

Docket Item:

University Program Approval: Eastern Oregon University, Bachelor of Art (B.A.), Bachelor of Science (B.S.), and Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.S.) in Sustainable Rural Systems.

Summary:

Eastern Oregon University proposes a new degree program leading to a B.A., B.S., or B.A.S. in Sustainable Rural Systems. The statewide Provosts' Council has unanimously recommended approval. Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) staff completed a review of the proposed program. After analysis, HECC staff recommends approval of the program as proposed.

Materials:

Academic program information.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends the Commission move to approve the University Program Approval: Eastern Oregon University, Bachelor of Art (B.A.), Bachelor of Science (B.S.), and Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.S.) in Sustainable Rural Systems.



EASTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY GENERAL COUNSEL & BOARD SECRETARY

November 18, 2019

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
8060 165th Avenue N.E., Suite 100
Redmond, WA 98052

Dear Commissioners,

At a regular meeting held on Thursday, November 14, 2019, the Board of Trustees of Eastern Oregon University reviewed and approved the following curriculum change:

- Establishment of Bachelor of Art (B.A.), Bachelor of Science (B.S.) and Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.S.) degree in Sustainable Rural Systems.

For further information about the meeting and this academic program, please visit our website at <https://www.eou.edu/governance/board-meetings/board-of-trustees-meeting-5/>.

If you have any questions, please contact our office at 541-962-4101.

Sincerely,

Christopher L. Burford
University General Counsel and Board Secretary



Proposal for a New Academic Program

Institution: Eastern Oregon University

College/School: College of Science, Technology, Mathematics and Health Sciences

Department/Program Name:

Degree and Program Title: BA/BS/BAS Sustainable Rural Systems

1. Program Description

- a. Proposed Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) number.
CIP 30 MULTI/INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES and sub codes [e.g. 30.33 Sustainability Studies]
- b. Brief overview (1-2 paragraphs) of the proposed program, including its disciplinary foundations and connections; program objectives; programmatic focus; degree, certificate, minor, and concentrations offered.
 - i) We are proposing the ***establishment of Bachelor of Art (BA), Bachelor of Science (BS) and Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degrees in Sustainable Rural Systems at Eastern Oregon University.*** The BA/BS options for Sustainable Rural Systems carry requisite general education, elective, and institutional requirements in satisfaction of the degree. The BAS option for Sustainable Rural Systems requires an earned Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree that is transferred in, plus satisfaction of 45 general education credits and satisfaction of all other upper division required elective and institutional requirements towards the degree.
 - ii) We are proposing a new degree program named “Sustainable Rural Systems,” in which students will learn about all the components that are needed for a functioning rural system. Interactions between these components will be studied as well as the interactions of rural systems with the global system. A key component of the degree program are multi-year, multi-disciplinary, authentic community projects in which students participate immediately after they enter the program, apply directly what they learned in the classroom, and take increasing responsibility for the projects. We have partnered with Baker Technical Institute (BTI) to incorporate their student-centered brownfields remediation program into our degree program as a first project type; it is expected that at later stages other multi-year community projects that are amenable to intense continual student involvement and that require integrating knowledge and skills from many academic disciplines will be added as needed and as they become available (in collaboration with community partners).

In the projects, students are working with external professionals on the projects; (e.g. in the brownfields projects, students identify sites, write assessment and subsequently clean-up grant applications, issue RFPs for work to be carried out, select contractors, and engage the community in the planning for repurposing of a clean site). To allow for effective student participation, curriculum and projects are entwined in a flexible manner to allow for meeting the needs of the projects as these unfold.

The program structure features a strong program core that will be taken by all students. The structure allows for ready addition (or removal) of concentrations as the program and projects evolve. For the start-up phase, two concentrations will be available, i.e. "Environmental Resources" and "Economics of Rural Systems." These are well-suited to support the first project, brownfield remediation. Other concentrations focusing on the many aspects of the health of rural communities will follow, as will others should new projects require these.

The emphasis on the core was chosen to allow for regular meetings and interactions of all students irrespective of their concentrations, so specific expertise acquired in the concentrations can be shared by students with all students in the program. For example, the projects seminar will bring together students in all years of their studies to take advantage of the peer mentoring that can readily occur in this format with focus on the project needs.

In their final year of studies, students will be able to focus for an entire term on management of the project(s). In fact, these students will form a project management team that will have substantial responsibilities for the execution of projects (with guidance by staff from EOU and project partners).

- c. Course of study – proposed curriculum, including course numbers, titles, and credit hours.

See attached Check Sheets Appendices A, B, C & D for program requirements

- d. Manner in which the program will be delivered, including program location (if offered outside of the main campus), course scheduling, and the use of technology (for both on-campus and off-campus delivery).

Program will be offered on campus; however, projects outside of our region would require partial distance instruction via live streaming.

- e. Adequacy and quality of faculty delivering the program.

The program draws in part from existing EOU courses (see check sheets below), which current EOU faculty will continue to teach. A number of new courses will be developed and delivered in part by existing faculty who will transfer some part of their load to the new program. Existing programs will be held harmless, i.e. the missing load will be made up. New faculty dedicated to the new program will need to be hired.

- f. Adequacy of faculty resources – full-time, part-time, adjunct.

For the start-up of the program, 2.5 faculty FTE are needed.

- g. Other staff.

All EOU resources are available; specific program and project staff support will be provided initially predominately by the College of Science Technology, Mathematics, and Health Sciences, with other staff support coming from the College of Business and the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. Some outreach support to primary and secondary schools will be supported by the College of Education.

- h. Adequacy of facilities, library, and other resources.

All EOU resources are available to faculty and students.

- i. Anticipated start date.

Fall Term 2020.

2. Relationship to Mission and Goals

- a. Manner in which the proposed program supports the institution’s mission, signature areas of focus, and strategic priorities.

This program fulfills multiple goals stated in EOU’s Strategic Plan, i.e. Goal 1 (Student Success: Objective 1: All graduates engage in high-impact, experiential learning activities), Goal 2 (Transformational Education: Objective 2: Graduates possess the essential learning outcomes employers seek), Goal 3 (Grow the Number of Lives Impacted: Objective 1: Serve as a growing and thriving rural university), and Goal 5 (Relevance and Interconnection: Objective 2: Be recognized as a leader in promoting rural community prosperity and resilience).

- b. Manner in which the proposed program contributes to institutional and statewide goals for student access and diversity, quality learning, research, knowledge creation and innovation, and economic and cultural support of Oregon and its communities.

In general, the program offers highly experiential learning that provides all of the essential (also called professional or soft) skills that employers demand from their workforce and that they expect from university graduates, such as communication competence (oral and written), professionalism and professional demeanor, ability to work in teams, ability to integrate knowledge from various disciplines, leadership, assumption of responsibility for team outcomes and accountability, flexibility, etc.

More specifically, the program will produce professionals with broad knowledge of all factors that are essential for the health and sustainability of rural communities and who have practical experience in identifying need designing, planning, fundraising, execution, and supervision of rural community projects.

As the program progresses, a body of research will accumulate based in part on the projects (e.g. through community surveys, environmental assessment, natural resource planning and sustainable usage, supported community activities, etc.) that may provide important general approaches and conclusions for rural systems everywhere.

Moreover, as part of the project team and through the project seminar, external professionals will interact with the students to provide direct exposure to operation, processes, procedures, etc. in companies, agencies and organizations. Interactions with external professionals will also lead to applied research findings that could be shared broadly.

EOU will support faculty research and development through existing programs such as the “Faculty Scholars Grant” and the “Faculty Development Grant.”

Manner in which the program meets regional or statewide needs and enhances the state’s capacity to:

- i. improve educational attainment in the region and state;
- ii. respond effectively to social, economic, and environmental challenges and opportunities; and
- iii. address civic and cultural demands of citizenship.

The program is built around experiential learning and thus supports educational attainment by college students who thrive by the immediate practical and relevant context. Through the project- and team-based learning structure, students will actively build and practice the professional skills that are in much demand by employers.

The subject matter of the Sustainable Rural Systems degree is in perfect alignment with the needs of rural communities in all aspects. The degree program produces graduates who are ready to work creatively to build and sustain prosperity and health of rural communities. Thus, the program provides a broadly trained, flexible workforce that can find employment in various role in municipalities, agencies, and organizations.

The program will produce graduates who as students will have engaged with the community through community projects. Students will interact will all interest groups and stakeholder that are relevant for the success of a project in particular, and who are critical for healthy communities.

3. Accreditation

- a. Accrediting body or professional society that has established standards in the area in which the program lies, if applicable.

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)

- b. Ability of the program to meet professional accreditation standards. If the program does not or cannot meet those standards, the proposal should identify the area(s) in which it is deficient and indicate steps needed to qualify the program for accreditation and date by which it would be expected to be fully accredited.

Program will meet all NWCCU standards.

- c. If the proposed program is a graduate program in which the institution offers an undergraduate program, proposal should identify whether or not the undergraduate program is accredited and, if not, what would be required to qualify it for accreditation.

Not Applicable.

- d. If accreditation is a goal, the proposal should identify the steps being taken to achieve accreditation. If the program is not seeking accreditation, the proposal should indicate why it is not.

NWCCU notification will occur after HECC approval.

4. Need

- a. Anticipated fall term headcount and FTE enrollment over each of the next five years.

Providing both a typical (BA/BS) and professional/technical (BAS) pathway to a bachelor's degree will maximize the student enrollment potential. All degrees will be attractive to students who seek immediate practical application of classroom learning; thus, the degree targets in addition to the "traditional" student type a hitherto underserved and somewhat different student type. However, every student type will benefit greatly from the experiential learning structure of the degree program.

The BAS degree in particular enables holders of Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees a streamlined path to graduation with a Bachelor of Applied Science degree. The BAS degree option reaches a hitherto underserved group of students by accepting technical credits and satisfying general education through a reduced number of credits to satisfy requirements for the bachelor's degree.

While all degree options are expected to train professionals, who enter the workforce after graduation, the BA/BS degree in particular lends itself as basis for entering professional Master's programs, e.g. in public administration, sustainable technologies, environmental monitoring, etc.

Given the novel innovative degree program and structure, enrollment predictions carry a larger than usual margin of error. As elaborated above, we do expect substantial interest from traditional and hitherto underserved student populations. Furthermore, an integral part of the degree program is the integration of high-school students (and their teachers) into project teams via cross-institutional career academies. While the exact structure and mechanisms for this integration and cooperation are still being discussed with regional high schools, we expect that this will encourage participating students to pursue a college education as they will have worked side by side with college students, and faculty, and professionals and thus will have direct experience of what college study is like.

Consequently, and with appropriate marketing, EOU expects a full-time cohort of 25.

- b. Expected degrees/certificates produced over the next five years.

For BA/BS/BAS earners, it is expected that beginning in program year 3 the program will graduate 20+ students/year.

- c. Characteristics of students to be served (resident/nonresident/international; traditional/ nontraditional; full-time/part-time, etc.).

This degree program is unique in the region, State, and Western United States. Thus, we expect this program to become a destination for all students who seek immediate practical application of classroom learning through authentic team-based projects and who seek to learn about and have positive impact on rural communities everywhere. Thus, the degree targets a somewhat different student type compared to the “traditional” student type (although the latter will benefit greatly from the experiential learning structure of the degree program).

d. Evidence of market demand.

There is a huge body of testimonials that employers demand from universities that their graduates possess, in addition to subject knowledge, the so-called soft skills (also referred to as professional or essential skills) such as communication competence (oral and written), professionalism and professional demeanor, ability to work in teams, ability to integrate knowledge from various disciplines, leadership, assumption of responsibility for team outcomes and accountability, flexibility, etc. In fact, many employers rank these higher than the subject knowledge, as the latter – at least in larger organizations – may be available through in-house training. The fact that the core of the proposed degree program is a team-based large project provides students extensive practical and authentic experiences in which they can learn and master all of the soft skills required in their future careers.

e. If the program’s location is shared with another similar Oregon public university program, the proposal should provide externally validated evidence of need (e.g., surveys, focus groups, documented requests, occupational/employment statistics and forecasts).

N/A.

f. Estimate the prospects for success of program graduates (employment or graduate school) and consideration of licensure, if appropriate. What are the expected career paths for students in this program?

i) See e. Above.

5. Outcomes and Quality Assessment

a. Expected learning outcomes of the program.

This degree program provides an inter- and multidisciplinary approach to understanding rural systems and planning for sustainable rural communities. It provides the opportunity to synthesize and apply knowledge of the economic, political, environmental, and cultural aspects of a rural community. This program also provides an in depth understanding of sustainability as it applies to both rural and urban systems. The extensive project component creates the opportunity for students to collaborate with the broader community to solve problems and make informed decisions about policies and sustainable development. The integrated curriculum also teaches students to develop and apply critical thinking skills that allow them to creatively apply cultural

understanding, historical perspective, scientific information, and economic principles in policy development and decision-making.

Learning Outcomes:

Content Knowledge: Students will demonstrate a mastery of content knowledge within this new discipline. They will also demonstrate the ability to apply this content knowledge to problems in rural communities.

Creative Inquiry: Students will demonstrate the ability to gather information to design studies that provide scientific information and apply it creatively to planning of sustainable rural systems. They will also be involved with creative planning for projects that improve, restore, or create opportunities for sustainable resource use and economies in rural communities.

Integrated Learning through Critical Thinking: Students will learn to collect and analyze information about the sociological, economic, environmental, and political aspects of a rural system. The ability to critically assess various types of information will be practiced both in formal coursework and in the project setting.

Community and Civic Engagement: Students will engage with the broader community to solve problems unique to rural settings. They will be involved with restoration and sustainable development efforts with a variety of stakeholders to benefit the community.

At completion of the Sustainable Rural Systems degree program, the student will be prepared for life-long success in a variety of rural-based settings and careers via the ability to:

1. Develop a sense of rural communities through a broad understanding of the components of rural systems, including economic, societal, political, environmental, and historical aspects;
 2. Understand and apply the concept of sustainability;
 3. Synthesize relevant knowledge and skills in order to create positive change in the social, economic, political, environmental, and cultural aspects of rural communities;
 4. Apply critical thinking, cultural understanding, and scientific information to real-life situations via project-based learning;
 5. Evaluate how rural and urban communities interact with each other, both locally and globally;
 6. Operate in collaboration with community stakeholders, both independently and in a team setting, to solve community problems and make informed decisions about policies and sustainable development.
- b. Methods by which the learning outcomes will be assessed and used to improve curriculum and instruction.

The outcomes for each class will be clearly stated on the syllabus. Assessments for included courses will address both the conceptual and applied aspects of the class. Means of assessment will include projects, quizzes, and exams. The objectives for projects and other assigned work will tie directly into course outcomes.

- c. Nature and level of research and/or scholarly work expected of program faculty; indicators of success in those areas.

Faculty, hired from graduate institutions or business and industry with advanced degrees, are evaluated for continuance and promotion based on teaching excellence, evidence of demonstrated application of research or scholarly work to the teaching and learning environment, and commitment to continuous improvement as demonstrated by KPI targets for participation in professional development and assessment of student learning outcomes.

The project courses will be offered by an EOU faculty member, who is responsible for instruction, content, and assessment, as well as project management activities that are the responsibility of EOU. This faculty member will assign student grades. Student assessment will be individualized but include to a large extent the contributions of an individual student to the student team and the project. This includes overall in interactions with and contributions to the team, such as timely delivery and quality of contributions/assignments expected by the project team, as well as readiness to assume responsibility for tasks that contribute to the project and the team.

6. Program Integration and Collaboration

- a. Closely related programs in this or other Oregon colleges and universities.

This program is unique in the State of Oregon and in the Western United States.

- b. Ways in which the program complements other similar programs in other Oregon institutions and other related programs at this institution. Proposal should identify the potential for collaboration.

This is a unique program in the State; however, the Environmental Resources concentrations already draws from courses offered by Oregon State University's College of Agriculture at the Eastern Oregon University campus. The program may draw from the courses offered by other Oregon public universities, particularly if community projects require specialized instruction not currently available at Eastern Oregon University.

- c. If applicable, proposal should state why this program may not be collaborating with existing similar programs.

Not Applicable

- d. Potential impacts on other programs.

The impact of the program on existing EOU programs is challenging to predict. The program is distinct from all other programs and provides access to a different range of careers. In particular, the program will not prepare students for graduate programs e.g., in the hard sciences and in health fields; those students will need to seek the existing preparation pathways. However, particularly in the initial implementation period, there

may be some movement of existing students from existing programs to the new program.

7. External Review

If the proposed program is a graduate level program, follow the guidelines provided in *External Review of New Graduate Level Academic Programs* in addition to completing all of the above information.

Not applicable, this is an undergraduate program.

Revised May 2016

APPENDICES:

Appendix A: Check Sheet	BA/BS Sustainable Rural Systems Environmental Resources Concentration
Appendix B: Check Sheet	BA/BS Sustainable Rural Systems Economics of Rural Systems Concentration
Appendix C: Check Sheet	BAS Sustainable Rural Systems Environmental Resources Concentration
Appendix D: Check Sheet	BAS Sustainable Rural Systems Economics of Rural Systems Concentration



- I. Complete all Institutional Graduation Requirements (including University Writing Requirement, Diversity Requirement, General Education Requirements, etc.) as provided at: <http://www.eou.edu/catalog/> [graduation requirements]
- II. Program Requirements: Program has pre-requisite courses that are needed prior to beginning this degree path.
- III. A grade of "C-" or better is required for each course counting towards the major, but a cumulative grade of C [2.00] is required for completion of the major.

Note: Listed courses provided by Oregon State University at Eastern Oregon University reflect the revised course offerings that are awaiting final approval.

Required Core Classes:

Course #	COURSE TITLE
SRS 201	Rural Society, Environment & Economy (4)
SCI 226	Environmental Science I & Lab (5)
SCI 227	Environmental Science II & Lab (5)
STAT 243	Statistics (4) <i>Prereq: Placement in Math 111</i>
<i>or</i>	
STAT 327	Statistics and Experimental Design (5)
WR 320	Professional Writing (3) [UWR] <i>Prereq: WR 121 or equivalent</i>
SRS 321	Rural Community and Economic Systems (4)
SRS 363	Rural Land Use and Development (4)
SRS 451	Natural Resource and Environmental Policy (4)
SRS 493	Response to Climate Change (4)
Core Total (37-38 credits)	

Required Project Courses:

Course #	COURSE TITLE
SRS 215	Rural Systems Seminar (3)
SRS 316	Rural Systems Project I, II, III (6)
SRS 417	Project Leadership and Community Connections (12)
Project Total (21 credits)	

Environmental Resources Concentration:

Course #	COURSE TITLE
GEOG 210	Intro to GIS (3)
SCI 328	Environmental Science III & Lab (5)
CSS 305	Principles of Soil Science (4)*
SCI 442	Sustainable Water Resources (4)

Choose two from the following list:

IAWS 131	Principles of Range Management (3)*&
AGRI 2XX%	Critical Issues in Oregon Agriculture & Natural Resources (3)* [online]
IAWS 330	Ecosystems I (3)*&
IAWS 331	Ecosystem II (3)*&
IAWS 430	Wildland Restoration (4)*
IAWS 435	Wildland Monitoring (4)*

*These courses are provided by Oregon State University (OSU) at the Eastern Oregon University Campus or online through OSU's E-Campus.

%Course number to be determined.

&These course names are in discussion and subject to change. Additional OSU courses applicable to this degree program may be offered.

Concentration Total (22-23 Credits)

Total Degree Requirements (80 credits minimum)

Project Coursework	21 credits
Degree Core Courses	37-38 credits
Concentration	22-23 credits



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Economics of Rural Systems:

Course #	COURSE TITLE
ECON 345	Economics of Development (5)
ECON 355	Ecological Economics (5)
ECON 375	Environmental & Natural Resource Economics (5)
ECON 435	Public Finance (5)
Concentration Total (20 Credits)	

Total Degree Requirements (78 credits minimum)

Project Coursework	21 credits
Degree Core Courses	37 credits
Concentration	20 credits



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Institution: Eastern Oregon University
Program: BA/BS/BAS in Sustainable Rural Systems

Action: At the **November 21, 2019** meeting, the Statewide Provosts Council approved a new program for **Eastern Oregon University, BA/BS/BAS in Sustainable Rural Systems**, Policy to move forward to the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission for its review and approval. **The Eastern Oregon University** Board of Trustees approved the program at its **November 14th, 2019** meeting.

Eastern Oregon University

Sarah Witte, provost

Approved
 Opposed
 Abstained



Oregon State University

Ed Feser, provost

Approved
 Opposed
 Abstained



Portland State University

Susan Jeffords, provost

Approved
 Opposed
 Abstained



University of Oregon

Patrick Phillips, provost

Approved
 Opposed
 Abstained



Oregon Health & Science University

Elena Andresen, interim provost

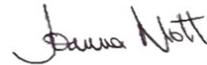
Approved
 Opposed
 Abstained



Oregon Tech

Joanna Mott, provost

Approved
 Opposed
 Abstained



Southern Oregon University

Susan Walsh, provost

Approved
 Opposed
 Abstained



Western Oregon University

Rob Winningham, provost

Approved
 Opposed
 Abstained

