

2017 UNIVERSITY EVALUATION: Eastern Oregon University



Source: Department of State Lands

2017 UNIVERSITY EVALUATION: EASTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

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INTRODUCTION

This report is guided by Oregon Revised Statute 352.061, which requires that the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) submit to the Legislative Assembly an evaluation of public universities listed in ORS 352.002. Each public university must be evaluated in the manner required by this section once every two years. The purpose of this report is to evaluate the contributions of Eastern Oregon University (EOU) to State objectives for higher education as articulated in statute and in the HECC's Strategic Plan (https://www.oregon.gov/HigherEd/Documents/HECC/Reports-and-Presentations/HECC-StrategicPlan_2016.pdf). The Report relies on a combination of accreditation reports, self-assessments conducted by the university on criteria jointly developed with the HECC, and state and federal data. It signals areas of key interest to the HECC that support the objectives of the State of Oregon: student success as measured by degree completion; access and affordability as measured by equity across socioeconomic, racial/ethnic and regional (urban/rural) groups; academic quality and research; financial sustainability; and continued collaboration across universities in support of the State's mission for higher education. Additionally, the report describes how EOU's Board of Trustees has operated since its formation in July 2015. The form and content of subsequent annual evaluations will be guided by feedback from legislators, the public, and the universities about how to improve the usefulness of this process and product.

LEGISLATIVE MANDATE (SB 270)

Passed by the Oregon legislature in 2013, **Senate Bill 270** established individual governing boards at the University of Oregon (UO) and Portland State University. It also established a time frame for Oregon State University (OSU) to establish an individual governing board, which it subsequently did. Western Oregon University (WOU), Southern Oregon University (SOU), Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT) and Eastern Oregon University (EOU) have all established Boards of Trustees. In addition, the bill required the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to conduct an evaluation of the universities. During the 2017 Legislative Session, the legislature amended ORS 352.061 requiring the HECC to evaluate each public university once every two-years. The stipulations required by the bill are codified in Oregon Revised Statute (**ORS 352.061**).

ORS 352.061(2) stipulates that the HECC's evaluations of universities must include:

- a) A report on the university's achievement of outcomes, measures of progress, goals and targets as described in the university's achievement compact with the Oregon Education Investment Board;
- b) An assessment of the university's progress toward achieving the mission of all education beyond high school as described in **ORS 351.009** (the "40-40-20" goal); and,

ORS 352.061(2)(c) also requires that the HECC assess university governing boards against the findings set forth in **ORS 352.025**, including the provision that governing boards:

- Provide transparency, public accountability and support for the university.
- Are close to, and closely focused on, the individual university.

- Do not negatively impact public universities that do not have governing boards.
- Lead to greater access and affordability for Oregon residents and do not disadvantage Oregon students, relative to out-of-state students.
- Act in the best interests of both the university and the State of Oregon, as a whole.
- Promote the academic success of students in support of the mission of all education beyond high school, as described in ORS 351.009 (the “40-40-20” goal).

In addition, the statute notes four additional Legislative findings:

- Even with universities with governing boards, there are economy-of-scale benefits to having a coordinated university system.
- Even with universities with governing boards, services may continue to be shared among universities.
- Legal title to all real property, whether acquired before or after the creation of a governing board, through state funding, revenue bonds, or philanthropy, shall be taken and held in the name of the State of Oregon, acting by and through the governing board.
- The Legislative Assembly has a responsibility to monitor the success of governing boards at fulfilling their missions and compacts, and the principles stated in this section.

For the 2017 evaluations, the HECC will evaluate four institutions: Southern Oregon University, Oregon Institute of Technology, Western Oregon University, and Eastern Oregon University.

EVALUATION PROCESS

In an effort to approach the evaluation in a collaborative manner, the HECC formed a work group comprising university provosts, the Inter-Institutional Faculty Senate, Oregon Education Investment Board staff (now known as the Chief Education Office), HECC staff, HECC Commissioner Kirby Dyess, and other university faculty and staff. The workgroup began meeting in February 2015, with a focus on understanding the purpose and scope of the evaluation as defined in statutes, the structure of the evaluation, and the process for the evaluation. As a result of these conversations, an evaluation framework was developed as a tool to assist in the process.

During its development, the framework was shared with various groups such as university presidents, university faculty senates, and others, to seek feedback and input on the framework. The framework was revised based on input and suggestions and three categories were identified as organizers. These included institutional focus areas, governance structure focus areas, and academic quality. Each category contained key metrics and performance measures of academic quality that were aligned with the newly-adopted student success and completion model indicators. After final review and consideration of stakeholder feedback, the HECC adopted the framework on September 10, 2015. The framework template is populated with data from the HECC Research Office and then verified by university offices for institutional research and data. All data included in this report are from the HECC unless otherwise indicated.

A balanced evaluation of whether Oregon’s public universities are meeting the goals described for them by State law does not lend itself to a formulaic or mechanical approach. The Commission draws from

contextual elements such as the State’s fluctuating funding for higher education and changing student demographics to help explain data in the framework, and progress towards goals. The Commission also leverages other evaluations already undertaken by universities including self-studies, accreditation reports and the work of boards of trustees to provide a perspective that is uniquely focused on each institution’s contribution to serving the State’s higher education mission under the new governance model.

This report is focused on the legislative charge and the HECC’s primary areas of emphasis as indicated in its Strategic Plan. This report is not a comprehensive evaluation. It reflects the narrower scope of legislative issues of interest, incorporating findings from accreditation studies where there is overlap.

STATEWIDE CONTEXT

Funding History

Over the past several biennia, state funding for public universities has not kept pace with enrollment or inflation. While recent investments have moved the needle in a positive direction, additional funding is necessary to support institutions as they work to increase the graduation and completion rates for a growing diverse population.

Figure 1: Public University Funding



Source: HECC (2017)

Governance Changes

Senate Bill 270 (2013) outlines the benefits that are to be achieved from having public universities with governing boards that are transparent, closely aligned with the university's mission, and that "act in the best interest of both the university and state of Oregon as a whole." In addition, the Legislature found that there are benefits to having economies of scale and as such, universities were granted the ability to continue participation in shared service models. It is important to note that all public universities are required to participate in group health insurance, a select set of group retirement plans, and collective bargaining through July 1, 2019 per ORS 352.129.

Local Conditions and Mission

Eastern Oregon University has a proud history of serving citizens and rural communities throughout the state of Oregon and in the surrounding region. Founded in 1929, today EOU serves its communities through a special focus on rural, regional, and distance learning. Long an essential part of the fabric of northeast Oregon, EOU plays a unique role as the educational, cultural, and economic engine throughout eastern Oregon and other rural areas of the state, offering 22 bachelor's degrees, more than 27 different minors, four master's programs and multiple partnership opportunities. Programs are delivered on campus, online, and onsite in La Grande and at 16 regional centers throughout the state and include liberal arts and sciences, business and agribusiness, education, and partner programs in agriculture, nursing, and dental hygiene.

Eastern Oregon University's founding mission was to serve the community and the region, and the University's current mission remains centered on providing the citizens of the region with access to a quality education, delivering affordable programs, and engaging with the rural and frontier regions of the state. EOU's rural geographic location, traditions, and work ethic play an important role in the school's history as it explores the new dimensions of work and society in a changing local and global environment.

As one of Oregon seven public universities, EOU is unique. In its rural setting relatively remote from the population centers of the western side of the state, the University serves rural communities inside a geographic footprint roughly the size of the state of Pennsylvania. As a result, EOU serves a varied student population both on campus and at a distance, both onsite through its 16 regional centers and online. Longstanding agreements with partner public universities in Oregon ensure that students in the eastern region of the state have access to degrees in nursing, agriculture, criminal justice, and dental hygiene. As a nationally recognized leader in providing online courses, EOU works with students across Oregon, giving them the flexibility they need to reach their goals. Fourteen different degree programs and 14 minors can be completed entirely online, bringing affordable and accessible education to students living throughout Oregon and beyond. More than 50 percent of current EOU students are taking advantage of a mix of flexible course accessibility.

Many of EOU's students are first generation college students from small schools in remote regions of the state and beyond. A significant number of students are non-traditional students who previously stopped-out of college. An equally significant number of students transfer from community colleges to complete four-year degrees at EOU. For all of these students, the university experience is both a challenge and an opportunity. A very high proportion of EOU students require financial aid—more than at any other

university in the Oregon Public University System. EOU's annual \$45 million budget promotes the regional economy. An essential part of the fabric of northeast Oregon, EOU plays a unique role as an economic engine.

MISSION

The most recent review of EOU's Mission and Core Themes began with the President's Staff Retreat on September 5, 2012, which initiated the annual strategic planning, assessment, and budgeting cycle for 2012-13. The mission was approved by the Oregon State Board of Higher Education in 2012 and by the EOU Boards of Trustees in 2016. The mission is supplemented by three values: Access; Affordability and Engagement.

EOU guides student inquiry through integrated, high-quality liberal arts and professional programs that lead to responsible and reflective action in a diverse and interconnected world. As an educational, cultural and scholarly center, EOU connects the rural regions of Oregon to a wider world. Our beautiful setting and small size enhance the personal attention our students receive, while partnerships with colleges, universities, agencies and communities add to the educational possibilities of our region and state.

In August 2016, the President launched university-wide strategic planning at the annual Board Retreat. The University Council conducted a collaborative process and presented the plan at the EOU Board of Trustees in April 2017. The Board approved it in May 2017.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

The following evaluation is informed by the 2012 Eastern Oregon University Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan. As an educational, cultural and scholarly center, EOU connects the rural regions of Oregon to a wider world. The University is a crucial component of the state, county and city economy. As one of the three largest employers in Union County, its annual \$45 million budget equates to millions of dollars in direct spending in surrounding communities. EOU is the only four-year educational institution in eastern Oregon. With the next closest Oregon public universities located more than four hours away in Portland and Bend, EOU is a critical facility for the population in this rural part of the state. As an economic and cultural driver for the larger community, in the event of a natural disaster, EOU would be a significant resource for the local community. For additional information, please view:

https://www.eou.edu/facplan/files/2013/01/EOU-NHMP-Sec2_Campus-Profile-011113.pdf

ACCREDITATION

This report is formative and focuses on the areas of interest identified by the Legislature and in alignment with the HECC's Strategic Plan. It is not intended to be a comprehensive evaluation of Eastern Oregon University. A more comprehensive assessment and review of academic and institutional quality is available from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), which accredits EOU and other universities in Oregon. Accreditation of an institution of higher education by the NWCCU

indicates that it meets or exceeds criteria for the assessment of institutional quality evaluated through a peer review process. An accredited college or university is one that has been found to have the necessary resources available to achieve its stated purposes through appropriate educational programs, and to be substantially doing so, and which provides reasonable evidence that it will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Institutional integrity also is addressed through accreditation. This section draws on the relevant parts of NWCCU reports, supplemented with information on economic and community impact (identified from EOU sources). Other components of NWCCU reports are incorporated elsewhere, as appropriate.

In February 2014 EOU was affirmed for accreditation with the NWCCU following its Year Three Evaluation. Despite recent financial challenges, the report concluded that (a) the university had been able to continue investing in needed equipment not only with the area of information technology but campus-wide. Significant investments have been made in the central plant to update, expand capacity and gain efficiencies; and (b) EOU maintains a detailed campus master plan that is updated regularly and serves as a guiding document when making decisions regarding capital improvements to ensure that investments are in alignment with the university mission and goals.

(<https://www.eou.edu/accredit/files/2013/11/NWCCU.2013-EOUY3EvalF13.pdf>) page 21

The following information is drawn from the Year Three NWCCU Report

(<https://www.eou.edu/accredit/files/2013/11/NWCCU.2013-EOUY3EvalF13.pdf>)

The NWCCU commended EOU in several key areas. Among them the evaluation team commended EOU for its:

Deep sense of commitment to serving the rural regions of the state, including Eastern Oregon; faculty-driven academic program assessment approach, which has transformed a process-based approach to one which facilitates reflection and program improvement based on the expertise of its faculty members;

Robust, open and inclusive tuition setting process that utilizes a broad spectrum of relevant data elements and that is truly participatory with active involvement throughout the process from a cross-section of campus including students, staff and faculty via the Tuition Advisory and Budget and Planning Committees as well as through university-wide open forums. The positive impact of this process is evident in the level of student support for proposed increases and complimentary feedback at the Oregon University System level;

Aggressive, visionary, and proactive leadership to streamline operations, reduce costs, and improve services, aided by insights gained from the self-evaluation process. Leadership actions have led to reorganization of regional operations, student success and engagement, and information technology, as well as development of a long-term sustainability plan.

In affirming accreditation, the NWCCU requested EOU address four recommendations:

1. Eastern Oregon University continue its work on articulating mission fulfillment to more clearly describe the process and criteria which determine an acceptable level of mission fulfillment in cases where the institution has not yet met its ambitious targets.

2. EOU take the necessary steps to ensure that all catalog listings are accurate and that certificate programs meet NWCCU requirements for related instruction.
3. Whereas the evaluation team acknowledges that EOU has made significant progress toward uniform application of academic portfolio assessment, it recommends that the university continue to ensure uniform application of assessment across all academic programs
4. Although the majority of EOU's academic programs demonstrate a coherent design with appropriate breadth, depth, sequencing of courses, and synthesis of learning, the Liberal Studies degree program represents an exception. While recognized as meeting the needs of a large number of students and resulting in the second highest number of degrees awarded annually, the Liberal Studies degree program is vulnerable to weak academic oversight, a potential paucity of senior level credits, and an inadequate number of faculty to oversee capstone experiences. The Commission recommends that the university refocus assessment efforts on the Liberal Arts program.

The NWCCU acknowledged that for all four recommendations EOU was substantially in compliance but in need of improvement. NWCCU further requested that EOU address Recommendation 4 in an Ad Hoc report due in Fall 2014. EOU submitted the Ad Hoc Report in August 2014 and the NWCCU approved it. EOU is on track with the accreditation cycle and will be submitting the Year Seven Self Evaluation (*Mission Fulfillment, Adaptation and Sustainability*) in Fall 2018.

Some individual programs at EOU area accredited by the following professional organizations:

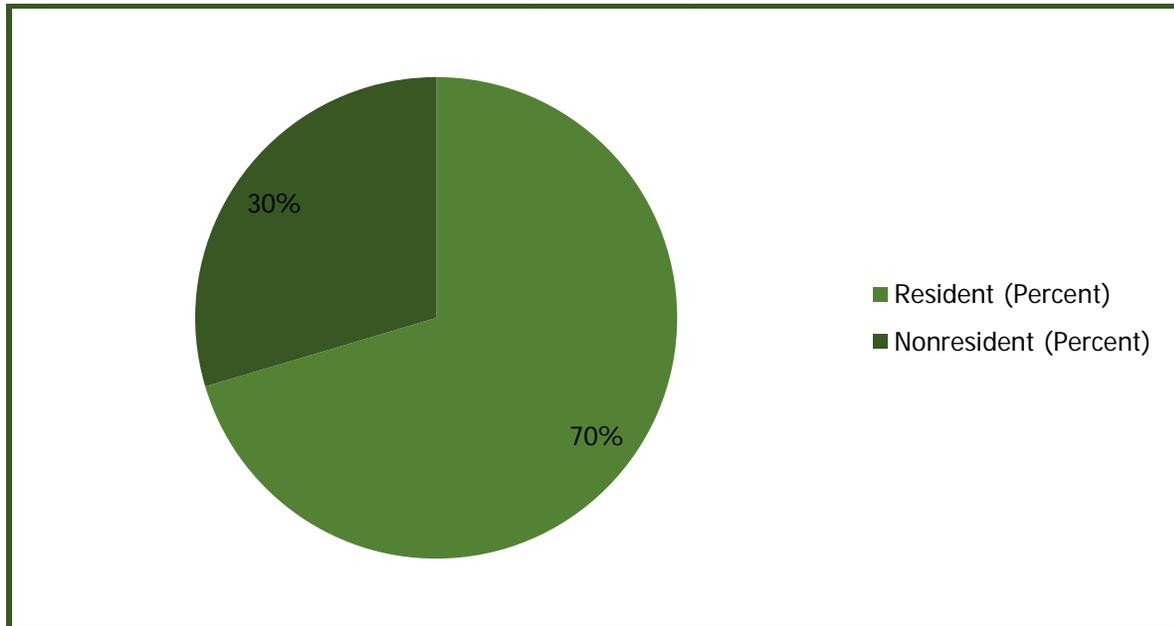
- Master of Business Administration
- Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration
- Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
- Curriculum for Undergraduate Elementary School Teacher Education (CUESTE)
- Master of Arts in Teaching

STUDENT ACCESS AND SUCCESS

Nationally, enrollment in higher education has generally declined since its peak during the Great Recession. Oregon sees a similar pattern with some variation across institutions, particularly in the enrollment and completion rates for low income, minority, and rural students. This section of the report is on tracking trends in enrollment and completion outcomes.

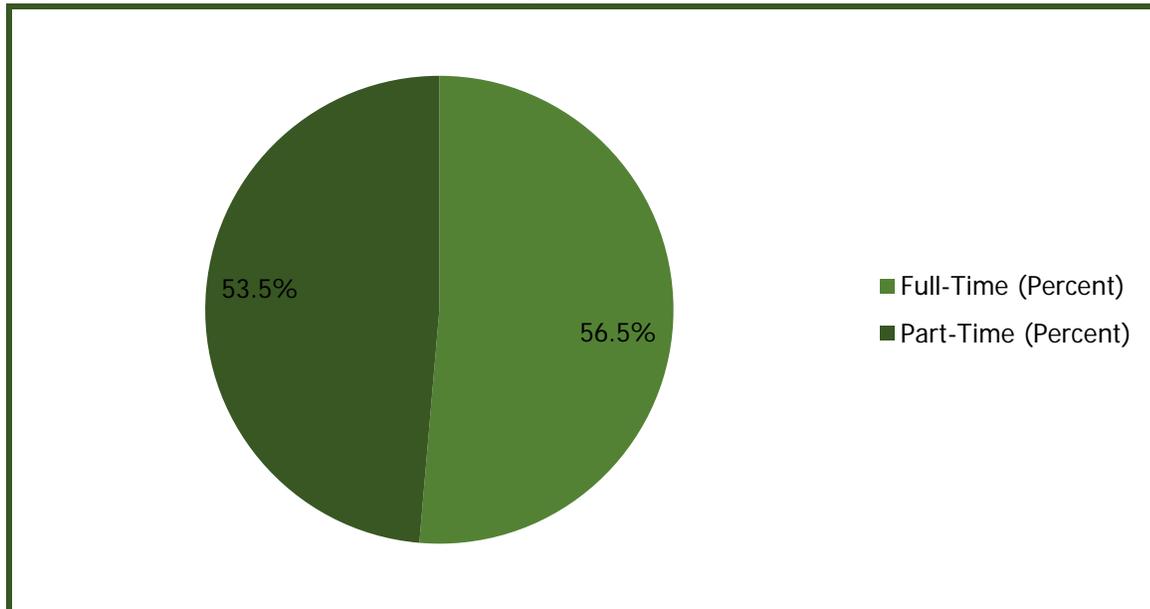
As described by Figures 2 and 3, the majority of EOU students (70%) are resident, and over half (56.5%) attend full-time.

Figure 2: EOU Student Enrollment by Residency, Fall 2016



Source: HECC (2017)

Figure 3: EOU Student Enrollment by Full-Time/Part-Time Status, Fall 2016



Source: HECC (2017)

In fall 2017, EOU enrolled 3,016 students. While this represented a 5.0% decrease from Fall 2016, EOU enrolled 5.4 % less newly admitted undergraduates (766 in 2017 compared to 807 in 2016).

While single year enrollment changes do not constitute a trend on their own, they are generally consistent with longer term enrollment patterns at EOU. EOU's Fall 2017 enrollment is 17.7% below enrollment a decade ago.

In spite of overall enrollment declines, the total number of underrepresented students at EOU has been increasing over the last four years. In Fall 2017, 19.7% of students were from underrepresented minority populations. In addition, 36.9% of the total student population were Pell recipients.

Table 1: EOU Headcount Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, Fall 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017

Race/ Ethnicity	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Change Fall 2016 to Fall 2017
Non-Resident Alien	50	48	45	41	(4)
American Indian/ Alaska Native	83	70	68	54	(14)
Asian	77	65	55	48	(7)
Black Non-Hispanic	99	78	78	64	(14)-
Hispanic	229	168	213	307	94
Pacific Islander	36	37	41	58	17
Two or more races, Underrepresented Minorities	35	64	107	112	5
Two or more races, not Underrepresented Minorities	12	18	23	18	(5)
White Non-Hispanic	2,777	2,596	2,393	2,216	(177)
Unknown	255	48	153	98	(55)

Source: HECC (2017)

Different student populations do not graduate at similar rates. Underrepresented students graduate at rates that are 3-4 percentage points lower than the overall population. EOU nonetheless is making year over year increases in the total number of degrees awarded to students who identify as two or more races of underrepresented minorities, but as a whole, underrepresented minorities completion has decreased year-over-year. The graduation rate for EOU’s First Time Freshmen who entered in fall 2010 is as follows:

Table 2: Four-Year and Six-Year Graduation Rate, First Time, Full Time Freshmen Entering EOU in Fall 2010

	Four-Year Graduation Rate	Six-Year Graduation Rate
All Students	19.4 %	40.2 %
Underrepresented Minorities	17.2 %	41.4 %
Pell Grant Recipients	15.9 %	39.1 %

Source: HECC (2017)

*Fall 2010 cohort is the latest year of available data. Includes students who completed at any Oregon public university.

EOU’s number of resident completions by award type decreased in every category in the 2016-17 academic year compared to the 2015-16 academic year, except at the certificate level where figures did not change. EOU awarded 2 fewer associate’s degrees, 34 fewer bachelor’s degrees, and 1 less master’s

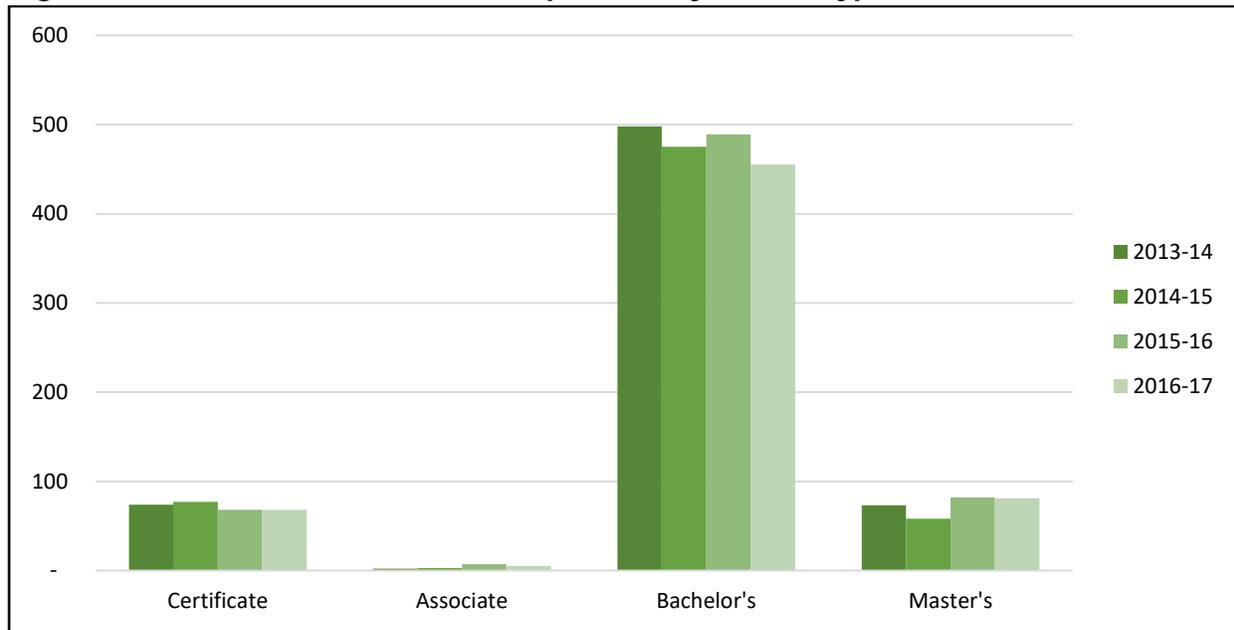
degree. The greatest number of completions were awarded at the bachelor's degree level. EOU does not offer doctoral or professional degrees.

Table 3: EOU Resident Student Completions by Award Type

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Certificate	74	77	68	68
Associate's	2	3	7	5
Bachelor's	498	475	489	455
Master's	73	58	82	81
Doctoral	-	-	-	
Professional	-	-	-	

Source: HECC (2017)

Figure 4: EOU Resident Student Completions by Award Type



Source: HECC (2017)

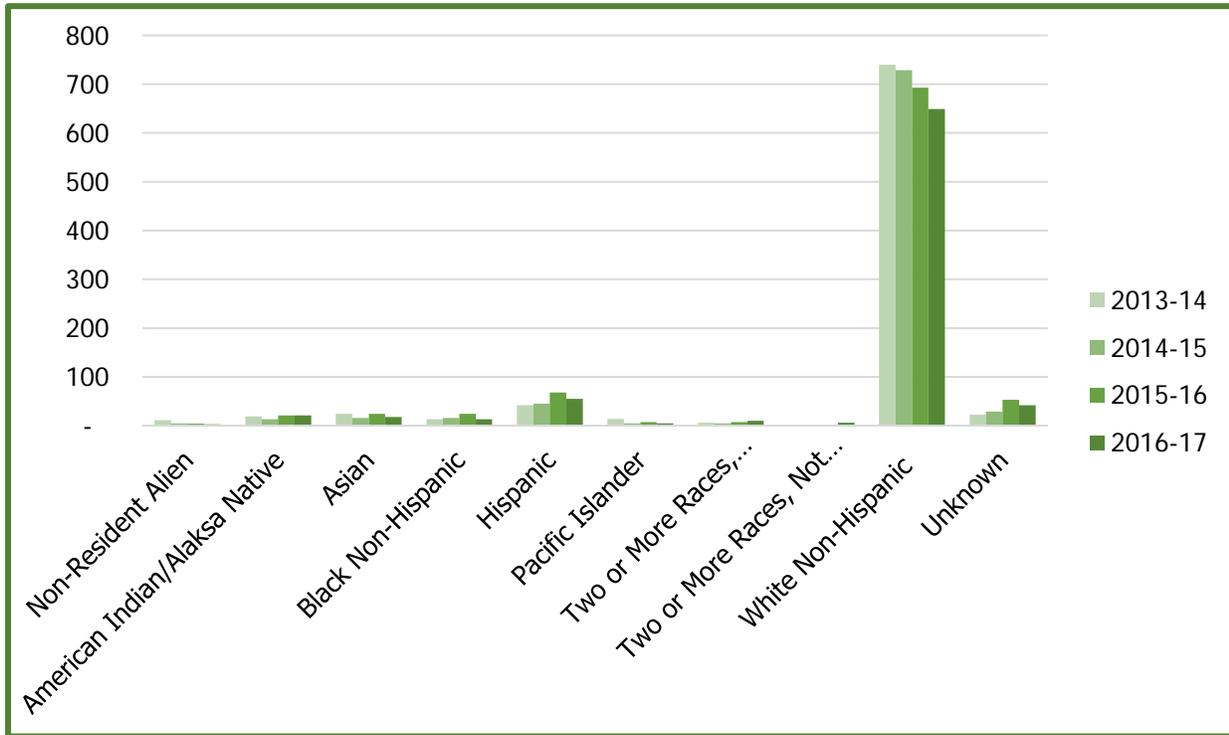
EOU saw a 7.7% decrease in the overall number of students graduating from 2014 to 2017, but a different pattern over that same period for underrepresented students - a 10.6% increase in graduates. American Indian, students who identify as two or more underrepresented races, and Hispanic students accounted for the bulk of that performance.

Table 4: EOU Completions by Race/Ethnicity

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Non-resident alien	11	5	4	3
American Indian/ Alaska Native	19	13	21	21
Asian	24	16	24	18
Black Non-Hispanic	13	16	24	13
Hispanic	42	45	68	55
Pacific Islander	14	5	7	5
Two or more races, Underrepresented Minorities	6	5	7	10
Two or more races, not Underrepresented Minorities	-	-	1	6
White Non-Hispanic	740	729	693	649
Unknown	22	29	53	42

Source: HECC (2017)

Figure 5: EOU Completions by Race/Ethnicity



Source: HECC (2017)

AFFORDABILITY

Among the factors that the HECC is required under ORS 352.065 and 352.025(1d) to evaluate whether universities remain affordable for Oregon residents. The following constitutes our evaluation of Eastern Oregon University’s affordability.

Many students and prospective students at Eastern Oregon University, like their counterparts at other universities around the state and nationwide, continue to face significant challenges related to access and affordability. Public defunding of higher education is a national trend that is shifting a majority of the burden of paying for a college education to students and their families. That shift has been particularly acute in Oregon in recent years. Partly as a result of state funding cuts, resident undergraduate tuition and fees at Eastern Oregon University increased 37.7% in the last 10 years, including increases of 3.2% and 4.5% in 2016-17 and 2017-18 respectively.¹ Specifically, in 2017-18 tuition increased 5.5% and fees did

¹ Source: https://financialaid.EOUregon.edu/cost_of_attendance as well as historical OUS tuition data. Defined to include full-time resident base tuition and all mandatory fees (including incidental fees).

not increase for an overall tuition and fees increase of 4.5%^{2,3} Resident graduate students have faced similar increases.

Students, however, do have access to financial aid at Eastern Oregon University. In addition to need-based federal and state financial aid programs (Pell and the Oregon Opportunity Grant), Eastern Oregon University students benefit from EOU's significant commitment of institutional resources to scholarships, remissions, and tuition discounts. In the 2016-17 academic year, EOU recorded \$1,356,188 in resident tuition remissions (7.8% of resident gross tuition charges). The year prior, 2015-16, EOU recorded \$1,193,772 in resident tuition remissions (6.9% of resident gross tuition charges). In 2016, the most recent year for which data is available, EOU's average financial aid award was \$10,157, which, on average, meets 63% of demonstrated financial need.⁴

Tuition, however, tells only a part of the affordability story. The total cost of attendance for students includes significant expenses associated with housing, food, transportation, and textbooks. Eastern Oregon University estimates the average student budget for academic supplies and living expenses annually at \$14,484 for the 2017-18 academic year,⁵ an amount that exceeds resident tuition and fees.

While it is natural to view affordability primarily in terms of the student's direct cost associated with their enrollment, a larger perspective may take into account whether the student completes his or her degree, does so in a reasonable period of time, and has earning potential commensurate with the debts that might have been incurred. On average, the earnings for federal loan recipients 10 years after beginning school at EOU are \$38,900.⁶ Of Eastern Oregon University undergraduate degree recipients who leave the institution with federal loan debt, average federally-backed debt load is \$22,840. According to the College Scorecard, in the 2015-16 academic year, 53% of EOU students had federally supported loans and 47% received Pell grants.

ACADEMIC QUALITY AND RESEARCH

The introduction of a new state budget model that provides incentives for growth in enrollment and graduation outcomes has triggered concerns across various sectors that the pursuit of economic sustainability may adversely affect academic quality and research. A concern is that institutions might be tempted to lower standards in order to recruit and graduate more students. In light of this concern, there is interest in sustaining rigorous academic quality across all institutions. In partnership with all public universities, the HECC relies on regular external accreditation reviews, and collaborative partnerships with organizations such as the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) to pursue promising initiatives to develop nationally-normed outcomes to assess and track student learning and post-graduation success.

² This increase includes all tuition and mandatory fees (including incidental and other fees that are not subject to HECC review). EOU's resident undergraduate tuition and fees increase did not exceed 5% and was therefore not reviewed by the HECC.

³ A fulltime resident undergraduate student (taking 45 credits per year or 15 credits for each of three terms) will pay \$6,928 in tuition and \$1,434 in fees during the 2017-18 academic year.

⁴ Source: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-university-search/eastern-oregon-university>

⁵ Source: https://financialaid.EOUregon.edu/cost_of_attendance

⁶ Source for earnings, Pell grant information and debt load is the College Scorecard: <https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/>

The NWCCU commended EOU for its aggressive, visionary, and proactive leadership to streamline operations, reduce costs, and improve services, aided by insights gained from the self-evaluation process. The NWCCU concluded that leadership actions have led to reorganization of regional operations, student success and engagement, and information technology, as well as development of a long-term sustainability plan.

EOU has clearly established process for curricular review and approval. This process is vested with the Educational Curriculum and Policy Committee (EPCC) as a standing committee of EOU's constitution. The Committee website describes the constitution's EPCC duties and responsibilities as well as how the process works. It may be reviewed here: <https://www.eou.edu/epcc/>

EOU also has a clearly identified process in its Personnel Process and Procedure Handbook (2013) for the regular evaluation of faculty. These guidelines and processes can be reviewed at: <https://www.eou.edu/faculty/files/2014/07/personnel-process-and-procedure-handbook-final-June-2013.pdf>

EOU Faculty Professional Development

Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (CTLA): EOU sponsors the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, managed by the Director of Assessment and Faculty Development, assisted by the Teaching and Learning Technology Coordinator. The center has a Faculty Advisory Board, comprised of representatives from across the curriculum—Education, Integrative Studies, Student Success, Business, Writing Across the Curriculum, Instructional Technology, and the Library. CTLA's purpose is to assess for continuous improvement Academic Programs and the General Education Core (GEC) curriculum by working with teaching faculty to develop sound, nationally-normed assessment practices, employing an outcomes-based approach focused on what students learn and can do as they move through their curricula. The CTLA Faculty Advisory Board also surveys faculty to establish professional development workshops based on perceived teaching and learning needs, such as pedagogy, assignment design, instructional technologies, writing across the curriculum, etc. The CTLA Faculty Advisory Board also surveys faculty on evaluating facilities as they relate to efficacious teaching, such as the effectiveness of student computer lab space and needed classroom upgrades for furniture, technology and AV instruments. The CTLA Faculty Advisory Board also oversees the Summer Institute for Instructional Technology (SIIT), focused on the use of instructional technology to support transformational learning both on campus and online.

Research Support:

Sabbatical program for eligible faculty

Sabbatical leaves are granted for purposes of research, writing, creative activities, advanced study, travel undertaken for observation and study of conditions in our own or in other countries affecting the applicant's field or related scholarly or professional activities. The proposals are reviewed by a faculty committee.

Faculty Scholar's Program

The program provides faculty with resources for Faculty Scholar Summer Stipends to support Research. The funds are intended to help support 1) recruitment and retention initiatives, 2) proposals from junior faculty and Library Faculty who may need support to develop a research agenda, and 3) exceptionally strong proposals from faculty who have demonstrated excellence in scholarship. The proposals are reviewed by a faculty committee.

Faculty Travel Fund

This fund is managed by a faculty committee, providing each faculty member \$2000 per year. The purpose of the Faculty Travel Fund is to provide faculty with an opportunity to apply for support for necessary travel to conduct scholarly work, to attain increased knowledge or skills to improve teaching, or to acquire necessary materials, skills, and/or information necessary for curriculum development or University program development.

Eastern Oregon University Colloquium

This Colloquium has continuously operated as a venue to share academic research and pedagogy for over thirty years. It began its existence as the Division of Science Colloquia within the School of Arts and Sciences, and it now includes the entire university. This program is entirely run by faculty.

Advisor Training:

After the first year, students are assigned faculty advisors in their major programs, moving from EOU's on-campus cadre of professional advisors. The focus at EOU is on proactive advising in order to support retention and degree completion. Faculty require training in that nontraditional approach since it requires a paradigmatic shift in how underserved students are viewed and the best way to help them. The Advising Center provides workshops on proactive advising, supported by CTLA. The Advising Center also provides individualized training by professional advisors for faculty new to advising. (Tenure Track Faculty are not required to advise students until their second year.)

Troubleshooting Resources, NACADA (National Academic Advising Association) Resources Review, Advising Manual Review, review and appointments with Student Success, TriO, the Military/Veterans Coordinator, Financial Aid, the Learning Center, Disability Services, and the viewing of the Advising Center's PTSD Training video.

Research Activity:

For the period 2016-2018, EOU has secured approximately \$2.1 million in aggregate research funding, with research expenditures of \$399,421 as of November 2016.

COLLABORATION

There are a number of joint administrative, academic and governance efforts to maintain collaboration across institutions. Faculty at all public universities are represented at the Inter-Institutional Faculty Senate (IFS) which is made up of elected senate representatives from each institution. The IFS serves as a voice for all faculties of these institutions in matters of system wide university concern. In addition EOU engages in a number of collaborative initiatives with other universities and partners, as indicated below (*P* indicates Participation, *N/P* indicates Non-Participation):

Table 5: Eastern Oregon University Collaborative Initiatives Participation

Other University Collaborations	University Response
Public University Councils:	
Presidents Council	P
Provosts Council	P
Vice Presidents for Finance and Administration (VPFAs)	P
General Counsels (GCs)	P
Public Information Officers (PIOs)	P
Legislative Advisory Council (LAC)	P
Cooperative Contracting(<i>note: taking part in State contracts</i>)	N/P
Capital Construction Services	N/P
OWAN	N/P
NERO Network	N/P
RAIN	N/P
Orbis Cascade Alliance	N/P
ONAMI	N/P
Other	

INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION

On the La Grande campus, EOU maintains longstanding partnerships with OHSU’s BS in Nursing and OSU’s BS in Agriculture Sciences, Crop and Soil Science, Natural Resources, and Rangeland Sciences, as well as minors in Agricultural Science, Animal Science, Crop Science, Fish and Wildlife Conservation, Natural Resources, Rangeland Sciences, and Soil Science. EOU provides general education ramps into OHSU’s and OSU’s degree programs, as well as upper division elective credits that contribute to degree completion. Student services and space lease agreements are reviewed regularly as Memoranda of Understanding between the institutions are updated.

Sharing facilities and services such as proctoring exams for online students, seven (7) of eleven (11) EOU Regional Centers are housed on Oregon community college campuses: EOU Gresham (MHCC), EOU Hermiston (BMCC’s Eastern Oregon Higher Education Center), EOU Ontario (TVCC), EOU Pendleton (BMCC), EOU Portland (Clackamas Community College—Harmony Campus), EOU Salem (Chemeketa Community College), and EOU Roseburg (UCC and SWOCC). There are plans in 2016-17 to move EOU Bend, currently housed downtown, back to COCC. Each center has a director who serves as a professional advisor for EOU students in the region, who are enrolled in one of sixteen (16) online majors. The EOU Center Directors also recruit from their assigned area two-year college students and non-traditional, returning students seeking to finish a degree, who can move seamlessly into an EOU online or campus programs. In addition, EOU provides face-to-face instruction for its onsite programs in Business (Gresham) and Education (Gresham, Ontario, and Pendleton), with face-to-face Weekend Colleges (focused on two-credit, upper division, General Education courses) offered on our partners’ community college campuses. The most recent partnerships have been secured between EOU and Klamath

Community College with a Base to Bachelor's pathway, between EOU and Walla Walla Community College with an articulation agreement to the BAS in Business Administration and Fire Services Administration/Emergency Medical Services Administration, and between EOU and Columbia Basin Community College to establish a pathway to our BAS in Business Administration.

EOU works closely with Community College Partners to ensure seamless transition from two-year to four-year programs delivered online, on the main campus in La Grande, and at onsite programs in Gresham, Pendleton, and Ontario. Business has led the way with community college transfer articulations in Oregon (17 separate articulations) and Washington (21 separate articulations). With many Oregon community colleges, pathways have also been established for Art, Mathematics, Psychology, Sociology, and Elementary Education, in addition to Business: <https://www.eou.edu/pathways/>

PATHWAYS

One area of collaboration that is of some concern, both in Oregon and nationally, is student transfer success. The statutes outlining goals for transfer student success and cooperation between Oregon's higher education sectors (ORS 341.430 & ORS 348.470) are the framework for HECC's continued partnership with the seven public universities. Recent policy discussions between the institutions and HECC give this sustained work a renewed focus: more and better statewide data on transfer student outcomes and potential statewide solutions where persistent barriers exist.

Although Oregon has good state level policies and processes to ensure that students may apply credits earned upon transfer from community college to university (the Associate of Arts Oregon Transfer degree, for example), research that resulted from House Bill 2525 (2015) revealed that community college transfer students on the whole often face challenges in completing an intended major, which result in excess accumulated credits, increased tuition costs, and debt. Statewide, community college transfer students graduate with more "excess" credits than their direct entry counterparts. And despite the best efforts of advisors, faculty, and administrators, some students who complete statewide degrees such as the AAOT are ill-served if they transfer into certain majors. Credit requirements at the university level often change without notice, which can hinder community college students and advisors in effective degree planning.

Statewide, 42 percent of students entered who entered an Oregon public university in Fall 2015 did so from a community college or other transfer institution. [FN HECC Office of Research and Data, "University Student Data" <http://www.oregon.gov/highered/research/Pages/student-data-univ.aspx>]. Eastern Oregon University (EOU) enrolled 62 percent of its students as transfers in that same period.

In the 2017 legislative session, House Bill 2998 passed, which required the Commission to work closely with both public universities and community colleges to create a new framework for statewide transfer, a Foundational Curriculum of at least thirty credit hours, and a process for the creation of Unified Statewide Transfer Agreements (USTA) in major fields of study to aid transfer students in moving more easily into university study, with fewer lost or excess credits.

EOU representatives have been advisors and participants to the HB 2998 implementation process, adding insight and value to the creation of a proposed foundational curriculum currently under review and the policy questions that have been generated by the bill and reviewed in the legislative report that will result.

Lastly, EOU has recently begun investigating joining Western Oregon University and Blue Mountain Community College in the Interstate Passport [FN: <http://www.wiche.edu/passport>], a learning outcomes based framework for lower division general education transfer. Eastern also maintains a robust and approachable set of resources on line and on campus to serve transfer students. EOU’s mission is geared toward the needs of non-traditional students, frequently those who transfer from other regional universities and community colleges. As a transfer serving institution, EOU offers different modalities to serve students such as online classes and other “flexible learning” opportunities.

Table 6: Admitted Undergraduate Enrollment by Entry Pathway Fall Fourth Week Enrollment, 2016

Year	Undergrad first time freshman		Undergrad Transfer		Total Admitted Undergrad enrollment*
	N	%	N	%	
2016	1,075	40.1%	1,603	59.9%	2,678
2017	1,050	42.2%	1,436	57.8%	2,486

SHARED ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Eastern Oregon University also engages collaboratively in a number of administrative services with other universities and partners, as indicated in the table below. (P indicates participation; NP indicates)

Table 7: Shared Administrative Services

Provider	University Response
University Shared Services Enterprise (USSE, hosted by OSU)	
Financial Reporting	P
Capital Asset Accounting (currently only OIT)	
Payroll & Tax Processing (includes relationship w PEBB, PERS/Federal retirement*)	P
Collective Bargaining *	P
Information Technology/5 th Site ¹	P
Treasury Management Services:	
Legacy Debt Services-Post Issuance Tax Compliance	P
Legacy Debt Services-Debt Accounting	P
Non-Legacy Debt Services	P
Bank Reconciliations (and other ancillary banking services) ²	P
Endowment Services	
Other Miscellaneous Statements of Work:	
Provosts Council Administrative Support	P
Legislative Fiscal Impact Statement Support	P
Risk Management Analyst (TRUs only)	P
Public University Fund Administration ³	P
Eastern Oregon University	
Retirement Plans *	
Legacy 401(a) Plan	P
Legacy 403(b) Plan	P
Optional Retirement Plan (ORP)	P
Tax-Deferred Investment (TDI) Plan	P
SRP Plan	P
Public University Risk Management and Insurance Trust (Risk Management)	P

Stemming from the passage of SB 270 and the University Shared Services Workgroup of 2013, as well as subsequent legislation found in ORS 352.129, the seven public universities created the University Shared Services Enterprise (USSE), a service center hosted by Oregon State University. USSE offers a fee for service model for many back-office functions previously offered by the OUS Chancellor's Office. ORS

352.129 mandates participation by the independent universities in certain services offered by USSE until July 1, 2019.

These mandated services include group health insurance, a select set of group retirement plans, and collective bargaining. All universities, including EOU, continue to participate in these mandated services.

FINANCIAL METRICS

This section of Eastern Oregon University’s evaluation includes an overview of key high-level financial ratios which are viewed as “industry standard” metrics for understanding the strength of a public institution’s balance sheet and its operating performance. These ratios cannot be viewed in isolation from each other, or as a single snapshot in time, but as a continually unfolding story. Like any entity, Eastern Oregon University’s ability to fulfill its mission is dependent on its long-term financial health. The financial ratios examined in this section provide information on the financial flexibility possessed by the institution at the balance sheet date and yearly operating results compared to the size of the enterprise. Both types of measures should be understood in the context of the institution’s overall strategy and its capacity to effectively execute on that strategy.

Standard benchmarks for each ratio are presented alongside calculated ratios for the institutions. These benchmarks are for demonstration purposes only. It is important to recognize the best comparison in assessing financial stability for an institution may not be peer institutions or national benchmarks, but may be a comparison to the institution itself over time.

In some cases, the effort of tracking institutional financial stability through ratios is complicated by changes in accounting standards and practices. For example, effective in the 2014-15 fiscal year (FY 15), Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement No. 68 attempts to improve pension-related accounting and financial reporting. This change in the presentation of pension-related financial information impacts all of the ratios used in this evaluation. As such, the ratios are presented in two different ways: inclusive of the impacts of GASB 68 and exclusive of those impacts.

Additionally, Eastern Oregon’s ratios for FY 15 differ from those submitted to the HECC for the institutional evaluation completed in January 2017. Specifically, EOU provided mislabeled ratios to the HECC, resulting in the inaccurate reporting of GASB 68’s impact on some metrics. EOU has corrected this error in the ratios presented here for evaluation.

The following narrative focuses on the ratios EOU provided to the HECC both with and without GASB 68. Ratios without GASB 68 are presented for reference at the end of this section:

EASTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY RATIOS WITH GASB 68				
Ratio	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	Benchmark
Viability Ratio	54.00%	44.00%	49.00%	>125%
Primary Reserve Ratio	30.00%	20.00%	21.00%	>40%
Net Operating Revenues Ratio	-2.74%	-13.07%	-4.26%	>4%
Return on Net Assets Ratio	27.99%	136.99%	-0.21%	>6%
Debt Burden Ratio	3.59%	3.39%	3.71%	<5%

The viability ratio measures one of the most basic elements of financial health: expendable net assets available to cover debt should the institution need to immediately settle its obligations. Ideally, an institution would have enough expendable resources immediately available to more than cover debt. While

EOU's ratio has been relatively stable over the most recent three-year period, declining in FY 16 before a partial recovery in FY 17, it still falls well short of this capability. Creation of additional debt could slow progress on this metric and, therefore, should be carefully considered and monitored by the institution.

The primary reserve ratio compares expendable net assets to total expenses, providing a snapshot of how long the institution could continue operations without the ability to generate revenues from those continuing operations. A trend analysis of the primary reserve ratio indicates whether an institution has increased its net worth relative to the rate of growth in its operating size. EOU's primary reserve ratio declined sharply from FY 15 to FY 16 but stabilized in FY 17. The most significant factor in this decline is the changes required by GASB 68. According to EOU's audited financial statements, GASB 68 resulted in stated expenditures 9.4% higher in FY 16 and 4.5% higher in FY 17 than would have been the case without GASB 68. In fact, were it not for GASB 68, EOU's primary reserve ratio would have increased substantially over the past three years, falling just short of the benchmark in FY 17. Still, given that the "GASB 68 effect" is due to future pension costs associated with current activities, an institution that perpetually has a primary reserve ratio this low and so significantly impacted by GASB 68 may face significant cost pressures from pension expenses in the future, resulting in limited flexibility to make strategic operating investments or to fully fund operations.

The net operating revenues ratio indicates whether total operating activities for the fiscal year generated a surplus or created a deficit. It attempts to demonstrate whether an institution is living within its available resources. EOU's net operating revenues ratio has declined since FY 15 and they have posted an operating loss the past three years, although the loss decreased significantly from FY 16 to FY 17. As with the primary reserve ratio, the extent of both this loss and this trend is substantially due to the impact of GASB 68 as the institution would have posted a much smaller operating loss in FY 16 and a very slight operating gain in FY 17 without the impact of GASB 68. Regardless, continuing negative operating revenues ratios may indicate that an institution does not currently have capacity to develop a stronger fund balance or make strategic operating investments without the use of existing fund balance, expense reductions, or revenue enhancements due significantly to the future pension costs highlighted by GASB 68.

The return on net assets ratio demonstrates whether an institution is financially better off than in previous years. It shows an institution's total economic return. A positive return on net assets ratio means an institution is increasing its net assets and is likely to have increased financial flexibility and ability to invest in strategic priorities. A negative return on net assets ratio may indicate the opposite, unless the negative ratio is the result of strategic investment in strategies that will enhance net assets in the future. EOU showed a dramatic increase in its return on net assets ratio in FY16, primarily derived from accounting changes and therefore does not allow for comparison to prior years. Specifically, debt associated with Article XI-G, Article XI-Q, COPs, and lottery bonds were shifted off of EOU's balance sheet to the State of Oregon due to the reorganization of the former Oregon University System, dramatically improving EOU's return on net assets for FY16. Although EOU's return on net assets ratio was negative for FY 17, it was barely so, indicating that EOU's assets have been relatively stable in the past year.

Debt burden ratio demonstrates two factors: the extent to which an institution has used borrowed funds to finance its mission; and the relative cost of institutional borrowing to total operating expenditures. EOU's

debt burden ratio has been consistently stable and well below the standard benchmark of 5% over the last three years. This indicates that debt is not being overly relied upon to finance EOU activities and that the cost of debt is at a manageable level.

The ratios presented in the table below reflect financial statements excluding the impact of GASB 68. They are provided for reference:

EASTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY RATIOS WITHOUT GASB 68				
Ratio	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	Benchmark
Viability Ratio	55.60%	67.00%	84.00%	>125%
Primary Reserve Ratio	29.36%	33.00%	38.00%	>40%
Net Operating Revenues Ratio	-8.72%	-3.77%	0.05%	>4%
Return on Net Assets Ratio	14.35%	146.77%	2.99%	>6%
Debt Burden Ratio	3.38%	3.71%	3.63%	<5%

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

As required by the cited statute as well as Article V, Section 1 of the Board’s [Bylaws](#), and by Section 1.4 of [Board Statement No. 1](#) (Conduct of Public Meetings) the board schedules four regular meetings per year. The board also conducts an annual retreat. Our January 2016 meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather (Interstate 84 was closed). <https://www.eou.edu/governance/document-archive/2016-17-academic-year/>.

In compliance with state law and [Board Statement No. 1](#) (Conduct of Public Meetings), the board posts public notice of board meetings, along with an agenda and any available supporting materials, no later than six calendar days before a regular meeting and four calendar days before a special meeting. See, e.g., the May 24, 2017 Board meeting [webpage](#). When the items are posted, a message with linked meeting materials is emailed to the campus community. We also issue [press releases](#) in advance of (and following) regular board meetings.

The university has a [Public Records Request Procedure](#) which describes the university’s procedure for responding to public records requests. In addition, the Board has adopted bylaws in accordance to ORS 352.076(6) and can be found here: <https://www.eou.edu/governance/files/2015/07/Bylaws.pdf>

[Board Statement Number 6](#), section 2, Ethics, describes the fiduciary duties of a trustee, including the duties of care, loyalty and obedience. [Board Resolution 16-02](#) (April 21, 2016) declares the commitment of each trustee to those fiduciary duties.

The board has a Finance and Administration Committee which is responsible for reviewing matters related to: 1) the Budget, 2) Investments and Finances, 3) Tuition and Fees, 4) Real Property, 5) Personal Property, and 6) Audits and Internal Controls. [Board Statement No. 3](#) (Committees), Section 3. The committee met [seven times](#) in 2016-17. The Board of Trustees reviewed and took action on financial matters at each of its regular [meetings](#).

[Board Statement Number 8](#), adopted by the Board on November 10, 2016, describes the board's process of self-evaluation. The process for reviewing the board's performance for 2016-17 will conclude at the board meeting on November 16, 2017.

The Vice President for Finance and Administration discussed the proposed tuition increase with the student government Senate on [January 17, 2017](#), [February 27, 2017](#), and [April 3, 2017](#). The Board's Finance and Administration Committee discussed the proposed tuition increase at public meetings on [February 1, 2017](#), [March 1, 2017](#), and made a recommendation to the Board at a committee meeting on [April 5, 2017](#). The board heard comments and took action at its [April 20, 2017](#) regular public meeting.

The board participated fully in the hiring of President Tom Insko by the State Board of Higher Education in May 2015. This was prior to the Board assuming official governance of the University on July 1, 2015. Article VI, section 2 of the Board's [Bylaws](#) states that "The Board shall appoint a President."

The Board has a mission statement that can be found [here](#).

The Board of Trustees at EOU has not acquired any property since the Board took over authority for the university on July 1, 2015.

CONCLUSION

This report is guided by Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 352.061 which requires that the HECC report on the university's achievement of outcomes, measures of progress, goals and targets; assess the university's progress toward achieving the mission of all education beyond high school, described in the 40-40-20 goal; and assess how well the establishment of its governing board comports with the findings of ORS 352.025. This report relies heavily on regularly-conducted academic accreditation reports and the self-assessments prepared for these accreditation reviews, as well as on state and federal data. The contents of this report signal areas of alignment with the HECC Strategic Plan, which in turn supports the objectives of higher education for the State of Oregon.

The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) last affirmed accreditation for EOU in 2014 after EOU completed the Year Three Accreditation review in 2013. . In that review the NWCCU commended EOU in several key areas including for its deep sense of commitment to serving the rural regions of the state; faculty-driven academic program assessment approach; and aggressive, visionary, and proactive leadership to streamline operations, reduce costs, and improve services. EOU is on track with its accreditation cycle. A Year Seven Report is due in Fall 2018.

Enrollment at EOU has been declining since 2011. Fall 2017 saw a 5.0% decline in total enrollment, non-resident enrollment decreased by 4.7%, and resident enrollment decreased by 5.2% from the previous year. Enrollment is the lowest it has been in over a decade; it has decreased by over 25% since its 2011 post-recession peak, and is down 17.7% over a ten year period. The most recent six-year graduation rate is 39.1% for Pell Grant recipients, 41.4% for underrepresented minority students, and 40.2% for all students. EOU awarded 7.4% fewer degrees in 2016-17 than the prior year, continuing a declining trend that began in 2013. The underrepresented minority students' enrollment figure has increased 17.4% year-over-year, and is the highest it has ever been. Partly as a result of state funding cuts, resident undergraduate tuition and fees at Eastern Oregon University increased 37.7% in the last 10 years, including increases of 3.2% and 4.5% in 2016-17 and 2017-18 respectively.⁷The total cost of attendance for students includes significant expenses associated with housing, food, transportation, and textbooks.

Eastern Oregon University estimates the average student budget for academic supplies and living expenses annually at \$14,484 for the 2017-18 academic year,⁸ an amount that exceeds resident tuition and fees.

In addition to need-based federal and state financial aid programs (Pell Grant and the Oregon Opportunity Grant), Eastern Oregon University students benefit from EOU's significant commitment of institutional resources to scholarships, remissions, and tuition discounts.

In 2016, the most recent year for which data is available, EOU's average financial aid award was \$10,157, which, on average, meets 63% of demonstrated financial need.⁹

⁷ Source: https://financialaid.EOUregon.edu/cost_of_attendance as well as historical OUS tuition data. Defined to include full-time resident base tuition and all mandatory fees (including incidental fees).

⁸ Source: https://financialaid.EOUregon.edu/cost_of_attendance

⁹ Source: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-university-search/eastern-oregon-university>

Of Eastern Oregon University undergraduate degree recipients who leave the institution with federal loan debt, average federally-backed debt load is \$22,840.

According to the College Scorecard, in the 2015-16 academic year, 53% of EOU students had federally supported loans and 47% received Pell grants.

As noted at the outset, this report does not strive to be a comprehensive evaluation of this complex and multi-faceted university; rather, it emphasizes several areas that are of particular importance to the HECC and to the State of Oregon today. In partnership with institutional leadership, legislators, and other stakeholders, the HECC will continue to consider modifications to this annual process and product in order to improve its usefulness to our universities and to the people of Oregon.

