Oregon Health & Science University seeks Board approval to offer an instructional program leading to a Ph.D. in Cancer Biology.

OREGON HEALTH & SCIENCE UNIVERSITY – PH.D. IN CANCER BIOLOGY

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

   The best new strategies for diagnosis, treatment, and control of cancer will come from identifying and understanding the molecular defects present in cancer cells. A critical component to understanding and controlling cancer is training the next generation of healthcare professionals and scientists that will carry on this effort. The goal of the Ph.D. in Cancer Biology is to provide graduate and medical students with the education and training that will enable them to make significant contributions to the cancer biology field.

   Oregon Health & Science University’s (OHSU) vision is to “improve the health and well being of people in Oregon and beyond.” As Oregon’s only academic health center, OHSU’s mission includes education, research and scholarship, healthcare, and community service. The proposed program in Cancer Biology is designed to provide the organizational context for faculty and students that fosters a coherent inter-departmental and inter-programmatic focus on developing innovative strategies for dealing with cancer and its treatment.

   In *Vision 2020*, which is OHSU’s strategic plan, the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute is a signature program that provides a series of innovative research programs that each interface with clinical care. With partnerships between several academic, clinical, and research departments within the University, the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute is uniquely positioned to provide an outstanding series of multidisciplinary training opportunities. Students in the cancer biology program will be exposed to all facets of the Knight Cancer Institute, including training in one of the faculty research labs before engaging in their own research projects.

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

   Cancer is the leading cause of death among Oregonians. The best new strategies for diagnosis, treatment, and control of cancer will come from identifying the molecular defects present in cancer cells. The goals of the Cancer Biology programs are to train students to conduct research in the broad area of Cancer Biology. The core curriculum focuses on multiple aspects of cancer biology, including the genesis, progression, treatment, and prevention of cancer. The aim is to prepare students for research careers in academia or
industry, although many other outcomes and combinations are possible, such as a career as a physician scientist, patent law, science policy, and public policy.

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

Oregon universities offer graduate programs in biology, but the proposed Cancer Biology program is the first of its kind in Oregon. Several universities in the western United States offer Ph.D.’s in Cancer Biology, including the University of Arizona, Stanford University, University of California at Berkeley, the University of California at San Francisco, and the University of Washington. This program complements the biology programs at Oregon University System universities and provides an in-state opportunity for talented bachelor’s graduates to specialize in this high-demand field.

4. What new resources will be needed initially and on a recurring basis to implement the program? How will the institution provide these resources? What efficiencies or revenue enhancements are achieved with this program, including consolidation or elimination of programs over time, if any?

Resources from research and training grants will be used to implement the new degree within the interdisciplinary division of Molecular and Cellular Biosciences (PCMB). PCMB is an interdisciplinary program comprised of 150 faculty with expertise in chemical, molecular, cellular, and systems biology. The Cancer Biology program will have 21 primary faculty and 34 adjunct faculty, all members of OHSU’s graduate faculty.

All appropriate University committees and the OUS Provosts’ Council have positively reviewed the proposed program.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE COMMITTEE
The OUS Provosts’ Council recommends that the Board’s Academic Strategies Committee authorize Oregon Health & Science University to establish an instructional program leading to a Ph.D. in Cancer Biology, effective Fall 2010. With Committee approval, a five-year follow-up review of this program will be conducted in 2015-16.

(Committee action required.)