



**Western Oregon University seeks the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission approval to offer an instructional program leading to a B.A./B.S. degree in Sustainability.**

1. Describe the purpose and relationship of the proposed program to the institution's mission and strategic plan.

The Sustainability major is in alignment with the mission of WOU and the Strategic Plan. The guiding principles of these documents include:

- i) Adapting to the changing world through continuous institutional improvement, evolving pedagogies and expertise, sustained scholarly and creative activities, and delivery of critical and innovative programs.
- ii) Cultivating student success through personalized attention, mentoring and degree attainment.
- iii) Sustainability and Stewardship.

Further, this major draws from existing faculty capacity and curricular offerings from multiple departments to support the major curriculum. It aligns with the institutionally developed assessment criteria of Integrative Learning and Inquire and Analysis. The major provides students with an interdisciplinary framework for critical investigation and action.

The curriculum described and discussed in the proposal addresses the social, economic, and environmental challenges facing our society. The special attention to economics and business highlights how the program views these challenges as real opportunities as well. By providing such tangible connections, the proposed Sustainability major will offer incentives for some students to learn more about these challenges and opportunities and, hence, will chart pathways to successfully complete their educational pursuits at the undergraduate level.

2. What evidence of need does the institution have for the program?

There is currently a significant demand for employees with a background in sustainability. Employment projections indicate that demand will continue to increase.

A recent review of job opportunities for graduates with a bachelor's degree in sustainability included several state and private universities, state and Federal government, non-profit organizations, and private industry. The following is short list of employers who recently announced job openings requiring a bachelor's degree in sustainability or a closely related field: Weyerhaeuser, Nike, Microsoft, Tillamook Creamery, and Oregon State University.

It is also important to note that B.A./B.S. graduates in Sustainability who earn a Master's degree in education are very employable in Oregon. This information is from conversations with high school principals, but we do not have a formal report or memo to validate the point.

3. Are there similar programs in the state? If so, how does the proposed program supplement, complement, or collaborate with those programs?

The program is targeted to students seeking to attend a smaller campus such as WOU with its emphasis on first generation and educationally-underserved students. The major will enable students interested in sustainability to be able to pursue such a program at WOU. Further, "traditional" majors have supported sustainability through encouraging coursework via elective credits and general education requirements, but it is essentially impossible to receive a thorough foundation in sustainability and graduate within 180 credits. A defined degree in Sustainability will give students this option.

There are other programs related to Environmental Science, Policy, and Sustainable Development at other Oregon public universities, but they are significantly different. Other programs focus on the quantitative science of sustainability or urban planning. The Sustainability major at WOU integrates environmental science with policy, ethics, and economics. It provides opportunity to students who are quantitatively gifted as well as those who are passionate about social issues. The program is holistic and provides students with opportunities to pursue their strengths and interests in close association with their advisor. Students choose WOU due to our small student to faculty ratio and because of the size of campus, location and emphasis on faculty-student interaction at the undergraduate level.

All appropriate University committees and the Statewide Provosts Council have approved the proposed program. The Western Oregon University Board of Trustees approved the program on October 25, 2017.

### ***Recommendation to the Commission***

The Statewide Provosts Council recommends that the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission authorize Western Oregon University to establish an instructional program leading to a B.A./B.S. degree in Sustainability, effective Fall 2018.

**Institution:** Western Oregon University  
**Program:** B.A./B.S. in Sustainability

**Action:** At the September 13, 2017 meeting, the Statewide Provosts Council approved a new program for Western Oregon University, B.A./B.S. in Sustainability, to move forward to the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission for its review and approval. The WOU Board of Trustees approved it at their October 25, 2017 meeting.

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**Eastern Oregon University**

Sarah Witte, provost

Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained



**Oregon Health & Science University**

Elena Andresen, interim provost

Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained



**Oregon State University**

Ed Feser, provost

Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained



**Oregon Tech**

Gary Kuleck, provost

Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained



**Portland State University**

Margaret Everett, interim provost

Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained



**Southern Oregon University**

Susan Walsh, provost

Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained



**University of Oregon**

Jayanth Banavar, provost

Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained



**Western Oregon University**

Steve Scheck, provost

Approved  
 Opposed  
 Abstained

