

DRAFT Summary Points
Eastern Oregon University Evaluation
February 2022

ORS 352.061 requires the HECC to conduct annual evaluations of public universities in Oregon according to specific statutory criteria. Overall, the HECC's approach is to assess the university's contributions to statewide goals for higher education. We do not purport to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the university against its own mission. A summary of key findings follows:

1. **Accreditation:** EOU is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). EOU was last affirmed for accreditation following its Year 7 (Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability) review in fall 2018, and the university was reaffirmed in 2019. The institution has been working on four NWCCU recommendations for continuous improvement resulting from the fall 2018 review. Two recommendations were fulfilled in 2020, following NWCCU review of EOU's ad hoc report, and two recommendations were deemed substantially in compliance but in need of improvement and updates were made in the mid cycle review for fall 2021. In 2024, EOU is scheduled to conduct its Year 6 report on Standard 2 – Policies Regulations, and Financial Review. This will be followed by the Year 7 evaluation of institutional effectiveness in 2025.
2. **Economic impact:** EOU remains the third largest employer in Union County, and is a vital economic driver for the region. Eastern Oregon University employs 509 people and pays on average \$43,357 in wages per year.
3. **Student access and student success:** The 2,825 students who were enrolled at EOU in Fall, 2021 represented a decrease of 7.9 percent over two years. Since 2011, EOU's enrollment has declined 33.3 percent. EOU's enrollment decline over the past decade has been particularly concentrated among resident students, whose total fell 38.3 percent between fall 2012 and fall 2021. This year, resident (in-state) students account for 65.9 percent of EOU's total student body. EOU's six-year graduation rate is xx.x percent for Pell Grant recipients, 35.1 percent for underrepresented minority students, and 39.0 percent for all students. EOU is making year-over-year increases in the total number of degrees awarded to under-represented minority students. While single year enrollment changes do not constitute a trend on their own, and the culmination of winter and spring term of 2019-20, academic year 2020-21, and fall 2021 numbers were affected by extemporaneous circumstances, they are generally consistent with longer-term enrollment patterns at EOU.
4. **Affordability:** Partly as a result of state funding cuts, resident (in-state) undergraduate tuition and fees at Eastern Oregon University have increased 45.4 percent over the last 10 years, to a total of \$9,101 for 2021-22. Most recently, tuition and fees increased 5.2 percent between 2019-20 and 2020-21, and an additional 1.6 percent in 2021-22. The 2021-22 increase was due entirely to fees, which rose 8.9 percent, while tuition remained flat. Graduate students have faced similar fee increases. Total cost of attendance for EOU students includes significant expenses associated with housing, food, transportation, and textbooks. Eastern Oregon University estimates the average student budget for living expenses annually, not including tuition and fees, is \$14,973 for 2021-22. The average debt among EOU graduates was \$20,000, compared to a statewide average of \$21,406, and 50 percent of EOU students had federally supported loans.
5. **Academic Quality and Research:** EOU maintains good standing with its regional accreditor. For 2017-18, EOU reported total research expenditures of approximately \$676,000, and for 2018-19 total research expenditures of approximately \$642,000.
6. **Collaboration:** EOU contributes to a host of collaborative activities with other post-secondary institutions and partners, most notably with OSU Agriculture and OHSU Nursing programs on the La Grande campus. These longstanding campus partnerships with OSU and OHSU date back to the mid-1980s. EOU's "Start There, Finish Here" Transfer Pathways program continues to be a successful option for students who begin their post-secondary education at a community college through one of EOU's 11 regional centers throughout the state. EOU maintains collaborative ties with 40 high schools across Eastern Oregon through its GO-STEM Hub and Eastern Promise dual credit offerings. In collaboration with high schools and community colleges in the region, EOU is currently engaged in implementing a cohesive set of career pathways-aligned strategies to recruit and retain students from rural eastern Oregon, as well as provide them with internship and career opportunities in high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand industry sectors in the region through career-oriented dual credit pathways, EOU Summer Career Academies and the Rural Engagement

and Vitality Center--EOU's partnership with Wallowa Resources. A career pathway orientation for Eastern Promise dual credit activities throughout the region proposes to align dual credit courses to career pathways while offering additional course opportunities to rural students online.

7. **Shared administrative services:** EOU participates in the majority of the services offered by the University Shared Services Enterprise (USSE).
8. **Financial Condition Analysis:** Overall, EOU is in an improving financial position. The institution has improved its level of expendable net assets, improved the performance of existing assets, and has improved its overall liquidity position. Over time, EOU's primary reserve has been stable at a level around two to 2.5 months' worth of expenses. Still, EOU's financial position is potentially precarious and sensitive to enrollment changes as well as the balance between state funding and other sources of revenue.
9. **Board of Trustees:** In 2021, the EOU Board of Trustees appears to have met its legal responsibilities for providing public notice, accessibility, and records. In 2021, the Board exercised many of the powers reserved for it under law, including presidential oversight, budget adoption, tuition adoption, debt issuance, and program approval (for HECC consideration).