Eastern Advantage Program Proposal

Background:
Eastern Oregon is a region that has median incomes below the state median. This region also has many children living in poverty and higher than average unemployment rates. However, being a rural area, people from this region are known for their character, which includes being hard-working and they understand the principals of an agreement whereby to get something you have to give something in return.

Given these factors and the fact that EOU needs a means to differentiate itself from other universities in the marketplace, EOU is proposing the following program, known as the “Eastern Advantage.” This program combines benefits to the students, their families and the institution and is premised on an implied agreement as described below.

Proposal for the Eastern Advantage Program:
The Eastern Advantage program is an optional program available to first-time freshmen in Oregon, Washington and Idaho who qualify for in-state rates. The program is premised on the following sets of responsibilities:

EOU’s Responsibilities:
1. A fixed tuition rate for four years.
   a. Students pay a slightly higher tuition at the inception of the program, but save money over their four years at EOU.
   b. Required fees (incidental, health and building) are not part of the tuition guarantee, thus will change as determined by EOU student government.
2. To guarantee that all students who opt into this program can get the coursework needed to complete their program of study in four years.
   a. Students must hold up their end of the bargain as outlined below.
   b. Students changing majors may not be able to remain in the program.
3. To assist students in this program apply for financial aid from federal, state, institutional and private sources each year.
   a. The EOU Financial Aid Office will offer individualized planning on financing their education for Advantage students.
4. To assist students who are nearing graduation find employment in their fields.
   a. Help seniors find employment opportunities or assist with graduate school applications.
   b. Assistance writing resumes, interviewing techniques, preparing portfolios, etc.

Student Responsibilities:
1. Students must maintain academic eligibility.
   a. Enroll for the requisite courses each term.
      i. Work with advisors and faculty to ensure schedule is completed correctly.
   b. Complete all coursework with acceptable grades.
2. EOU Advantage Alumni will be encouraged to:
   a. Donate 1% of their earnings (once they become employed) to an EOU scholarship fund to support future students, or
   b. Volunteer for the EOU Alumni association to assist in recruiting students or by working with admissions and the alumni offices.
The key benefits for this program are:

- Provides students with a specific advantage for attending EOU.
- Provides a financial and planning benefit for students and families.
- Differentiates EOU in the marketplace.
- Graduating in four years saves up to one year or more in tuition and living expenses.
- On-time graduation means faster access to the job market.
- Creates special cohorts that help student-to-student connections which can greatly assist with retention. This also facilitates streamlined curricular planning for the institution.
- On-time graduation means faster access to the job market.
- Drives student engagement with advisors, faculty and staff.
- Alumni start as freshmen and stay connected with EOU through graduation and beyond with an expectation for giving back to the institution.

To implement this program, EOU needs authorization from the State Board of Higher Education and the HECC to increase tuition beyond the 5% annual threshold. For the Fall 2015, EOU proposes to increase EOU Advantage Tuition rates by 10% over that charged currently. As noted above, this results in a savings for participants over the four year term of this program (see analysis below).

180 credits generally required to graduate:
- 15 credits per term * 3 terms = 45 credits per year * 4 years = 180 credits
- 12 credits per term * 3 terms = 36 credits per year * 5 years = 180 credits

### EOU Advantage Tuition Compared to Regular Tuition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Current 2014-15 Tuition - 15 credits per term/45 credits per year</th>
<th>EOU Advantage Tuition - 10% higher than 2014-15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>$6,030</td>
<td>$6,633</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
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<td>$6,633</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
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<td>$6,633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
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<td>$6,633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Four Year Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>$26,532</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Four-year Non-Advantage Tuition with 5% Annual Increases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Current 2014-15 Tuition - 15 credits per term/45 credits per year</th>
<th>EOU Advantage Tuition - 10% higher than 2014-15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
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<td>$7,330</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Four Year Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>$27,290</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Four-year Advantage Savings (15 credits per term) $758

Four-year Advantage Savings (15 credits per term) $5,065
Five-year Non-Advantage with 5% Annual Increases (12 credits per term)
2015-16
2016-17 $5,318
2017-18 $5,584
2018-19 $5,864
2019-20 $6,157
**Five Year Total** $27,988

Five-Year Advantage Savings (12-credits per term) $1,456

One-Extra year of Housing and Required Fees add: $9,000-$11,000 to above savings

This item was presented to and approved by the Oregon State Board of Higher Education at its January 9, 2015 meeting. Their approval was to seek HECC approval for a tuition increase greater than 5% as required by statute.

EOU is requesting HECC authorization to:
1. Increase tuition for students opting into the Eastern Advantage program for Fall 2015-16 by 10% as noted above.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff Recommends approval of tuition increases beyond the 5% threshold at Eastern Oregon University for the Eastern Advantage Program as reflected in the docket item above. If approved by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, Eastern Oregon University will seek subsequent and final approval from the Oregon State Board of Higher Education for the 2015-16 Academic Year.