

Eastern Oregon University

Report to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission Re. Conditions

December 2015

Nationwide, the higher education sector is undergoing significant change. Oregon funding for higher education, when measured on a per student basis, is currently 47th in the nation (this ranking has likely improved modestly with the recent increase in state funding). In addition, state funding for student financial aid also ranks near the bottom of the country at 43rd. This has forced universities in Oregon to raise tuition at rates that challenge many Oregonians' abilities to finance their education. Debt levels per Oregon student average nearly \$25,000 at graduation and without the ability to find higher paying employment financial challenges can be exacerbated. Coupled with increasing competition for students, the growth of online programs at many universities and a slowly recovering economy have made it difficult for many of the regional universities and community colleges serving lower income populations.

Couple these facts with significant changes in the governance structure and funding models for higher education in Oregon and the significant changes in our natural resource intensive economies and significant disruption becomes a real possibility. Yet at the same time, this disruption creates opportunities to be pursued for the betterment of Oregon. Navigating this perpetual whitewater will require a deft strategy, nimble reactions and visionary leaders who are willing to think and operate in new ways.

Eastern Oregon Background Information:

Population

The eastern Oregon region includes Baker, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, Wheeler and Wallowa Counties, with a total estimated population in 2013 of 184,776. Umatilla County, with 76,720 residents, is the most populous county, while Wheeler County has less than 1,500 residents. Hermiston (population 17,111) has grown significantly of late and recently surpassed Pendleton (population 16,612) as eastern Oregon's largest city.

Several of the region's counties have substantially larger Latino populations than the state as a whole: while 10.6% of the state population is Latino, nearly 25% of Umatilla County's population and approximately 33-34% of Malheur and Morrow Counties' populations are Latino. The Latino K-12 population in the 10-County eastern Oregon region is 30.3% as 9,366 out of 30,755 K-12 students are from Latino backgrounds. All but two of the region's counties have more elderly residents than the statewide population. Wallowa County has the oldest population in the region, with 31% of the population aged 60 or older.

Income Levels

Median incomes in all eastern Oregon region counties are below the state median of \$60,000: the median family income in the region's counties ranges from \$41,000 in Wallowa County to \$52,000 in Umatilla County. More eastern Oregon children are living in poverty with 22% of the region's children living in poverty compared to 17% of children statewide. However, there is variability among the region's counties in terms of child poverty. While Gilliam and Grant have child poverty rates just below the state average, child poverty rates in the remaining eastern Oregon counties are higher than the state average.

Education Levels

The Oregon Governor, legislative, education and business sectors have set a goal of having 40% of Oregon residents possessing four-year college degrees or higher, 40% possessing community college degrees or technical certifications, and 20% possessing high school diplomas by the year 2025. Currently, the eastern region's high school graduation rate, at 80%, is above the overall statewide high

school graduation rate of 66%. All counties in the region have high school graduation rates above the state average. Despite the higher than average high school graduation rates, eastern Oregon counties have lower percentages of residents with college degrees. While the percent of the regional population with an Associate's Degree (10%) is slightly higher than the state and nation, just 17% of the region's adults have a Bachelor's Degree, compared to 28% of the state and nation as a whole. All eastern Oregon counties have a smaller percentage of residents with college degrees than the state average, and in Morrow and Malheur Counties just 12% and 13%, respectively.

As a means to stimulate increased college-going rates, EOU, Blue Mountain Community College (BMCC), Treasure Valley Community College (TVCC) and the Intermountain (IMESD) and Malheur Educational Service Districts have created a program known as the Eastern Promise. This program is intended to increase access to early college credit for high school students throughout the region and to build a college/post-secondary going culture. It features programs to get fifth graders to visit campuses during the school year and spend one week each summer on a college campus, working with ninth graders to create an educational plan based on career interests and low cost precollege credits for upper division high school students. One of the primary objectives of this program is to give high school students the confidence that they can be successful in college classes.

In recent studies conducted by Education Northwest and ECO Northwest, the Eastern Promise program has been found to be effective as it: 1) has led to a 100% high school graduation rate for its participants compared to a 80% graduation rate in Eastern Oregon and 66% in Oregon generally; 2) lowered the participants' absenteeism rates in high schools; and 3) increased the participants' college going rate. In addition, the cost benefit analysis of this program has demonstrated that the investment in the Eastern Promise program has produced a significant return on this investment to the State.

Existing and Emerging Economy

The eastern Oregon economy has not rebounded from the recession as well as other parts of Oregon. A natural resource based economy, eastern Oregon was experiencing strong economic headwinds even before the recession. Job growth in existing industries such as agriculture, natural resource utilization and extraction, has been relatively stagnant in the past ten years and this is likely to continue. However, demographic evidence along with feedback received during the past five months suggests there is significant opportunity for new local college graduates to attain gainful employment due to turnover resulting from retirements. Education requirements and skills needed to meet the regional employment need fit well with degrees offered at EOU. The top three regional opportunities are in education, public administration and social service professionals, and business (management, marketing, and related). A demand forecast suggests an opportunity to increase EOU FTE enrollment by 14% just by meeting the regional needs in these three job categories.

Pendleton was recently selected as a drone test site, thus this may be an emerging industry for the region. The first drone test flight at the Pendleton Unmanned Aerial Systems Test Range was in October 2014. Steve Chrisman, the Pendleton economic development director, stated the range would be the first to conduct a test on the contiguous West Coast.

Large technology companies (Amazon, Facebook, Apple, and others) have begun to locate server farms in Boardman, Hood River and Prineville, which may lead to more technology development. Cayuse Technologies in Pendleton is a 100% Tribally owned, onshore delivery center providing software development, technical help desk, and other business process outsourcing solutions. They provide an innovative and domestic alternative solution to addressing the tremendous demand among many organizations striving to keep work within the United States, where businesses are seeking high quality onshore and cost-effective delivery capabilities. Technology can be utilized throughout the region, thus suggesting that computer science and technology initiatives will be part of the future for this region.

The brew pub industry led by Terminal Gravity Brewing in Enterprise, Barley Brown in Baker City, Prodigal Son Brewing in Pendleton, 1188 in John Day and Jolts and Juice in Ontario seems to be growing in the region. In addition, the transformation in Walla Walla led by the vineyard and wine making industry seems to offer some hope for certain parts of the region where the climate and elevation are appropriate for grapes.

Eco-tourism also offers opportunity for the region. The Silvies Valley Ranch is chief among initiatives where owner Scott Campbell is building a destination golf course modeled after St. Andrews in Scotland (with tee boxes and greens on each end of every hole to be played one direction one day and the opposite direction the next day) combined with a cattle ranch and stream restoration programs that are revolutionizing stream ecology and beef production. The Alpine Huts, premier mountain biking, hiking, hunting, fishing and the Rails with Trails and Rail-bikes initiatives in Wallowa and Union counties also are examples that could drive the region's economies.

Eastern Oregon University Background and History

Eastern Oregon University began in 1929 as a normal school and has always had a strong Education program. In addition, EOU has 2+2 professional degrees through partnerships with OIT in dental hygiene, OHSU in nursing and OSU in agriculture. The institution also has a strong College of Arts and Sciences with degrees ranging from computer science, chemistry, biology, political science, English/writing, anthropology/sociology, psychology, math, communications, history, music, art and theatre. Degrees in business, economics, and physical activity and health are offered through the Colleges of Business and Education and are in high demand.

The presence of EOU and its fine and performing arts programs make it a cultural hub and major amenity for the region. The Grande Ronde Symphony is Oregon's oldest symphony, and features community members from throughout the region combined with EOU faculty, staff and students. Arts East is another non-profit organization that collaborates with EOU to provide fine arts programs and services for school districts, EOU and community members. Numerous choirs connected to EOU host performances throughout the year and productions at the Elgin Opera House draw attendance from all over the region. These activities provide cultural assets that allow the eastern Oregon communities to attract professionals (doctors, dentists, attorneys, etc.) that otherwise may not consider eastern Oregon as a place to live.

EOU athletics offer additional forms of entertainment for regional citizens. EOU's football, volleyball, women's basketball, and men's cross country and track teams completed their seasons nationally ranked by the NAIA in 2014-15. This year, EOU's women's volleyball team won its first outright conference championship and went to the national NAIA tournament for the second time in a row. EOU's women's soccer team completed a record-breaking season finishing 17-2-1 and earned a berth to the national tournament for the first time. In addition EOU has a strong tradition in its men's basketball program and men's soccer just completed its inaugural season finishing a respectable 7-9. EOU shares its football stadium, track and tennis courts with the La Grande High School for competitive and community events. Athletics is a bright spot for the university and is a source of great pride throughout the campus and in the community.

EOU is Affordable

Tuition increased markedly in Oregon, especially after the passage of Ballot Measure 5 in 1990. This ballot measure rolled back property taxes and thereby shifted the burden for funding the K-12 education system to the State with concomitant reductions in property taxes. In 1990, the State funded 30% of the K-12 education system and property taxes provided 70% of the funding. In 1990, higher education received roughly two-thirds of its funding from the State and the students provided the other one-third. Today these amounts are reversed, with the State providing 70% of the funding for the K-12 system and

college students now providing two-thirds of the funding for higher education. Thus, tuition at EOU has increased markedly since 1990. Yet, despite these increases, EOU maintains the lowest tuition price of any public university in Oregon.

Overview of Institutional Situation

Institutional mission in this context means the role, market niche, that EOU believes it has or should obtain in order to best serve the higher education needs of the state and attain financial success. One of the first requirements of this mission discussion and clarification involves an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats currently confronting the institution. These are as follows:

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT Analysis):

Strengths –

- EOU is affordable and offers the lowest tuition of any public university in Oregon;
- EOU has a diverse, multi-modal educational delivery (on-campus, on-line and on-site) system, thus allowing it to extend its reach to place-bound populations or deliver its program on community college campuses and in markets where there is a need or demand;
- EOU offers small classes and more personalized attention for its students, many of whom are low-income, under-served or under-represented; and
- EOU, as one of the only public four year universities on the east side of the State, enjoys strong regional and alumni support.
- EOU is seen by many as the only local university option in the region and has the added benefit of being the best value.

Weaknesses –

- EOU is located in a remote location in a region experiencing population stagnation and significant demographic changes;
- EOU's program realignment with the economic and employment needs of region is in its first year;
- The eastern Oregon region's economy has not fully rebounded from the recession and continues to experience many challenges for its natural resource based economy/jobs and limited potential for industrial growth;
- EOU's institutional reserves and funds for scholarships are insufficient to provide a satisfactory buffer against unforeseen events and to more fully assist its low income population to afford an education.

Opportunities –

- Given the weaknesses outlined above, EOU has multiple opportunities to implement programmatic efforts to grow enrollments (curricular and co-curricular);
- The growing Latino populations in the region can be a great source for new students;
- The new governance model provides EOU with a more robust leadership and advocacy structure than the former state system of higher education;
- EOU is well positioned to assist in forging a new economy for eastern Oregon and helping communities cope with this changing environment;
- EOU has the ability to leverage existing partnerships to enhance the Eastern Promise program to build a stronger college-going culture in regional primary and secondary education students.

Threats –

- The improving economy results in more students seeking jobs/stopping out thus providing enrollment challenges in the short-run;
- The State funding situation in Oregon continues to be unstable and inadequate to provide a robust funding source forcing institutions to increasingly rely on tuition for primary revenues;

- Increasing competition among higher education providers offering multiple modes of instruction means the higher education marketplace is saturated with numerous choices for students; and
- The cost of the new governance model and shared services will continue to tax the institution's ability to fully fund its infrastructure.

Overview of Institutional Identity (“competitive niche”)

Arguably, EOU has lost its institutional identity due to leadership instability and a lack of rigorous systems for maintaining mission alignment and focus. Consequently, even with a history of providing high impact learning experiences built upon strong relationships between student and faculty/staff, the institution has lost some of its effectiveness and competitive niche in the past 10 years. Addressing this gap is a priority with a focus on reestablishing leadership stability and continuity along with transforming the institutional culture.

The institution is distinguished by many of the things it was initially founded to do; those being:

- A normal school that provides education degrees to the future teachers in the region and state. In this regard with a growing Latino population in the region, EOU is well positioned to educate teachers with dual language and bilingual certifications, an intense need in the State and throughout the nation today.
- A strong business program that educates the future business leaders for the region and state. This is one of EOU's highest demand programs, both at the undergraduate as well as the graduate level.
- Quality programs in the social sciences, liberal arts, fine arts and sciences to serve both the general education requirements of the campus, provide robust majors for students and to provide community service and research to assist the region in coping with many of the changes outlined above.

As mentioned above, rural areas throughout the nation are imperiled as they are heavily dependent on natural resource extraction and utilization, yet the environmental movement presents challenges to this way of making a living. Given this, EOU can play a very key role in assisting rural communities adapt to these changes and in forging a more diversified economy for the region. Within the context of resource-based economies, EOU will pursue initiatives targeting degree offerings consistent with the shifting trends in these industries. This will likely take the form of renewed and enhanced partnerships (OSU and OHSU) along with possible new degrees. One example of this is EOU's new minor in outdoor recreation and leadership.

EOU, as mentioned earlier, offers three primary modalities of instructional delivery, on-campus, on-line and on-site. While these diverse modalities allow the institution to serve a sparsely populated region and other place-bound populations it also allows the institution to supplement and diversify its revenues. However, managing a schedule to serve these differing populations and modalities presents a challenge for the administration and faculty at the university. To do this effectively, EOU must carefully balance its faculty and academic support resources between tenure/tenure-track, fixed term, adjunct and academic support appointments, with its multi-modal (on-campus, on-line and on-site) educational delivery systems. Finding the right balance will entail rebuilding the on-campus enrollment which has fallen to the point where the on-campus populations are less than ideal for student activities and a robust campus. Rebuilding these on-campus enrollments will also require reallocation of resources, creation of new incentives and other changes to obtain the most effective and efficient allocation of these resources.

Student Pathway to Success

EOU must reverse the trend in enrollment, retention, and time-to-degree completion rates to reinvigorate its contribution to the state goal of 40/40/20. EOU will build upon the strong launch of the Eastern

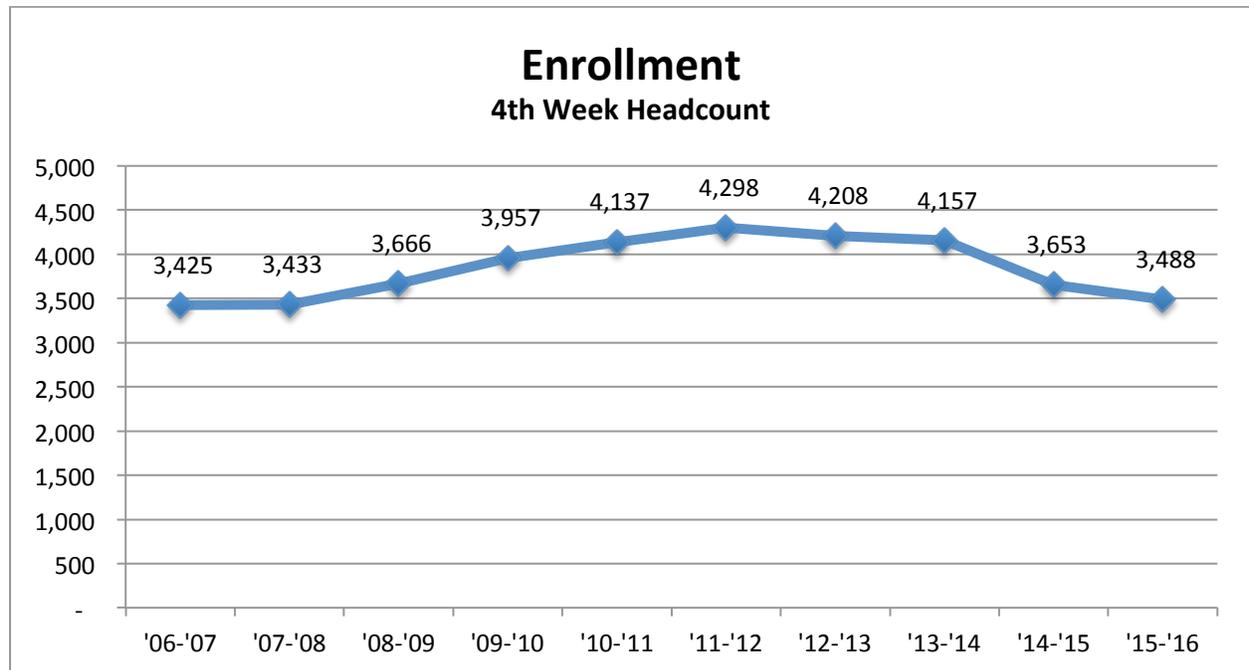
Promise in an effort to improve the college-going culture of eastern Oregon students. With higher-than-average high school graduation rates but lower-than-average college matriculation rates, this offers a growth opportunity for EOU enrollment while also advancing the region and the 40/40/20 objective of Oregon. EOU is also reinvesting in student services and fee remissions that are critical to student retention. Recently, EOU was awarded a TRiO grant to provide for added student service resources for high need students. Finally, removing obstacles to 4-year degree completion is the final step in creating a pathway for student success at EOU.

Eastern Promise and Other Precollege High School Initiatives

EOU will help prepare students for full admission to university academic programs through early college credit experiences, and pre-university developmental academic experiences. This program will permit greater access to regional high school students to achieve a college degree through increased access to proficiency-based college courses taught in the high school as well as on-line classes offered by EOU faculty. The program will also be part of the EOU mission to connect to our rural regions and will increase new student numbers, retention and graduation rates.

Enrollment

EOU's fall 4th week enrollment declined by 4.5% from the previous year. There remain structural factors that contributed to this decline that will be discussed in the next few paragraphs but this decline can also be attributed to the persistent instability experienced by the university. In addition to program reductions, administrative leadership turnover, and earlier misguided student service and support cutbacks, the effects of the implementation of the sustainability plan had an adverse impact on organizational morale that likely impacted recruitment and retention effectiveness. Effectively addressing these challenges have been and will continue to be a priority for new administrative leadership.



EOU is vital in helping the state achieve its 40-40-20 education goals. The first order of business for EOU has been reclaiming its backyard, meaning the rebuilding of relationships with high school counselors and recruiting students from the ten easternmost counties in Oregon. This has historically been EOU's primary service region that today comprises roughly 40% of its student enrollment base.

But, as noted above, the population demographics in this region are changing to include older populations and many more Latino students. Thus, part of this effort will be to reach out to these populations in new and more effective ways. This has required the addition of Spanish speaking recruiters and adding other support staff in financial aid and other key offices who speak Spanish. It will also require that website and other marketing information, as well as admissions and financial aid applications, be translated into Spanish for both the prospective students and their families.

Over the next five to ten years, EOU needs to rebuild its on campus enrollment to between 2,000 and 2,500 students. Having a larger on campus student body improves service delivery efficiencies, creates more energy for events, and activities and provides local business with more customers. On campus students report greater satisfaction with their academic experience and seem to have higher retention rates than do online students. Additionally, many degree programs may not be well suited to an on-line format for traditional students.

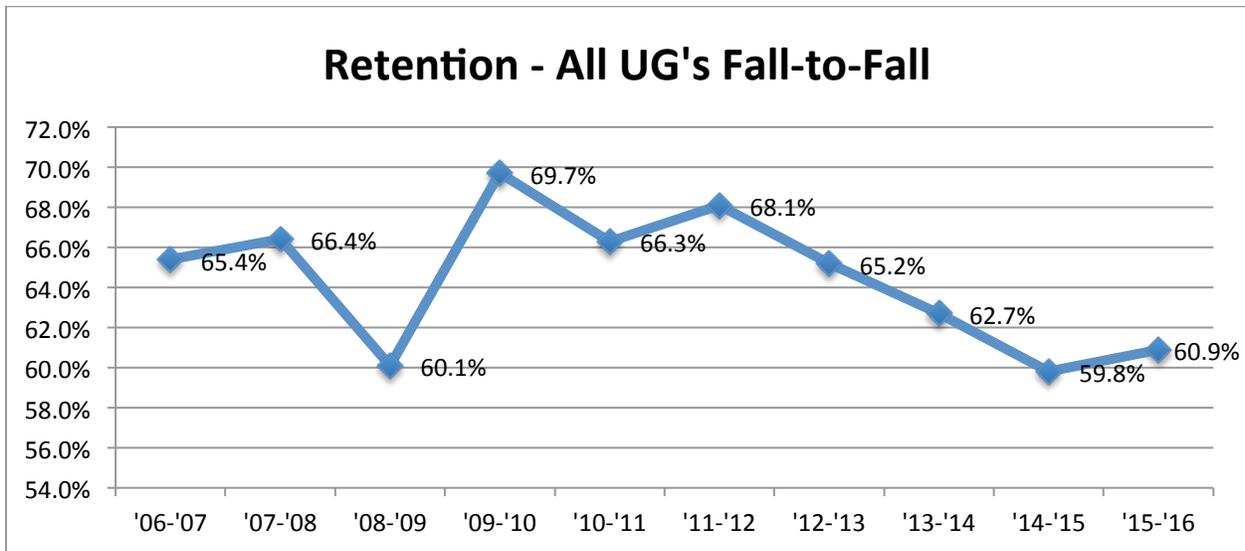
A few years ago, due largely to the rising costs of tuition in Oregon, community college transfer students replaced first time freshmen as the largest source of new students to Oregon public universities. This loss of lower division students has also meant more costs associated with instructional programs and recruiting, since most transfer students only spend 2-3 years at institutions. However, with the end of the lengthy recession, EOU has seen both its first-time freshmen and transfer student populations decrease. Most attribute the decline in transfer students to the improving job market, while the decline in first-time freshman may be the result of increased competition, program reductions, institution instability and mission drift, and uncertain state funding for regionally situated universities. A recent positive development is the modest increase in this year's first-time freshman class of approximately 4%.

Improving Retention Efforts

Student retention efforts must be engaged and enhanced. Under the purview of the Vice President for Student Services organizational restructuring has taken place that better aligns student support services and student life with best practices in student engagement. The Division of Student Services can best be defined as synergistic “bookends” beginning with Admissions/Pre-collegiate outreach at one end and a newly reestablished Career Center at the other. In between are found the range of services, activities and support such as but not limited to The Learning Center, Center for Student Involvement, Office of Residence Life, and the Multicultural Center which exist to meet the needs of a highly diverse traditional and non-traditional student population.

As a part of this restructuring is the intentional paradigm shift that focuses heavily on holistic student support services that mimic those often found in independent or the private college sector. This is intentional given the unique learning needs of our student population that comes from a range of learning traditions, styles and skill sets often which require “high touch” and “time intensive” strategies but when well deployed will positively impact student retention numbers.

Retention rates at EOU have trended downward of late indicative of a need to improve programs aimed at improved retention. The bottoming of the decline last year suggests initial actions taken in the past 12 months may have reversed the trend but benchmarking of other similar-type universities suggest a retention rate of 70%, an increase in 9 percentage points, is an attainable short-term target.



Improved Advising

The purpose of the Advising Center is to establish clear, consistent advising operational procedures and policies to ensure student success, to coordinate advising efforts and advisor professional development, to improve ties with faculty, to identify and eliminate obstacles to registration and graduation, working closely with the Registrar. EOU has a multifaceted advising system that includes faculty advisors, professional advisors assigned to colleges, professional advising as a central task of EOU Center Directors; there is informal advising for special admit students, First Year Experience, and in Writing 115 as well, where so many of the university's at-risk students begin their college careers. Simultaneously, off-campus advisors work mainly with non-traditional transfer and returning students. While the multifaceted system ensures all students advising needs are attended to, it tends to create inconsistencies. Improved, consistent advising over the past year is improving EOU's retention effort.

Advising Council uniformly invites faculty to present revised and new programming so they remain current with curricula. An advantage on campus advisors enjoy is proximity to the faculty in the disciplines, units, and colleges they serve. In those cases, coordination has been consistent and communication strong. In fact, there was some resistance at the outset of the establishment of the Advising Center model, under the direction of the vice provost, because on campus advisors thought they would lose that close connection as their reporting lines shifted out of the colleges to the vice provost. In addition, there was concern that the establishment of clear operational procedures and policies would limit informal exchanges between on campus advisors and faculty. However, the connections between on campus advisors and the disciplines they serve remains strong and direct, while processes are becoming more effective and consistent.

Improved Scheduling for Student Planning and Four-Year Degree Completion

Course offerings in the schedule have been reduced in response to budgetary constraints, with the result that fewer electives remain in the schedule, and multiple sections of service courses have been streamlined based on past enrollment data. As a result, course scheduling has become a very careful and complex task, requiring consultation with advisors, attentiveness to possible time conflicts for students working in multiple disciplines, as well as requests for adjustments in faculty schedules. For on campus offerings the result is a schedule that challenges students to stretch their coursework into earlier morning and later afternoon or evening times. All disciplines have revisited their curricula and four-year plans to see that they align and allow students who plan carefully to register for an average of fifteen credits per term, and persist to complete their degree requirements in four years. Some bottlenecks likely still exist,

and these are being identified and addressed as part of curricular review, course scheduling, and load assignment.

Given the changing curriculum, rising costs and the various modalities offered by EOU, and four-year completion it is increasingly important that students be better able to plan their academic coursework. To formulate and execute degree plans, students can view courses offered over the next two-years and advisors can view courses offered over the next four-years.

Financial Aid – Leveraging Our Limited Resources

Institutional Fee Remissions

Each year, EOU grants a number of institutional fee remissions based on predetermined criteria. The remissions structure and strategy is one that attempts to address our mix of students, and offers opportunities for merit-based remissions, need-based remission, as well as a combination of merit and need-based awards. Fee remissions are also used for athletic scholarships and have allowed our sports teams to be successful. EOU's total remission budget is typically 9-11% of tuition revenues, and is comprised of nearly forty different funding categories, or types of remissions.

Currently, fee remissions are budgeted at a minimum of 10% of gross tuition as remissions will be analyzed for effectiveness in generating targeted outcomes. With EOU's student demographics and if proven successful, 12-15% may be more appropriate though it may take a few years to build to this level. Strategic use of these funds can help the institution sculpt the student enrollment to institutional specifications, such as by providing financial incentives to attract high achieving, talented, diverse, on-campus enrollments, or to incent certain majors to fulfill workforce demands or to serve regional needs. For 2015-16 EOU is budgeting \$2.2M. In addition, in 2015-16 housing remissions will be used to assist students in funding their total costs of enrollment.

Improved Pricing for a Sustainable Future

As noted above, EOU has the lowest tuition of the seven public universities in Oregon. In addition, EOU has historically not taken advantage of differential tuition and other pricing programs used by other universities. Some believe it is time to raise tuition, as low prices many times are associated with lower quality products or services. As part of the sustainability plan, EOU raised tuition effective fall 2015 by 4.9%. The sustainability plan calls for a similar increase in fall 2016 but for financial forecasting purposes an increase of 3.5% has been used. While some pricing adjustments may be needed, EOU has the lowest income student body of any of the public universities in Oregon. Thus, while price increases are not out of the question, they need to be accompanied by increased student aid so students in the region can continue to afford to obtain a college degree.

Effective fall of 2015, "differential" tuition was added for business classes and majors. The intent was to set tuition in a similar fashion to other Oregon public universities that charge this differential. Also, increased tuition resulting from this change will help offset higher-than-average costs of business and economics faculty. Ten percent of the funds raised from charging this differential are allocated to fee remissions.

Another area where EOU can leverage its advantage and relationships with local schools is through professional development and credit overlay programs. Being the only masters' degree granting institution in eastern Oregon gives EOU an advantage to work with school districts on teacher training and certification. Credit overlay on instructional programs provided by independent parties to teachers is an attractive means of incenting teachers to partake of the training as it may qualify them for new certifications or promotional opportunities. These programs and the presenters' credentials must be reviewed and approved by campus faculty to ensure accreditation standards are being met. These

programs are also very profitable as the only cost to the institution is the validation of credentials, course content and the transcription of credit.

Refined Plans with Regional Centers and Community College Partners

EOU Centers across the state are undergoing a significant review and strategic plan development. EOU's on-line program has not been immune to the instability and organization changes of the broader institution. Important institutional knowledge has been lost and without robust management systems, EOU regional center strategy is suffering from an identity crisis. Former two-time interim president and dean of distance education, Dixie Lund, has been engaged to assist with an assessment of current center operation. Completion of the assessment phase is scheduled for December 15, 2015, with a strategy development team slated to launch in January 2016. Regional centers have the potential to significantly contribute to EOU's success in mission fulfillment, financial viability, and contribution to the goal of 40/40/20.

Enhanced Student Services: Career Center, Childcare, and Other Auxiliary Services

Eliminated three years ago during a previous budget reduction, the EOU Career Center has been reestablished to provide this vital student support and development. This is one of the fundamental and necessary student services at most universities. It should have been at EOU. In addition to providing placement services for students who are nearing graduation this office offers resume writing services and interviewing skills. This office also coordinates internships and other opportunities to assist students who wish to obtain work experience while attending EOU. Many times these programs can be paid internships which can also assist students in obtaining resources needed to finance their education and can help to improve retention rates.

EOU has undertaken numerous studies in the past to determine the feasibility of offering childcare services to its faculty, staff and students. There has always been feedback that there is significant demand for these services. Thanks to the re-purposing of some bond funding and the partnership with a local childcare provider, EOU is pursuing the establishment of a child development center on campus by fall term 2016. Benefits will include a valuable community partnership benefitting both EOU and local residents. Also, allowing affordable access to childcare for student parents will increase retention and improve completion rates. And, it will provide an experiential learning lab for early childhood development classes.

Food services desperately needed to improve at EOU. The food selection was over-priced and lacked quality and adequate healthy selections. A Food Service RFP was released in January 2015 and a new vendor was selected. Feedback from students and staff on food services this fall of 2015 has been extremely positive. Collegiate food service operations can play a key role in the development and enhancement of university community and play an important role in student satisfaction. This in turn can positively impact student retention.

Largely related to declining enrollments and increasing competition, the EOU Bookstore was losing money in recent years. Textbook prices have become so expensive that they are now challenging the financial ability of students. EOU has now entered into an outsourcing agreement for contracted management with Barnes and Noble.

Program Alignment

Aligning the Curriculum with the Needs of the Region and State

Eastern Oregon University is establishing a Center for Rural Development to refocus the University's efforts on helping communities in the 10 easternmost rural counties of Oregon meet the challenges of change they face in the twenty-first century. This center will renew and strengthen the institution's

commitment to our faculty's and students' engagement in civic affairs, service learning, and small business support and development, while providing a vehicle for integrating curriculum with community needs. EOU is actively investigating grant support and management structures for facilitating the effective establishment of a center.

Curricular Changes

With a local board comprised of people from the region, it will become more and more important for the curriculum to be aligned with the needs of the region. In addition, as the costs for higher education and borrowing to finance their education have risen, more and more students want an education that will provide them an opportunity to secure a better paying job. Given these factors, the institution is making investments in the following new or existing programs. These investments need to be self-supporting based on securing adequate enrollments to generate sufficient revenues to fund these investments.

The process for adding these programs will depend on whether they are new, and thus require the approval of the Faculty Senate, Provost's Council, EOU Board of Trustees and the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC); or whether they are simply additions to existing programs which the institution already has the requisite authority to offer. For the former, the University Budget and Planning committee reviews the projected costs of these new programs as contrasted against some estimate of their revenue generating potential. Many of the programs outlined below address critical employment needs in the region/state and propel EOU forward in addressing the 40-40-20 educational goals of the state.

- **Bachelors of Applied Science in Business Management** - Approved in 2015, this program is designed for students who have completed an Associate of Applied Science degree at a regionally accredited two-year institution such as a community college. Since the credits accumulated in these types of programs may not readily transfer to traditional baccalaureate programs, the B.A.S. degree in Business Management is designed to provide these students an opportunity to advance their professional skills and acquire the knowledge to enhance current employment and assume management and leadership roles. Many cases exist where people with associate degrees working in industry, first in production, later become management candidates and need this credential to advance with their employer.
- **Bachelors of Applied Science in Laboratory Technology** - Work is underway to identify the certificate options available in the field of lab technology. Several conversations on campus with the chemistry faculty have begun the process of curricular action, with next steps to identify concrete needs, cost and resources required, and to work collaboratively with regional partners to build the curricular structure necessary for an undergraduate degree program. Faculty in Chemistry will be meeting with community college partners to explore possibilities in developing a B.A.S in Laboratory Technology. At present they must determine which of the array of lab tech certificates aligns most closely with the curriculum offered at EOU, and what gaps will need to be filled to articulate or embed a lab tech certificate or B.A.S degree option in the current chemistry-biochemistry degree program.
- **BS/BA Emergency Medical Services Administration Program** – This program was approved in 2015 and is open for enrollment. The State of Oregon requires paramedics to have an associate's degree or higher in order to be eligible for licensure. With few exceptions, every paramedic in Oregon holds an associate's degree, usually with a title similar to "Emergency Medical Services," or "Emergency Medical Technology." The required associate's degree does not necessarily have to be in Emergency Medical Services but most are if the paramedic graduated from an Oregon program.
- **Career and Technical Education** - The CTE endorsement has been in effect since the beginning of 2015. There is currently no other public four-year institution providing a CTE Teacher Preparation program. There are currently 54 CTE I licensed teachers who need coursework to maintain their licenses. We expect a high percentage of retiring CTE teachers over the next decade and have no current pipeline to fill those jobs. In the Umatilla/Morrow region alone there are 4 teachers who must

take these courses to maintain licensure, but 10 additional new teachers who are likely to take at least some of them. This program meets a need in eastern Oregon and statewide. Offering the program as credit overlay makes it attractive for CTE teachers who already have a bachelor's degree, and the option to take the coursework at the graduate level is an incentive. Existing teachers who are endorsed in other content areas will be able to add the CTE endorsement through this online credit overlay opportunity.

- **Computer Science** - Though relatively small in terms of both faculty FTE and numbers of students, the Computer Science program nonetheless plays an outsized role in our regional communities and our mission-related activities. A developing partnership with BMCC's revitalized Associates degree in Computer Science provides a future pipeline of students from BMCC to EOU. The small scale at which the program operates is EOU's central challenge. ETIC-specific funding currently sustains 2 FTE for the program with institutional plans to sign on to a consortial agreement with WOU and SOU in 2015-16 to provide more robust curricular offerings for students wishing to study Computer Science at EOU.
- **Education –ESOL and Bilingual Education** - Oregon's recently-revised Educator Equity Act (ORS 342.433 to 342.449) declares that "the goal of the state is that the percentage of diverse educators employed by a school district or an education service district should reflect the percentage of diverse students in the public schools of this state or the percentage of diverse students in the district" (ORS 342.437 as amended by HB 3375, Section 3, 2015). Enhancing ESOL and Bilingual programs in our state are a critical link in achieving this goal. EOU intends to continue and to expand three highly effective programs during 2016 that will meet the goals of ORS 342.437: the Oregon Teacher Pathway, the Center for Culturally Responsive Practice, and the enhancement of the English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Bilingual curricular offerings. These program investments have the potential to address the need for diverse educators in eastern Oregon and to bring widespread recognition to EOU.
- **Masters in Counseling** - Refocusing the BS in Psychology towards its applied roots affords EOU an opportunity to build towards a Masters in Counseling degree by 2018 to better serve the mental health care needs of eastern Oregon. An impending retirement creates opportunity both for redirecting the undergraduate degree towards an applied degree and developing a Masters ramp for a Master's degree in Counseling, where nearly 75 jobs exist, according to the Greater Oregon Behavioral Health, Inc. (GOBHI). Career pathways in the counseling field range from clinical psychology in addiction, family and marriage, forensic, industrial and organizational, and other fields needed in eastern Oregon. Refocusing the Psychology program towards a field of practice reconnects the program to communities of need in the rural eastern Oregon health care landscape.
- **Natural Resources** - EOU faculty in the sciences, business-ag, forestry, and policy have great strength in natural resource related research, where they collaborate on a regular basis with their students to serve the resource needs of our region through local and regional externship projects. In partnership with OSU, EOU is positioned to begin curriculum development on an EOU transdisciplinary degree that is responsive to resource ecologies in the region. Succession planning in the workforce region of eastern Oregon warrants such a degree keyed to resource adaptation and policy planning opportunities with agencies and private sector employers across the eastern region of the state.
- **Nursing—Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)** – The Biology program is refocusing towards allied health fields, beginning with development of a CNA I program approved internally in 2015 to serve entry level needs of students interested in pursuing careers in the health field. Investment in the program is expected in 2016.
- **Outdoor Adventure Leadership** – EOU approved an outdoor leadership minor in 2015 by creating synergies with the existing Outdoor Program in Student Services. The academic program engages non-degree students in outdoor recreation activities for credit. The program also interacts well with community and economic development initiatives. A future degree in outdoor leadership, supported

by ten-year occupational data, presents interesting possibilities to pull the university and the community closer together and co-brand EOU and La Grande as a gateway to outdoor activities.

- **Post-Bac Certificate in Accounting** - To sit for the CPA exam in most states one must complete a required number of accounting courses. Many students, particularly those who majored in programs other than accounting, need to pick up added accounting courses to qualify for CPA licensure. Thus, this program will offer students an opportunity to earn a post-baccalaureate certificate in accounting and thus qualify the student to receive Federal Financial Aid and sit for the CPA examination. This is a good way for students with liberal arts degrees to earn a professional certification and qualify for many business careers.
- **Public Administration** – EOU’s suspended degree in Public Administration is a viable candidate for a reconfigured degree and career pathway for students interested in public administration, public service and policy development in the areas of forestry, climate adaptation, and water resource management. Retooling such a degree for the region is consistent with EOU’s larger strategic planning goals.
- **Spanish** - Given the growing Latino populations in the region, it is recommended that FTE be added to diversify the utility of the Spanish minor, with programming redirected to regional needs in business, health care, and education.

Long-Term Financial Viability

Improved Technology Support for More Efficient Operations - EOU Information Technology is working on a variety of fronts to improve technology support that will bolster campus efficiency. EOU has not invested in information technology at the same rate other universities have. This shows in many of the administrative and academic services provided. In some cases, the rudiments needed to support the campus are lagging or completely missing and need to be built or restored. Investment is occurring in information technology and given our small computer science academic program, we need to create synergies in creative ways. Despite these constraints, effective use has been made of students and staff in the department. Investment in information technology staff and systems has begun, resulting in two new programmers, implementation of a more robust and user-friendly learning management system (Canvas) and a major upgrade in campus network infrastructure, a significantly improved website interface, a mobile app (goEOU!). This begins to address critical gaps in IT support of university operations and EOU’s web presence.

Improved Budget Process, Accountability and Reporting - EOU is working toward a better, more transparent budget and cost monitoring process and needs to enhance the accountability for budgets and other strategic actions critical to the success of the institution. Robust reports are being developed to more effectively monitor financial performance on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis. A set of dashboards is being developed for monitoring key performance indicators with data refinement targeted to different activity levels (e.g. Board of Trustee dashboard much higher level metrics than at the division or department levels). A robust and institution specific forecasting model is being developed to provide decision support for investments as well as to help identify resource allocation priorities based upon impact to the financial condition of the institution. The first iteration of this model is expected to be complete by December 15, 2015.

Increased rigor is being added to the cost monitoring and budget process by the central budget office and president of the institution. These reports show total budget, total spend, total encumbrances, total remaining balance and easily allow budget managers and central administration to monitor burn rate. Monthly reporting/updating of year-end projected E&G fund balance is reported to division leaders, as well as to EOU’s Budget & Planning Committee. Within this forecast, current revenue and expense is adjusted based on actuals recognized to date, and all possible new expenses and revenues are tracked and monitored.

Ongoing and periodic cash flow analysis occurs in the budget office and is shared with President's Staff on a monthly or quarterly basis, depending on need. The budget office prepares a cash flow forecast at the beginning of each fiscal year, and then updates the forecast as necessary and reports that to President's Staff. Monthly revenue, expense and cash monitoring of all funds outside of E&G occurs in the budget office and is reported to university leadership on a quarterly basis. These forecasts/ benchmarks/ dashboards allow administration, the Budget & Planning Committee of the University Council and the Finance and Administration Committee of the EOU Board of Trustees to continually monitor ending fund balance, while also preparing, in a timely manner, for additional expense and/or revenue that the institution may recognize.

Faculty Workload for Quality Programs and Efficient Operations

Overload Limits

In an effort to improve quality, much of the overload instruction associated in the past with degree programs offered both on campus and online has been reduced to meet the limitations imposed by the institutional overload policy (one course per term per faculty member willing to teach overload). There remain some very isolated instances of overload in the schedule in excess of the policy and these are currently being engaged in consultation with faculty. Solutions are to reassign individual courses to other faculty without overload assignment, or to adjunct faculty, as well as careful monitoring and limitation of multiple sections of on campus and on-line service courses.

Accounting for Release Time and Service

Faculty have reported their non-instructional load hours for service, commitment to subject discipline, and outreach with a retroactive report beginning in spring 2014 followed by reporting for the 2014-15 academic year and forecasting for the 2015-16 academic year. With very few exceptions and with full documentation through the Instructional Release and Administrative Assignment Policy, faculty teach their full contractual load, with release from instruction documented in the case of the Nightingale Gallery Curator, the Writing Center Director, Chemical Hygiene Officer, and documented administrative assignments.

Capital Campaign, Legislative Relations and Other Grant Funding Opportunities

The advent of a local governing board made up of individuals who are focused on EOU's success provides several benefits, alongside budget, planning and management oversight. Trustees are advocates for the university in many ways: as community connectors for EOU, as legislative lobbyists in Salem, as public relations champions in the regional and statewide media, and as development supporters who may provide helpful contacts for new funding activities.

In 2009, the EOU Foundation, working with University Advancement, launched a long-term private giving campaign to raise \$11.5 million for scholarships and programs. Despite staffing reductions over the past four years, the UA staff and Foundation trustees have managed to raise over \$6 million and are over halfway to their goal and has dramatically increased the full assets of the Foundation to over \$12 million. The next phase for the campaign is to review fundraising goals and efforts to date and update the project lists and priorities. Connecting with trustees, deans, colleges, faculty, coaches and students and staff will be critical in determining who to work with and how to proceed. With these assets in place consistently, EOU has new opportunities for direct staff support in line with university and foundation funding priorities and new resources may be added to the University Advancement funding portfolio.

For the 2015 legislative session and beyond, EOU's presence in the state capital building and work with the legislature takes on a new level of importance. Increased institutional independence, and the dissolution of the Oregon University System, places a premium on political advocacy to keep higher

education and regional issues actively in front of Oregon policy-makers. Until last year, the Oregon University System and the State Board of Higher Education led and coordinated state legislative efforts on behalf of the seven public institutions.

What makes these changes durable?

We believe that the durability of these plans is predicated on four things:

1. Quality – faculty, staff and program quality are critical to the long-term durability of the institution. Without quality the institution’s brand will suffer and in the new competitive environment the institution will suffer. Thus, quality must be enhanced and maintained in all areas, programs and services.
2. Leadership and improved accountability – both from the institutional president and executive team and the new EOU Board of Trustees. Having a local board as opposed to being one of seven campuses in a system will enhance accountability as the Board will be more familiar with the campus, its operations and its leadership as well as the needs of the region.
3. Systems development and integration into administrative processes – creating decision support systems to guide and focus actions of the academy will ensure continuity and resource allocation optimization.
4. Renewed focus on the region – Eastern Oregon University is eastern Oregon’s university. As such, there exists a symbiotic relationship between the university and the region. One can assist the other and working together can be a catalyst for much needed changes in the economy, communities and people of the region.

In conclusion, today public higher education is changing and, in fact, the academy is experiencing more significant change today than at any time in recent history. EOU is adapting to the changing competitive environment, to the demographics in its region, as well as to changing governance and funding models. All of these items present challenges, yet each also offers significant opportunities. With a new president, an energetic governing board and a renewed focus on serving the region with enhanced quality and accountability the institution is poised to address these challenges and turn them into opportunities. This bodes well for eastern Oregon specifically and the entire state generally. Now is the time to be fully focused on the 40/40/20 prize and the well-being of our citizens and state – it is within our grasp and will only be realized with a vital and robust EOU.