



## ***ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES OF PROPOSED GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES FOR EASTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY***

During my opening address, and in subsequent meetings with multiple bodies, I have discussed that we have a timeframe in which to formulate a recommendation regarding the institutional governance structure for Eastern Oregon University. In response to several of the questions I have received, this document is to serve as a descriptor of POSSIBLE and POTENTIAL structures and accompanying opportunities and challenges of each structure. It is very important to note that this is not to be an “all encompassing” analysis of each area and that many variations can be made.

To set the stage, the following is background information on why our governance models will be changing:

- In the 2013 Oregon State Legislative Session, Senate Bill 270 addressed university governance for the three larger universities in the state by creating institutional governing boards at the University of Oregon, Oregon State University and Portland State University. In addition, House Bill 3120 formalized the role of the Higher Education Coordinating Council (HECC) and the reporting relationships of universities to the HECC. The HECC will be the organization that formally allocates funds from the state to institutions of higher education, enacts statewide academic and other programmatic policy decisions and will establish legislative priorities, including capital requests, among many other key decisions.
- On July 1, 2014, the institutional boards at the University of Oregon, Oregon State and Portland State, along with the HECC will formally begin their duties and roles. The HECC membership has been appointed, and confirmed, by the Senate and in fact have held organizational meetings. The institutional board members have been nominated by the Governor and are awaiting Senate confirmation, which should occur during the November Legislative Work Session.
- On July 1, 2014 and through June 30, 2015 a reorganized State Board of Education will maintain governance and oversight for the EOU, WOU, SOU and OIT. On July 1, 2015 EOU and the other universities will transition to the new governance model.
- A legislative committee, “The University Governance Committee” has responsibility for determining, unless a university is granted the authority to have an institutional board by the State Board of Higher Education, the governance model it will fall under.

- Currently, there are three options of governance (each model will be described more in details) being discussed at all four universities:
  - A Consortium Board—EOU, WOU, SOU and OIT will share one single governing “Board of Trustees”. This Board will report directly to the HECC and oversee each of the four universities.
  - An Institutional Board—EOU would have a single Board of Trustees that would oversee EOU only. This Board will report directly to the HECC.
  - A “Branch” or “Affiliate” Model—EOU would be overseen by one of the larger universities.

Oregon's education goals (known as the 40-40-20 initiative) will become more and more important in state leaders' decisions about higher education policy and funding. Therefore, any choice we want to make about our governing structure must pay attention to these broad goals:

1. Access to post-secondary education, particularly for underrepresented groups of all kinds;
2. Affordable higher education for Oregon residents, including tuition cost or student loan debt; and,
3. Student success, so that ultimately Oregon achieves a better educated citizenry.

In addition, our governance structure must reflect our own institutional strengths and challenges that include fiscal sustainability, connection to our region, focus on student centered learning and scholarship.

As stated in a previous document, according the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (a national organization that supports the work of university governing boards), a governing board has the following overarching roles and responsibilities:

- Setting and affirming the mission, vision and core themes of the university;
- Hire, fire and evaluate the president(s);
- Approve and oversee long-range planning;
- Review educational and service programs;
- Ensure adequate resources and allocation processes;
- Ensure good and proper management;
- Preserve institutional independence;
- Create opportunities for collaboration with other universities and post-secondary institutions and enhance a P-20 continuum;
- Relate to, and build a bridge, between and among the campus and community constituencies;
- Assess the performance of the board; and,
- Advocate for and protect the integrity of the university (or universities).

### ***Option 1—A Consortium Board***

This model, in many ways, is reflective of the current State Board of Higher Education model. The Board of Trustees (or Directors) would most likely include up to 15 individuals. Each member would be appointed by the Governor and approved by the Senate. It would be presumed, and advocated for by each of the presidents, that these nominations would come forward from each of the universities and be representative of the three regional and technical universities (This point has been discussed by the presidents and if this is a selected model we would advocate to have this put into the legislation. For example, at my previous institution, the residing State Senator of the institution had the ability to disapprove an appointment.) We would also advocate for a faculty member, a staff member and a student to serve on the Board and this will rotate, as is done now, by each university.

Potential advantages of this model may include:

1. With four institutions working together, we have greater leverage negotiating with state education leaders because our combined enrollment is nearly equal to one of the three larger universities.
2. The expense of supporting the Board will be less since it will be shared across four schools.
3. We will be more likely to maintain existing policies and procedures, including tenure and promotion policies for faculty.
4. As a group, we may better serve the educational needs of Oregon's rural and under-served populations.

Potential disadvantages of this model may include:

1. EOU would not have direct access to the HECC—i.e., EOU would need to “compete” with other three universities for funding projects before advancing goals to the HECC.
2. Decisions by this Board will be based on the collective good for all four universities and therefore may disadvantage one or more institutions on specific topics.
3. Board makeup, as described above, must be worked out, otherwise, an imbalance of representation may occur.

### ***Option 2—An EOU Institutional Board***

In this model, a single Board of Trustees would be created and their sole governance purview will be on Eastern Oregon University. If the model that is being implemented at other universities is followed (and presumably it would) the Board of Trustees would be up to 15 members which would include one faculty member, one staff member and one student (per SB 270, the Governor would determine if they are voting or not and

currently, that is Governor's preference). The Governor would nominate Trustees and be confirmed by the Senate. The Governor may or may not wish to follow any recommendations by the university.

Potential advantages of this model may include:

1. EOU, overtime, should be able to influence and recommend members to the Board of Trustees that will be most advantageous for our needs.
2. The EOU Board would report directly to the HECC and advocate for funding, program approval and other requests.
3. EOU would have a Board that is dedicated and focused solely on EOU's mission and success and serving our students and region.
4. EOU would maintain much stronger control over our mission, policies, academic program offerings, strategies, etc.
5. EOU's Board will have new/increased authority in operational aspects—from purchasing, issuance of bonds, etc.
6. Increased fundraising opportunities.

Potential disadvantages of this model may include:

1. We may not be able to compete equally with UofO, OSU and PSU for state funding as a "stand-alone" university.
2. While we would have direct access to the HECC, we would be one of 7 universities.
3. Board operations will need to be budgeted.

### ***Option 3—a "Branch" or Affiliated Model***

While the two previous models are fairly straightforward in their applications at other states and universities, there are three variations on this particular model:

Variation 1: EOU could operate somewhat independently and autonomous of the larger university. This would enable us to maintain our own mission and some policies—as long as our policy does not contradict that of the main campus. Program approval and new initiatives would need to be approved by the main campus and their board.

Variation 2: EOU, while remaining a university, would be integrated into the main campus. This would mean, for example, that all programmatic efforts—both curricular and co-curricular—policies and procedures would be integrated into and under the umbrella of the main university.

Variation 3: Eastern would become an extended campus of the main university and thus serve solely its mission and program offerings.

In most cases, this discussion has centered on EOU being affiliated with OSU—thus the reference to OSU as the main campus. In these discussions, OSU has made it clear

that regardless of the variations, current OSU funds will not be made available to any new branch or affiliated university.

Potential advantages of this model may include:

1. EOU would be associated with a “larger name” and this could enhance our brand especially outside of the immediate region.
2. There are some possibilities to strengthen some academic programs and ties with their extension offices. This includes having access, in some capacities and selected programs, to research grants and other external funds.
3. Under the first variation, EOU may have additional political leverage by this association with OSU.
4. EOU has a robust academic partnership with OSU currently and it has worked well for nearly 3 decades.

Potential disadvantages of this model may include:

1. Under all variations, EOU’s ability to completely control its mission, academic offerings and campus policies will lessened. Under the first variation, we have more control as compared to the other two, but less than what we have now. Furthermore, while the initial formulation maybe under the first variation, there would be no guarantees that it remained as such as these decisions would be made by the Board of Trustees of OSU.
2. EOU’s will not have a direct connection to the HECC and it only be through multiple layers (through the OSU president and then to the OSU board).
3. OSU will approve all new curriculum offerings and existing duplicated programs maybe consolidated or eliminated.
4. The inherit competition between OSU’s “e-campus” and our on-line programs will result in an integration of programming efforts.
5. Many operations would be centralized to the main campus and thus a loss of flexibility would occur for faculty, staff and students.
6. Shared governance roles would follow that of the main campus.
7. Existing policies regarding promotion and tenure and other personnel policies will need to be modified to fit under OSU policies and procedures.

I encourage you to reflect on these opportunities and to formulate your own opinions and ideas. I also encourage you to provide me your thoughts and insights so that I can incorporate them in my recommendation to the State Board of Higher Education. Please send me an email, stop me on campus, or utilize the feedback form located at [www.eou.edu/governance](http://www.eou.edu/governance).