across disciplines.

Following discussion, a motion was made and seconded to approve the establishment of a BA in Creative Writing, effective fall 2020, pending support of the Statewide Provosts Council and the approval of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. The motion carried.

**d. New Academic Program: MA/MS in History**

Kelly asked Nicole von Germeten, professor and director of the School of History, Philosophy, and Religion, to present this item. Von Germeten said the proposed Masters of History degree is designed for students with undergraduate degrees in history, or related topics, and would provide students the option of specializing in global perspectives on war, peace, and empire; history of science and technology; and community history and civic engagement. Graduates of the program would be positioned to directly apply the knowledge learned in the program to a broad range of careers. Von Germeten described how the program connects to OSU's mission and strategic plan and spoke to the need for the program.

Following the presentation, Manning said the program was relevant and timely, and she noted synergies with other degree programs at OSU. In response to a question by Bailey about potential students, von Germeten responded that the new master's degree would likely draw some students who previously only had the option to pursue a concentration in history as part of an interdisciplinary

degree. She also described the results of a survey that suggested the potential for the program to become popular and highly competitive. President Ed Ray said the proposed degree aligned with the university's existing liberal arts portfolio.

Following discussion, a motion was made and seconded to approve the establishment of a MA/MS in History, effective fall 2020, pending support of the Statewide Provosts Council and the approval of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. The motion carried.

After the vote, Kelly reflected on the importance of viewing individual program approvals in a broader context, keeping in mind the array of programs offered. He asked Feser to speak to the approach used to consider the programs proposed for creation or removal in order to maintain an optimal balance. Feser said the programs that had just been approved by the committee exemplified faculty responsiveness to demonstrated student needs and good alignment between resources and demand. He added that the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education Alix Gitelman is focused on ensuring the optimal mix of programs and deans are engaged in comprehensive thinking about degree offerings in their colleges.

## 5. Discussion Items

### a. Standardized Testing in Admissions

Kelly asked Feser and Vice Provost for Enrollment Management Jon Boeckenstedt to present this item. Feser said he asked Boeckenstedt to prepare a white paper regarding standardized testing in university admissions. He then described the preliminary engagement with a number of key stakeholders. Boeckenstedt summarized the review, noting that standardized tests offer little additional information to high school grade point average in college prep courses in predicting academic performance. He also described issues of equity and justice in their use. Boeckenstedt provided an overview of the pros and cons of going test optional and said it is the recommendation of the Division of Enrollment Management that Oregon State adopt a test-optional admissions policy for students entering as freshman who enroll in fall 2021 and beyond.

Following the report, Pulliams asked how students and families might perceive the elimination of the requirement for undergraduate applicants to submit standardized tests. Boeckenstedt said the feedback he had received, particularly from high school counselors was supportive. He added that many people were closely following conversations among California public institutions about the use of standardized tests. In response to a question from Ray, Boeckenstedt said that students could still elect to submit tests, but the adoption of test-optional admissions processes would support a more holistic review of applications. In response to a question by Callahan, Boeckenstedt added that high school GPA and Insight Resume questions already serve as the basis for most of the university's admissions decisions and the elimination of the test requirement is not anticipated to be a problem. Eder asked about how admissions officers would decide whether a candidate is capable of doing university-level academic work, and Boeckenstedt said that high school GPA in college prep classes is the best predictor of college grades, adding that concerns about grade inflation are overstated. Eder also asked about the graduation rates of colleges that had eliminated the test requirement, and Boeckenstedt said that universities have not

overserved a difference in graduation rates or student outcomes. Bailey asked about the results of Advanced Placement tests, and Boeckenstedt said the performance of students in rigorous courses and on exams oriented to the content of such course was predictive of performance in college. Trustee Julia Brim-Edwards expressed her support for the change and encouraged staff to monitor implementation to understand the ramifications of the policy decision. Kelly expressed appreciation for the thoughtful review by staff and said he looked forward to next steps. Feser said he would continue to gather feedback on the recommendation and consult with stakeholders before finalizing his recommendation to the president. In response to a question by Hurd, Feser said the outcome of similar conversations in California was unlikely to alter OSU's timeline for implementation, should the recommendation to eliminate the testing requirement be accepted. Boeckenstedt added that he had spoken with colleagues at the other public universities in Oregon, and those who are not already test-optional expressed interest in moving in that direction.

**b. Research Briefing**

Kelly asked Interim Vice President of Research Irem Tumer to present this item. Tumer began with an overview of the metrics used by the university to track success in attracting funding, conducting research, and generating economic impact. Tumer noted that there are standard metrics used across universities to measure research performance. She also spoke about the university's public impact, which can be more difficult to measure but is an important component of understanding research performance. Tumer then summarized the metrics used to track progress in delivering innovation and economic impact. In response to a question by Kelly about trends in invention disclosures and licensing revenues, Tumer said that these areas have historically made up only a small percentage of research expenditures as many research universities have focused more on research than economic impact. Tumer provided progress updates on FY2019 priorities, including a review of processes, policies, and efficiencies in research administration; a review of centers and institutes; a review of research facilities; and efforts to advance innovation-based economic impact.

Tumer spoke next about national trends, beginning with the opportunity to diversify OSU's funding portfolio, including developing a strategy for targeting well-funded and untapped agencies, showcasing and building on strengths, and developing a university-wide research development strategy. Ray noted the importance of continuing to explore how OSU might increase its competitiveness by building robust relationships with federal agencies. Tumer described efforts to rethink the university's industry engagement, including developing the framework and model for a university-level strategy and collaborating with the OSU Foundation to advance broader industry partnership goals. Tumer concluded by describing the need to navigate national security compliance requirements by developing communication strategies to address uncertainty; developing clear policies, procedures, and access to resources; and providing education to researchers to encourage transparency and disclosure.

Following the presentation, Ray emphasized the need to continue expanding the scope of industry partnerships, and Tumer spoke about strategies for partnering with companies to advance corporate research and development goals and support the academic research enterprise. Eder expressed support for the university's efforts to develop robust relationships with federal agencies.

**c. Outreach and Engagement Briefing**

Kelly asked Interim Vice Provost for Outreach and Engagement Anita Azarenko to present this item. Azarenko began by sharing that OSU had recently submitted its application for renewal of the Community Engagement Classification awarded by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, a designation the university has held since 2010. She then provided an overview of outreach and engagement activities designed to support the priorities of making education accessible for all; supporting sound stewardship of natural and managed ecosystems and the built environment; improving the well-being and development of youth, individuals, and families; and supporting economic development. Azarenko also spoke about the OSU Extension Service and activities across seven program areas.

Next, Azarenko presented the outreach and engagement actions the university is prioritizing in 2020, beginning with strengthened focus and communications. She noted that the division had been renamed to the Division of Extension and Engagement, a change intended to make the focus of the unit — and the core role of the OSU Extension Service — clearer to external stakeholders. A search for the permanent vice provost for extension and engagement will be launched in January. Azarenko also spoke about conducting a needs analysis and establishing a formal staffing planning process, aligning Extension Service youth programs, assessing the continuing service level funding that will be required to meet programmatic needs and priorities, engaging in efforts to complement OSU's existing outdoor-related degree programs and respond to the industry's fast-changing workforce needs, and exploring the expansion of pathways to higher education. In response to a question from Pulliams about the expansion of pathways, Azarenko noted that a number of partners are involved in exploring the development of an Urban Youth Center housed at the OSU Portland Center.

Azarenko then described some of the most significant opportunities and threats facing Oregon communities and for which OSU's engagement efforts are working in partnership to address. These include building climate change resilience in managed and natural landscapes, agricultural and forest ecosystems, and coastal fisheries; working to develop and extend integrated pest management programs; supporting community and workforce development and security; and working to enhance community health and resilience. Azarenko added that the university is working on strengthening its outreach and engagement metrics to measure the true impact of its programming.

Following the report, Kelly asked about the sources of revenue that support the OSU Extension Service. Azarenko said that it is supported by a mix of revenue sources, with roughly half of the Extension Service's support coming from the state of Oregon. Trustee Mike Thorne emphasized the importance of strong relationships between the Extension Service and external stakeholders.

**6. Adjournment**

With no further business proposed, Chair Kelly adjourned the meeting at 5:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer M. Almquist  
Assistant Board Secretary