

## New Academic Program: Bachelor of Science in Outdoor Products

### BACKGROUND

#### Program Proposed Start Date

Fall 2020

#### Program Description

The new degree program proposed is a Bachelor of Science in Outdoor Products.

The Outdoor Products degree combines product commercialization, lands stewardship, and experiential learning to educate and inspire future leaders for the opportunities and challenges in the outdoor industry. Graduates of the program will lead by balancing product, profits, people, and the planet. Housed within the College of Engineering, the Outdoor Products degree will be unique to OSU-Cascades and is designed in partnership and consultation with industry leaders and innovators, many located in Central Oregon. It will not be an Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) accredited program.

The Outdoor Products degree will have a systems approach to product innovation, design, testing, and management; a curriculum that includes elements of sustainability throughout; and an understanding of natural resources and public lands. This curriculum will fulfill an important and unmet educational need in the global outdoor industry. In addition to key courses developed for the Outdoor Products degree, existing courses from other programs and colleges such as business; marketing; natural resources; tourism, recreation, and adventure leadership; and engineering will be leveraged to make up the core of this program. Students will specialize their program through selection of experiences in internship and practicum courses.

The major is 117 total credits, leaving room for 35-39 general elective credits. Students may personalize their degree by adding minors such as business; natural resources; sustainability; or tourism, recreation, and adventure leadership.

#### Program Context

As the land grant institution in Oregon, OSU is uniquely qualified to respond to industry demand for bachelor's degree trained graduates in outdoor products. These individuals will be educated in a systems approach to product commercialization, grounded in the themes of sustainability and corporate social responsibility. Many of the systems approach core courses will be offered via existing and expanding OSU-Cascades programs. Each program has hired faculty specializing in that area. For example, engineering courses in the Outdoor Products program (e.g. ENG 248) are taught by OSU-Cascades engineering faculty. The program-specific core courses will enable students to synthesize new information and lessons learned from courses or related programs.

There are currently no Oregon institutions (public or private) that offer a bachelor's degree in outdoor products. The University of Oregon's (U of O) master's program in sports product management and Portland State University's athletic and outdoor product planning certificate are the only programs in Oregon with *some* similarities to the proposed degree program, although their target audience and learning outcomes are very different. Utah State University is

the first and only university in the US to offer an undergraduate degree program focused on outdoor products, specifically on outdoor product design and development.

The proposed program could certainly be an attractive feeder program into U of O's master's degree program and may contain courses that the U of O could consider as progress toward their degree. The program at OSU-Cascades will not directly compete with programs at the U of O or PSU.

### **Program Purpose/Relationship to University Mission and Strategic Plan**

The mission of the Outdoor Products degree is to educate and inspire future leaders for the opportunities and challenges in the outdoor industry. This mission is achieved through a rigorous curriculum combining product commercialization, lands stewardship, and experiential learning. Graduates of the program will lead the outdoor industry in balancing product, profits, people, and the planet. The mission of the degree program complements OSU's mission and its three signature areas of distinction: the science of sustainable earth ecosystems; health and wellness; and economic prosperity and social progress.

### **Need for the Program**

The proposed program directly responds to the educational needs of an important economic sector that are not being met in the state and across the country. The juxtaposition of a \$900B industry and only a handful of explicit degree programs speaks volumes to the opportunity and the responsibility at hand. This degree program not only seeks to produce graduates who are skilled in outdoor products to meet market demand, but also to produce citizens who are committed to social justice and sustainability, and who are ethically responsible in caring for the earth, natural resources, and public lands.

A 2017 Outdoor Industry Association report found that in the United States, outdoor recreation employed 7.6M people and generated \$887B in consumer spending, almost \$65.3B in federal taxes, and \$59.2B in state and local taxes. Nationally, this is third in spending, behind only financial services/insurance and healthcare. Around 30% of those dollars were in manufacturing and retail. In Oregon, those numbers are \$16.4B in spending, \$5.1B in wages and salaries, \$749M in state and local taxes, and 172,000 direct jobs.

To confirm the need for this program, over 100 interviews were conducted with industry leaders in Oregon, Washington, California, Utah, and Colorado. Participants were asked about the skill sets desired in candidates for positions in their company, and the insights outdoor industry leaders wished they had acquired when first beginning their careers in the outdoor industry. In response, the curriculum has been designed around these consistent themes as key elements in a successful outdoor product degree and important areas for student learning:

- Develop a systems overview of product commercialization;
- Reduce negative environmental impact and promote social justice;
- Understand the history, use, management, and protection of public lands as an essential competency for work in the outdoor product industry;
- Participate in seminars, internships, and integrated cross-discipline projects.

Also, without exception, interviewees indicated that having such a degree would be a significant, if not determining factor in hiring a new employee in their company. All of the outdoor product

companies interviewed from Central Oregon expressed enthusiasm for partnering with OSU-Cascades to craft meaningful internships and projects. Geographical proximity is not necessarily a prerequisite to such partnerships. Companies from California, Utah, and Western Oregon expressed similar interest.

**Program Financials**

**Projected Enrollments:**

The program is expected to enroll about 33-35 students each year with six to seven students graduating each year. The program will add thirteen new classes to the overall curriculum. Six of the new courses will be taught in traditional classrooms, three will include product testing, and others will be a blend of practicums, internships, and capstone projects. These courses will need product creation and fabrication space. OSU-Cascades will meet these requirements with a combination of existing space and new space in Academic Building 2, which will open in fall 2021. Spaces in Academic Building 2 specifically noted for shared use by the Outdoor Products program include the following: Flex Lab - 1200 square feet, Capstone Project Area - 900 square feet, Makerspace - 700 square feet, Makerspace with Art Storage - 800 square feet, and Blackbox recording studio - 250 square feet, storage - 500 square feet.

**Instructional Faculty and Support Staff:**

Existing faculty will teach courses required for the degree that are already offered at OSU-Cascades. All of these class sections currently have capacity for the additional outdoor products students. Dr. Geoff Raynak and part-time teaching faculty will provide adequate staffing for all of the planned new outdoor product courses in the rollout phase of the program. As the program is established (FY2026/ Year-5), a junior faculty member will be added to assume expanded faculty needs. Resources have been allocated to hire a portion of a new academic advisor for this program (e.g., 0.33 FTE), based on the standard eligible-to-register student/advisor ratio. An OSU Foundation endowment fund will contribute to the overall budget until the program matures.

The budget is summarized in the table below.

	Academic Year 2020-21	Academic Year 2021-22	Academic Year 2022-23	Academic Year 2023-24
<b>Personnel</b>				
Faculty, fixed-term	\$84,873	\$91,105	\$121,986	\$124,687
OPE	\$48,154	\$52,686	\$60,093	\$64,950
Personnel Subtotal	\$133,028	\$143,791	\$182,079	\$189,638
<b>Other Resources</b>				
Library printed/electronic	\$850	\$869	\$888	\$908
Services & Supplies: office supplies, postage, professional development, student workers	\$5,815	\$3,843	\$3,870	\$3,898
Other Resources Subtotal	\$6,665	\$4,712	\$4,758	\$4,806
<b>TOTAL COST OF PROGRAM</b>	<b>\$139,693</b>	<b>\$148,503</b>	<b>\$186,837</b>	<b>\$194,444</b>

**RECOMMENDATION**

All appropriate university committees and the OSU Faculty Senate have positively reviewed the proposed program. The Provost recommends that the Board 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.