SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY PRIORITY AREA

Academic Strategies Committee Meeting
April 8, 2010
OUS Sustainability Initiatives Committee Recommendations for Consideration by the OSBHE Academic Strategies Committee

Introduction
The Oregon State Board of Higher Education (OSBHE) created the Sustainability Initiatives Committee (SIC) in 2008 and charged it with leading “a collaborative effort that sets the System and its institutions on a course to become a recognized international leader in sustainability.” The SIC includes academic, business and community representatives. It builds on the OUS Sustainability Plan, adopted and approved in 2004, as well as the work of the OSHBE Academic Excellence and Economic Development Committee and the existing campus sustainability initiatives. The SIC has developed a shared vision of sustainability and specific action recommendations. The SIC plans to submit a full report to the OSHBE in June and to review the action recommendations with the Provost’s Council, the Research Council and others before then.

OUS campuses are nationally recognized leaders in sustainability and higher education. Even in a time of constrained resources, OUS must take action if it is to retain leadership and competitive advantage, concomitant with the urgent need to solve the world’s great challenges, such as climate change, peak oil and water scarcity. Oregon can show the world how people can live sustainably on Earth and OUS is vital to discovering how to do it through its teaching, research, outreach, service and extension missions and through the operation of its facilities and infrastructure.

The SIC believes that the role of OUS is to focus on setting system-wide goals, assuring accountability in meeting them and then in convening, enabling and fostering collaboration between the campuses. The SIC recommendations are not meant to supersede existing campus sustainability plans or initiatives. Rather, the SIC hopes to foster better communication and collaboration among the campuses while recognizing their unique resources, cultures, and communities.

Background
The Board charge to the Sustainability Initiatives Committee included these activities:

1. Identifying and assessing existing and potential areas of academic strength, and our competitive position nationally and internationally;

2. Identifying and recommending to the Board ways to remove barriers to faculty work in targeted sustainability areas;

3. Facilitating coordinated efforts with existing organizations focused on sustainability (e.g., Oregon BEST);

4. Identifying effective strategies of communication between OUS and other key public and private entities engaged in sustainability initiatives; and

5. Submitting to the Board an OUS action plan for sustainability that encompasses instruction, research, facilities, outreach, and a communications/branding strategy.
In its work, the Committee encountered some significant factors that shape the recommendations designed to fulfill the Board charge:

- the breadth and vagueness of “sustainability” and the fluidity of activities, research and courses that might be given that label make it difficult to create a meaningful or lasting system-wide inventory;
- finding and maintaining the right balance between a system-wide focus and the diversity of the individual institutions requires a suite of nuanced tools;
- there is broad desire to collaborate on sustainability activities among students and faculty, and low-cost solutions to foster communication and collaboration can be effective; and
- the committee is aware of the bleak budget outlook for higher education.

Committee recommendations reflect these factors. For example:

- Creating a Board policy on sustainability with clear goals and accountability strikes the right balance between OUS and its institutions.
- Creating a system-wide Sustainability Coordinator position is the appropriate means to implement the Board policy and achieve effective communication and coordination among campuses as well as providing a single point of contact and coordination with the System for the community.
- Creating a well-designed OUS web portal for sustainability (part of the Coordinator job description) is an effective and efficient means to identify sustainability strengths and put forward an “Oregon” face to the world.
- Establishing a “Living Laboratory Incentive Fund” to match the fees students assess themselves for sustainability is a responsive move to support curriculum development, communication of best practices and initiatives on the campuses.

The Committee will issue a full report to the Board in June. Recommendations to ASC follow.
## Sustainability Initiatives Committee Recommendations and Potential Actions

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| Develop and adopt a Board sustainability policy with clear goals in areas of education, research, service, facilities & operations, and accountability. *(policy statement attached)* | No funding required. Assign existing campus and system leadership to draft goal statements and action items (e.g., learning outcomes to Provosts’ Council, research goals to Research Council, etc.) | Possible position reassignment opportunity but not recommended | A system-level coordinator position will serve as a central contact point and develop collaborations across campuses in all aspects of sustainability. **Total Request: $250K**  
*Position ($155K total comp.)*  
*Conference ($25 - $30K)*  
*Website ($20K)* |
| Recruit and hire an OUS Sustainability Coordinator within the Chancellor’s Office *(job description attached)* |  |  | A new incentive fund at the OUS level would foster collaboration across campuses and accelerate progress to OUS goals. **Total Request: $1.5M**  
*Board match of current student green fees @ OSU, PSU, SOU, & UO ($1.3M)*  
*Remaining campuses @ $5 per term ($200K)* |
| Create a Sustainability Incentive Fund to support sustainability innovations in teaching, research, outreach and operations *(fund description attached)* |  |  | Fund STARS enrollment costs for the regional campuses and training workshops to promote collective learning among campuses. **Total Request: $10K**  
*Registrations fees for EOU, OIT, SOU, and WOU ($5,100)*  
*Two training workshops in Portland ($4,000 - $5,000)* |
| Join the AASHE Sustainability Tracking and Assessment Rating System (STARS) to assure consistent performance evaluation and benchmarking. *(STARS description attached)* | Continue the existing enrollment of UO, OSU and PSU in the program |  |  |