The University of Oregon seeks Board approval to offer an instructional program leading to a B.A./B.S. degree in General Social Science.

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON – B.A./B.S. IN GENERAL SOCIAL SCIENCE

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

The University of Oregon (UO) proposes a new B.A./B.S. degree in General Social Science that will provide undergraduates with the opportunity to pursue interdisciplinary studies addressing contemporary issues in the Social Sciences. The UO Academic Plan stipulates growth of the institution to 24,000 students. The Social Sciences have absorbed a significant share of these new students and must develop more efficient ways to teach them. This student/teaching-oriented proposal is expected to greatly improve student access, offering students opportunities to major in new areas that have high student demand. It is also likely to improve efficiency in instruction by providing a mechanism for students to explore previously under-subscribed courses that are well-positioned to prepare them in their particular area of interest. Finally, it is also likely to improve retention by providing students who are not appropriately matched within a particular Social Science department an option that allows them to meet their broad interests in Social Sciences without the constraint of operating in a single department.

The UO is a comprehensive research university that serves its students and the people of Oregon, the nation, and the world through the creation and transfer of knowledge in the liberal arts, the natural and social sciences, and the professions. The proposed program is directly responsive to many of the University’s efforts to enrich the public that sustains it, representing a commitment to undergraduate education; integration of teaching, research, and service; acceptance of the challenge of an evolving social, political, and technological environment by guiding change rather than reacting to it; and cultivation of an attitude toward citizenship that fosters the wise exercise of civic responsibilities and individual judgment throughout life. The proposed specialization in Crime, Law and Society will serve the needs of students interested in pursuing careers in law, law enforcement, criminology, or corrections. The proposed specialization in Geo-Politics, Policy and the Environment promulgates the University’s central theme of sustainability. The proposed specialization in Applied Economics, Business and Society will help develop a well-rounded workforce for Oregon’s present and future businesses. The proposed specialization in Social Studies Teaching will help students prepare for state licensure and enable them to develop the minds and enrich the lives of future Oregonians.
2. **What evidence of need does the institution have for the program?**

The UO needs to accommodate an increasing number of students, many of whom major in the Social Sciences. In the ten years ending 2007-08, Social Sciences at UO grew by 35,000 student hours, then increased another 40,000 student hours in the last two years, and now stand at roughly 200,000 credit hours. Currently, there are ca. 1000 majors in the Political Science Department, 900 in Economics, and 800 in Sociology and these departments are stretched to capacity. Some of the other Social Science departments, however, have fewer majors and could still accept more students. With the closure of the UO General Social Science program at the Bend campus, there are no other General Social Science majors with the four tracks as defined in the proposal at other OUS campuses. The College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) has absorbed a significant share of these students and the Social Sciences have absorbed a significant share of those students coming into CAS. The General Social Science major will enable students to meet graduation requirements by taking courses across multiple departments and, therefore, is expected to be an effective means of redistributing students across the Social Sciences and across other divisions within the College and units in the University.

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

There are no other General Social Science majors with the four tracks as defined in our proposal at other campuses in the state. The UO formerly offered the B.A./B.S. major in General Social Science, but this degree program was deactivated in the mid-1970’s until its reactivation in 2001 at the Bend campus, where a General Social Science major without specific tracks is presently offered. With the current restructuring of the Bend program and greatly increasing student demand, it is essential that this expanded General Social Science program be brought to the Eugene campus. The Social Science Teacher track coordinates with the UO Middle/Secondary Social Studies Teacher Licensure program and the Masters in Teaching Education program now offered by Oregon State University in Bend.

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?**

The General Social Science major will require a Director and office space. Beyond this position and some additional staff support, the major is expected to be resource neutral, drawing on existing courses rather than creating new courses, and efficiently “bundling” courses into specialization-track fulfilling offerings. The financial viability of the program is solely dependent on the number of majors and it is anticipated that the additional resources required would be generated by enrollments of 25 students in each of the four specialization tracks. UO’s expectation is that the major will enroll substantially more than this number of students, making it self-supporting.
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 the University of Oregon to establish an instructional program leading to a B.A./B.S. degree in General Social Science, effective Winter 2011. With Committee approval, a five-year follow-up review of this program will be conducted in 2015-16.

(Committee action required.)