Table of Contents:

Eastern Oregon University Background/Context ................................................................. 1
Preliminary Operating Request ............................................................................................... 6
Assumptions/Major Cost Drivers Considered in Request ..................................................... 7
Description of Benefits from Additional Investment ............................................................ 8
Preliminary Capital Request ................................................................................................. 17
Eastern Oregon University Background/Context

Introduction

Eastern Oregon University (EOU) has a proud history of serving citizens and rural communities throughout the state of Oregon and in the surrounding region. Founded in 1929, today EOU serves our communities through a special focus on rural, regional, and distance learning. Long an essential part of the fabric of northeast Oregon, EOU plays a unique role as the educational, cultural, and economic engine throughout eastern Oregon and other rural areas of the state, offering 22 bachelor’s degrees, more than 30 different minors, four master’s programs and multiple partnership opportunities. Programs are delivered on campus, online, and onsite in La Grande and at 16 regional centers throughout the state and include liberal arts and sciences, business, education, and partner programs in agriculture, nursing, and dental hygiene.

Founded in 1929 by the state legislature as Eastern Oregon Normal School, in 1939 the name of the school was changed to Eastern Oregon College of Education, which became, two years later, a four-year degree-granting institution. Throughout the evolution of EOU’s identity and subsequent name changes, the institution’s central role of service to eastern Oregon’s rural communities has remained constant. EOU’s core values of access, affordability, and engagement reflect our mission and drive our three core themes, as discussed in the body of this report.

Institutional Context

Eastern Oregon University’s founding mission was to serve the community and the region, and the University’s current mission remains centered on providing the citizens of the region with access to a quality education, delivering affordable programs, and engaging with the rural and frontier regions of the state. EOU’s rural geographic location, traditions, and work ethic play an important role in the school’s history as it explores the new dimensions of work and society in a changing local and global environment. EOU is one of seven universities in the Oregon University System (OUS), comprised of three large research universities and four smaller regional universities, reaching more than one million people each year through on-campus classes, statewide public services, and lifelong learning.

EOU plays a critical role in Oregon by providing regional access and service to eastern Oregon and the rural coast, a statewide presence through distance education, and liberal arts and professional programs available on campus, online, and on site through partnerships with community colleges across the state. As a member of OUS, EOU is unique. In its rural setting relatively remote from the population centers of the western side of the state, the University serves rural communities inside a geographic footprint roughly the size of the state of Pennsylvania. As a result, EOU serves a varied student population both on campus and at a distance, both onsite through its 16 regional centers and online. Longstanding agreements with partner universities in OUS ensure that students in the eastern region of the state have access to degrees in nursing, agriculture and agribusiness, criminal justice, and dental hygiene. As a nationally recognized leader in providing online courses, EOU works with students across
Oregon, giving them the flexibility they need to reach their goals. Nine different degree programs and 16 minors can be completed entirely online, bringing affordable and accessible education to students living throughout Oregon and beyond. More than 50 percent of current EOU students are taking advantage of a mix of flexible course accessibility.

Most importantly, EOU is known for serving its students and providing quality instructional support for their accomplishments. EOU offers 22 bachelor’s degrees, as well as two bachelor’s degrees in nursing and five bachelor’s degrees in agriculture through our partnership programs; more than 30 different minors; multiple pre-professional programs; and four master’s degrees, in business, teaching, science in education, and fine arts in writing. The ratio of fall 2011-12 FTE enrollment (calculated as full-time plus one-third part-time headcount) to full-time faculty headcount was 26.3:1, allowing for direct interaction with our superb teaching faculty according to the 2012 OUS Performance Report to the Board. The University employs 112 full-time teaching faculty, 13 part-time teaching faculty (no teaching assistants), and 252 staff. EOU’s student population for Fall 2012 was 4,208, and the total annual cost of tuition and fees for 2012-13 was $7,238, slightly above the national average (USDOE College Navigator and College Affordability and Transparency List). EOU’s on-campus housing has the programmatic capacity for 508 students in four residence halls, with maximum capacity for 528, and there are more than 50 active student groups on campus, including 10 diversity-focused clubs.

Many of EOU’s students are first generation college students from small schools in remote regions of the state and beyond. A significant number of students are non-traditional students who previously stopped-out of college. An equally significant number of students transfer from community colleges to complete four-year degrees at EOU. For all of these students, the university experience is both a challenge and an opportunity. A very high proportion of EOU students require financial aid—more than at any other university in the Oregon University System. EOU students received nearly $37 million in financial aid, including fee remissions, scholarships, grants and loans in 2011-12. EOU’s annual $55 million budget promotes the regional economy. An essential part of the fabric of northeast Oregon, EOU plays a unique role as an economic engine.

Mission and Values

EOU’s mission accurately reflects EOU’s role in providing regional access to liberal arts and professional programs and to promote the economic, social, and cultural development of eastern and rural Oregon. The mission remains unchanged since 2008:

EOU guides student inquiry through integrated, high-quality liberal arts and professional programs that lead to responsible and reflective action in a diverse and interconnected world. As an educational, cultural and scholarly center, EOU connects the rural regions of Oregon to a wider world. Our beautiful setting and small size enhance the personal attention our students receive, while partnerships with colleges, universities, agencies and communities add to the educational possibilities of our region and state.

EOU’s mission manifests as a regional hub for education, culture, and scholarship throughout eastern Oregon and other rural areas of the state. EOU plays a unique role within the OUS as the

![Figure 1.A.1](image)

EOU’S MISSION GUIDES THE UNIVERSITY. UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETATION OF THIS MISSION AND HOW IT RELATES TO THE PRESENT AND EVOLVING NEEDS OF EOU STUDENTS AND THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES HAVE LED TO THREE SHARED VALUES THAT BOUND THE UNIVERSITY’S CURRENT STRATEGIC DIRECTION. AS EOU POSITIONED ITSELF FOR THE FUTURE, THESE VALUES UNDERSCORE THE INSTITUTION’S LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY, AS follows:

**Access** — EOU PROVIDES STUDENTS FROM EASTERN OREGON AND BEYOND THE BEST ACCESS TO A QUALITY EDUCATION THROUGH ONSITE, ONLINE AND ON-CAMPUS PROGRAMS. OUR PRIORITY IS TO REMOVE BARRIERS FOR STUDENTS WHO MAY BE PLACE BOUND, FINANCIALLY RESTRICTED, OR CULTURALLY/SOCIOEconomically DISADVANTAGED.

**Affordability** — EOU OFFERS STUDENTS A QUALITY EDUCATION AT AN AFFORDABLE PRICE. OUR PRIORITY IS TO KEEP THE TOTAL COST OF COLLEGE FAVORABLY COMPETITIVE WITH UNIVERSITIES IN THE REGION AND ACROSS THE STATE.

**Engagement** — EOU IS RESPONSIVE TO THE COMMUNITY AND REGION BY ENGAGING IN PARTNERSHIPS THAT SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING AND THAT ENHANCE THE ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL LIFE OF THE REGION.

These shared values set EOU’S STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND HELP THE UNIVERSITY UNDERSTAND HOW TO FULFILL ITS MISSION. THESE VALUES PROVIDE THE CONTEXT FOR UNDERSTANDING THAT THE THREE CORE THEMES BOTH GUIDE HOW MISSION-DRIVEN EFFORTS ARE OPERATIONALIZED AND HOW RESOURCES ARE ALLOCATED TO THOSE EFFORTS.
Rural Oregon includes 26 of Oregon’s 36 counties, which together encompass about 80% of the state’s land mass and 20% of its population. Rural counties are vital to the state’s fiscal health, with economies that rely heavily on agriculture, timber, recreation, and tourism. Eastern Oregon University is committed to providing Oregon’s rural population with the higher education necessary to prosper, most especially in our 12-county primary service in eastern Oregon.

The educational attainment and college-going rates of Oregonians in rural counties lag behind those of their urban counterparts. About 31.2% of people in Oregon’s urban counties have a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 19.5% in rural counties. This puts rural residents at an economic disadvantage. Additionally, in the fields of agriculture, timber, recreation, and tourism, as in so many others, technology is changing the way Oregonians work; workers in these industries have a higher level of education today than they did in 2000. It is expected that nearly four-fifths of high-wage jobs created in Oregon by 2018 will require that job seekers hold at least a bachelor’s degree to be competitive.

The lower rate of educational attainment can largely be attributed to the many barriers rural Oregonians face, such as limited geographical access to Oregon’s public universities, affordability challenges, cultural or social barriers, and insufficient assistance to pursue higher education, including financial aid and academic preparation support.

In 2007, about 27% of public high school diplomas were awarded to rural students, but only 22% of OUS first-time freshmen who enrolled the following fall were from a rural county. This means that students from rural high schools are 24% less likely to participate at an OUS institution than their urban counterparts. The OUS study, Where Have Oregon’s Graduates Gone? has shown that rural students generally do not pursue college in another sector or state; a large proportion
of rural students do not attend college at all, which underscores the vital role that EOU plays throughout rural Oregon as a public regional university.

The lower college participation and completion rates of rural students compared to their urban counterparts is a matter of serious concern to the State of Oregon, and much effort has been dedicated to identifying the barriers that create these gaps. Following are three significant obstacles many rural students face, along with targeted efforts by EOU that can and potentially could address the barriers and enable Oregon to close the urban/rural higher education gap.

**Income:** Per capita income is lower in rural regions of the state, making it harder for parents to afford college for their children. Improved funding for the EOU student scholarships represents the single largest initiative to increase access to college for low- and moderate-income rural Oregonians. Awarding more grants that better defray educational costs, and serving more students, benefits low- and moderate-income students and families across the state.

**Distance:** For many rural Oregonians, the closest university can be several hours away, and for none of Oregon’s regional universities is this more true than for the students and communities served by EOU. Some rural students’ lack of exposure to a college setting can be a major barrier to enrolling in postsecondary education. EOU has increased the level of outreach to rural areas by expanding extended and distance education services and offering partnerships with community colleges and rural K-12 school districts and ESDs.

**Familiarity:** Many rural students are the first in their families to go to college. Pre-college academic preparation and enrichment programs available to rural communities are vital to get students familiar and comfortable with college expectations. Examples of successful programs include EOU’s Eastern Promise and Rural Access programs, our Native American outreach programs and Veteran’s access programs, as well as the seamless advising relationships we have built with community college partners throughout rural Oregon. We currently offer college readiness programs for low-income rural students in numerous middle and high schools in more than a dozen rural Oregon communities, and are now expanding to additional rural communities through the collaborative K-14 relationships built through the Eastern Promise.

**Retention Efforts:** Getting rural students into college is the first step, but the ultimate goal is making sure they succeed once they get there. Once rural students choose to attend college, it becomes extremely important to understand the struggles these students face. Retention efforts for underrepresented students attempt to focus on (1) connecting students to the campus and other students; (2) recognizing student adjustment issues; (3) identifying campus resources and using each appropriately; and (4) developing strategies for dealing with issues in these and other areas facing students, which can be unique to each campus environment. EOU’s Rural Access efforts have proven key to our success in supporting rural students as they work toward degree completion.

Later in this request, EOU addresses its current targeted programs aimed at serving our role and mission throughout rural Oregon, and how incremental increases in state investment would institutionalize our critical targeted programs and lead to improved recruitment and retention for the students we serve.
## Preliminary Operating Request

### Eastern Oregon University

**HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE BUDGET SUBMITTAL for 2015-17**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Fund Allocation</th>
<th>2013-15 Estimated</th>
<th>2015-17 Proposed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment Driven Funding</td>
<td>20,363,599</td>
<td>20,363,599</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional Funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Targeted Programs</td>
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<td>1,963,380</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incentive for Student Success</td>
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<td>457,970</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuition Buydown (includes estimated settle-up)</td>
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<td>1,330,190</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEIU Appropriation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Appropriation</td>
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<td><strong>Total Public University Support Fund</strong></td>
<td><strong>$29,232,792</strong></td>
<td><strong>$29,071,771</strong></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Appropriation Funding Request</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared Services Support/Governance (TRU Costs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PEBB Liability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase in Expenses (3% inflation for the Biennium)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase in Compensation (3.2% annually)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deferred Maintenance Projects below $1,000,000*</td>
<td>2,559,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Additional Funding Request</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,340,267</strong></td>
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**OUS State Programs**

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<tr>
<th>ETIC Funding (Currently used for Instructional Support)</th>
<th>344,079</th>
<th>355,089</th>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer from OSU for Fifth Site Operations</td>
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<td>1,171,617</td>
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<tr>
<td>SELP Debt Service</td>
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<td>1,296,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total 2013-15 Estimated State Appropriation</strong></td>
<td><strong>$30,872,871</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total 2015-17 State Appropriation Request</strong></td>
<td><strong>$39,234,744</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 2015-17 State Appropriation Request plus 5%                | $41,196,481       |                  |
| 2015-17 State Appropriation Request plus 10%               | $43,158,219       |                  |
| 2015-17 State Appropriation Request plus 25%               | $49,043,430       |                  |

*All individual deferred maintenance projects are less than $1M per project*
Assumptions/Major Cost Drivers Considered in Request

In preparing the 2015-17 preliminary request, EOU used the following assumptions:

- General inflation of 3% for the biennium
- Total compensation increases of 3.2% annually for each year of the biennium
- Tuition buy-down
- Shared Services/Governance expense of $963,624 annually
- ETIC Replacement Funding - It is recognized that ETIC funding is no longer part of the Public University Support fund; however, the funding has been, and is currently used, to fund instructional programs and faculty positions in technology. Therefore, in order to maintain those programs and faculty, replacement funding for ETIC is requested.
- Future Budget Planning – EOU will be engaging in a budget planning exercise over the next two months to reduce expenses and balance its budget. As the plan becomes complete, and the reductions are identified, the savings recognized will be used to stabilize the university’s financial position, as well as to reinvest in programs and initiatives that directly impact student success.
Description of Benefits from Additional Investment

EOU’s targeted and regional programs are critical to its ability to serve students, to fulfill its role in Oregon, and to meet its mission. Highlighted below are four of the targeted programs that would be institutionalized into the base budget should additional investment of 5%, 10%, or 25% be provided. In addition, one new program is presented should this additional investment be made.

1. Eastern Promise

The Eastern Promise program fosters improved academic success among the children and youth of rural Oregon through University and community college higher education and K-12 partnerships that build a culture where a high school and a college degree are actively sought and obtained. The Eastern Promise supports Oregon’s 40-40-20 compact by providing access to early college credit activities and grades 5-12 pre-college activities, preparing students for college and careers, and lowering their college costs by bringing credits with them. The Eastern Promise program is a cross-sector proposal representing active and ongoing collaboration with the Oregon University System/EOU, the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development/BMCC & TVCC, and the State Department of Education/InterMountain ESD.

The Eastern Promise entails Blue Mountain Community College (BMCC), Treasure Valley Community College (TVCC), Eastern Oregon University (EOU) and the Intermountain Education Services District (ESD) working together to create a truly seamless pipeline of students from K-12 to post-secondary and to provide the necessary tools to ensure success. The goal is to create a “college going culture” by collaborating to create solutions which break down barriers for students by implementing innovative strategies to overcome the challenges of education in a rural setting.

The Eastern Promise also focuses on consolidating resources and improving efficiencies, which enable the program to promise parents and students a different level of accountability in education. In summary, the Eastern Promise centers on increasing post-secondary educational opportunities for high school students in Eastern Oregon. The Eastern Promise specifically builds on opportunities created by the State of Oregon through the Oregon Transfer Module (OTM) and the Associate of Arts Oregon Transfer (AAOT).

The primary strategies driving the Eastern Promise include the following:

1. Early College credit programs — Credit by Proficiency, Dual Credit & Expanded Options, Advanced Placement, with Credit by Proficiency specifically constructed for statewide scalability. All of these pathways are directly connected to higher rates of completion for the OTM, AAOT, and other certifications.

2. Faculty Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) — Secondary, Community College, and University faculty set standards and evaluation processes, building faculty relationships crucial to K-20 success.

3. “Local and Focused” based solutions to student success — Eastern Promise activities and
Early College credit offered in areas of demonstrated need for specific school districts.

4. Pre-college activities beginning in 5th Grade and aimed at creating a college-going culture with both students and their families.

**Program Justification and Link to 10-Year Outcomes**

The Education Policy Vision paper developed by the Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB) points out that “Oregon has an urgent need to improve high school completion rates, and a long way to go to reach 100 percent completion of the 40-40-20 Goal.” The Eastern Promise develops a K-20 collaborative approach across all levels—K-12, community college, university—that is scalable statewide with ALL K-20 constituencies.

This proposal speaks directly to having a positive impact on Strategy 1.2 and 2.1.

**Strategy 1.2: Implement coordinated and aligned set of standards, assessments and validations**

“Standards and curriculum must be vertically aligned from one grade to the next, providing a logical progression that leads students seamlessly from one learning stage to the next.

...Oregon has also adopted the more rigorous New Oregon Diploma, expanded dual credit opportunities and streamlined articulation and transfer of students in postsecondary. However, there is much work to do to align these initiatives and create the necessary culture of collaboration between early learning, K-12 and post-secondary.”

**Strategy 2.1 Define the core outcomes**

“...Ready for college and career training: High school students should demonstrate career and college readiness through multiple measures. Beyond the academic knowledge or courses taken, they should demonstrate critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity – all skills that prepare them for postsecondary education or employment.”

This proposal also supports the OEIB goals in support of the state’s 40-40-20 targets for the general population, underrepresented minorities and Pell Grant eligible students, as well as the specific measures under the Connections categories related to both early college credits and community college transfers. In addition, it supports the State Board of Higher Education goals for creating an educated citizenry in Oregon and contributing positively to the economic, civic and cultural life of communities. Focused specifically on creating and leveraging concrete opportunities at the grades 11-14 point of the K-20 continuum, the Eastern Promise offers a sound means of seamlessly connecting this crucial leverage point to the baccalaureate end of the State’s 40-40-20 goals.

**Program Performance**

The outcomes of the Eastern Promise are closely tied to the State of Oregon’s 40-40-20 expectations. The Eastern Promise activities and resultant deliverables—including the collaborative models between K-12, community college, and university partners—are particularly timely, specifically because they are scalable on a statewide level. Funding this
proposal will result not just in concrete and regionally-focused progress toward 40-40-20 throughout rural Oregon, but will also result in a set of resources both vital and timely to the state’s larger efforts to reach 40-40-20 goals. Specifically, the goals of the Eastern Promise are to:

- Increase the number of students from Eastern Oregon who are prepared for and attend college directly from high school;
- Increase the number of students who obtain the Oregon Transfer Model (OTM) and/or the Associates of Art Oregon Transfer (AAOT) degrees;
- Increase the number of BMCC and TVCC students who earn degrees or certificates and remain in the region;
- Increase the number of BMCC and TVCC students who successfully transfer to EOU or other four-year institution;
- Increase the number of EOU students who graduate with a bachelor’s or advanced degree and live in the region; and
- Provide a scalable model for pre-college and early college collaborative programming for K-12, community colleges, and universities throughout Oregon.

2. Rural Access

This program funding supports increasing college attendance in rural Oregon. Approximately 14 percent of the college-age population (18-24) in rural Oregon is attending college, which is less than half of the state’s average of 30.8 percent. The Rural Access Program at Eastern Oregon University (EOU) works to bridge the gap between rural students and higher education – especially minority students from Hispanic and Native American backgrounds.

The Rural Access program at EOU was developed specifically to reverse the national trend of declining post-secondary attendance by students from rural communities. Utilizing faculty and academic resources at Eastern Oregon University, staff work with students through nine different sites in eastern Oregon; supporting “embedded” part-time college advisers and a full-time Native American and Rural Programs Coordinator; and developing bi-lingual marketing materials on college affordability and access.

The program seeks to create, develop, and encourage a college-going culture in rural Oregon to increase the percentage of high school graduates attending college to the state average by 2015, resulting in an increased investment in economic development in the region and an increased regional and state tax base. The 2007 Legislature provided (via SB 5515) $580,000 to institute a pilot program at EOU to increase college attendance in rural areas of the state. This pilot program was subsequently expanded and funded at $538,900 in 2009 and again at $459,790 in 2011. This proposal connects directly to the Board’s Academic Strategies Committee priorities and goals, specifically the Student Participation and Completion Subcommittee, which works to “develop analysis and options leading to a statewide effort to improve participation, retention and success of underserved populations in postsecondary education throughout Oregon, through initiatives which directly address declining levels of freshman participation and completion to graduation.” These efforts support the Board’s Access and Affordability and Excellence in Delivery and Productivity initiatives. The successes of the efforts under the Rural Access
Program have been marked statewide and nationally: the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) featured the high impact practices that have been developed at EOU in their February 2011 national newsletter (http://www.aacu.org/aacu_news/AACUNews11/February11/feature.cfm). The Rural Access Program at EOU focuses on two primary strategies:

**Strategy 1:** Increase college attendance by making college education in rural Oregon more accessible.

**Activity a:** To encourage more high school graduates to pursue college by establishing a district-based (or “high school based” in large districts) program to mentor high school students as they progress through their secondary education, and to monitor their progress. To accomplish this, EOU advisors are in place in different districts whose sole responsibility will be to advocate for college education.

**Activity b:** Offer multiple college courses on high school campuses using a combination of traditional and extended residence courses as well as different modes of distance education. EOU doubled the number of credit hours offered every year through the 2006-2007 academic years. Since 2006-2007, EOU has increased or held steady the numbers of these courses in place at high schools throughout our rural region. These activities which also result in early college credits have been integrated into the larger Eastern Promise set of activities.

**Activity c:** Create a college-going culture by starting early outreach to mentor 7th through 9th graders on the benefits of college education, leading to a significant increase of additional students enrolling at any four-year institution each year.

**Activity d:** Reinforce the college-education culture by involving and educating parents in the processes and activities surrounding higher education, including financial aid, scholarships, and applying for admission to the college of their choice.

**Activity e:** Host summer institutes for dual credit on university campuses. The summer institutes have since been institutionalized, enrolling 40-50 high school attendees each summer. Plans for further developments with these summer institutes are focused on offering on-site summer institutes in Hermiston at the Eastern Oregon Higher Education Center and in Pendleton for students of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, as well as the students at the Warm Springs reservation.

**Strategy 2:** Increase college attendance by making higher education in rural Oregon more affordable.

**Activity a:** Establish special “Rural Oregon College Scholarships” for the graduates of rural high schools. The EOU Foundation has been successful in fundraising for these scholarships. Over the past five years, the Foundation has grown EOU’s endowment from $1.5 million to over $9 million. Of this total, over 90% of the endowment is directly aimed at these scholarships. It is anticipated that further funding sources will continue to include
private donors, foundations and state and federal grants.

**Activity b:** Support the creation of partnership agreements between universities and rural high schools to encourage high school graduates to pursue a college education and return to rural areas.

**Program Justification and Link to 10-Year Outcome**
This program speaks directly to having a positive impact on the Education Policy Vision Strategies 1.3, 2.3 and 3.2 and is uniquely positioned to address the state’s goal of 40-40-20 in the rural setting.

**Strategy 1.3: Focus on transition points between learning stages**

“In order to ensure a coordinated system of PK-20, specific attention must be paid to the transition points between learning stages...Focus must be placed on supporting high-quality learning and making transitions seamless as learners progress from early childhood through post-secondary experiences....It is crucial for Oregon to research and examine the factors leading to risk of failure, identify students who are at risk, deliver appropriate screening and evidence-based interventional strategies, and track students’ progress to completion.”

**Strategy 2.3: Invest in evidence-based programs and practices that improve outcomes**

“Post-secondary access and affordability: To reach Oregon's 40-40-20 Goal, the state must be strategic in instilling a college-going culture across the continuum, and in making, and honoring, a promise that post-secondary education will be within reach for all learners who achieve the important outcome of earning a high school diploma. We must persuade a much larger share of learners that a post-secondary degree brings returns in the job market and create a clear state policy on affordability that ensures increases in tuition are matched by increases in aid to protect those least able to afford higher education.”

**Strategy 3.2: Research and dissemination of best practices**

“To ensure that decisions and budgets are built around outcomes, the state must invest in the capacity to not only collect data, but to research that data and provide much deeper analysis of what is working across the continuum. Research and data will allow educators to become more rigorous about predicting the likelihood of dropping out on a student-by-student basis and understanding which conditions...raise the odds of graduation. Teachers need reliable and vetted resources proven effective...”

This program also addresses the **Economy and Jobs Policy Vision** statement that:
“Oregon must also address growing disparities across regions and demographic groups...Given the significant demographic shifts that have and will continue to occur over the coming decades, policy makers must ensure that all of Oregon’s citizens state-wide are prepared to benefit from economic development opportunities and growth along career pathways.”
Program Performance
The performance metrics associated with EOU’s Rural Access proposal are consistent with both the original legislative intent of SB 5515 and the current OUS/EOU OEIB Achievement Compact, as well as institutional role and mission and state and regional needs. These metrics are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural Access Program Outcome Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) # of rural high school students engaged in EOU Summer Institutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) # and % of newly admitted Oregon freshmen entering with HS dual credit or other early college credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Six year graduation rate for all first-time, full-time freshmen from rural Oregon high schools transfer students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) # of bachelor’s degrees awarded to rural Oregonians</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These data address the number of people served over time and the quality of services provided (inherent in the enrollment and retention data definitions).

3. OUS Regional Support

This funding provides financial stability at EOU and other OUS regional campuses and funds the governor’s Regional Solution Centers. This funding is critical to support the financial infrastructure of smaller universities that collectively serve over 22,000 students and help address issues of economies of scale and lack of depth in funding streams common at the larger institutions; and the issues associated with serving the typically under-represented and more economically challenged students in their areas.

Regional Support funding is crucial to Eastern Oregon University’s ability to both maintain and improve retention and graduation of our regional students. The funding recognizes that enrollment-driven targeted programs operate at different economies of scale than do larger more comprehensive programs, thus providing financial stability key long-term academic and fiscal sustainability. The impact of Regional Support funding at EOU cuts across all academic and student services areas. Key areas impacted are support of our Eastern Oregon Regional Solutions Center (RSC) Student Internship Program, which places EOU students in internships with local and state agencies in conjunction with the RSC agency personnel and EOU faculty. The Regional Support funding is also key to EOU’s collaboration with OHSU’s Nursing Program, housed on-campus at EOU.

Program Justification and Link to 10-Year Outcome

Financial stability is critical to ensuring the state’s goals of 40-40-20 and access to education for all Oregonians is met. In section 2.3 Invest in evidence-based programs and practices that improve outcomes of the Education Policy Vision, it is noted that “To reach Oregon's 40-40-20 Goal, the state must be strategic in instilling a college-going culture across the continuum, and in making, and honoring, a promise that post-secondary education will be within reach for all
learners who achieve the important outcome of earning a high school diploma.” Ensuring the stability of regional post-secondary options will provide a pathway for those that are region-bound.

In section 1.3 *Focus on transition points between learning stages* of the Education Policy Vision, it is noted that specific attention must be given to the transition points between learning stages. Regional support allows OUS institutions to provide a focus on ensuring that students make effective transitions through the use of:

- Articulation agreements – helping students build a pathway between community colleges and universities.
- Advanced Credit Programs (ACP) – giving high school students an opportunity to take college courses during their senior year to help give them a head start on pursuing a higher education degree.
- Distance Education (DE) Programs – providing access to place-bound students to many programs. DE also provides access to place-bound practicing professionals with associate degrees interested in career advancement and who want to pursue a baccalaureate degree.
- Partnership programs in different regions of the state – dental hygiene in La Grande in partnership with Oregon Dental Service (ODS) and EOU, clinical laboratory science and paramedic programs in Portland in partnership with OHSU, and dental hygiene in Salem in partnership with Chemeketa Community College.
- Pilot reverse transfer – developing a process by which community college students can transition to a university baccalaureate degree program, saving time and money, as well as transfer university credits back to the community college to complete an associate’s degree.

In section 2.3 *Investing in education based programs and practices that improve outcomes* of the Educational Policy Vision, one of the areas of investment is Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). The technology degrees offered by Oregon Tech are unique in the university system. No other Oregon university offers these unique applied laboratory-based degrees. However, laboratory intensive programs are expensive to deliver. Regional Support funds allow Oregon Tech to:

- Maintain access and affordability for students by helping to hold tuition as low as possible.
- Maintain the quality of current programs.
- Explore opportunities to develop new programs to meet industry needs.

The funding for the Collaborative Nursing program ties to the Economy and Jobs Policy Vision as follows:

Strategies 3.1 “*Use Sector Strategies to assure a highly skilled workforce that can help sustain and grow priority industry clusters*” and 3.2 “*Strengthen and align Oregon’s workforce to meet the labor skill demand of employers and move people into career pathways.*”
Economic & Jobs Policy, Strategy 2: Be more effective, integrate economic and community planning, project finance, infrastructure and regulatory services from the bottom up for efficiency

Strategy 2.2 Create a fertile economic environment in Oregon for all businesses
- Partner with local communities to identify local solutions that balance economic, equity and environmental grass-roots values.
- Be a proactive partner in local pursuits through data collection, research, facilitation and leveraging of resources.

4. Services to Students with Disabilities

EOU Disability Services strives to provide and promote a supportive, accessible, non-discriminatory learning and working environment for students, faculty, staff, and community members with disabilities. Accommodations include: notetakers, books on tape readers, extended testing time, distraction free testing, proctors for testing, services to meet individual needs. The importance of the Disability Services Office at EOU is underscored by the rural location of EOU and the relative scarcity of diagnostically-oriented testing and related services locally, as well as the relative scarcity of community-based resources. Many of EOU’s students, both on-campus and off-campus, have no disabilities-related services available to them beyond those offered through the EOU office. Disability Services coordinates academic adjustments and auxiliary aids for students with disabilities, including visual, hearing or mobility impairments; learning and psychological disabilities; chronic health conditions; and other disabilities. The DS program also assists in the modification of classroom, laboratory, on-campus housing and University program modifications as well as access to adaptive and assistive technology. Services include note taking, alternative format text, and reader-scribes.

Program Justification and Link to 10-Year Outcome

Providing these specialized services promotes student success and is an example of a model that promotes “flexibility, innovation, and individualized learning” as referenced in section 2.3 Invest in evidence-based programs and practices that improve outcomes of the Education Policy Vision

5. Veterans Retention Specialist

Purpose & Relevance
EOU is seeing a very sharp increase in the number of veterans attending EOU, given the both the recent return from deployment of our local National Guard unit and the increasing numbers of veterans from other units and service branches either returning to college or entering for the first time. These students need very special attention not only to deal with the GI Bill benefit programs but also the social and cultural shock they encounter as the re-enter “normal society” at the same time they are also learning to deal with the rigors of university life. The intent behind this legislative request is to fund a veterans-specific retention specialist to assist these students (and prospective students) for success.

Funding for one position to work with these students, our veterans, would generate a significant return on investment for both EOU, as well as veterans hoping to successfully engage college-
level studies and degree completion.

Planning
Eastern Oregon University has long been noted as a “Veterans Friendly Campus” and has also been a longstanding member of the US Department of Defense Soldier Opportunity Consortium (SOC). Given the high percentage of serving soldiers and other service members drawn from rural communities, it is no surprise that EOU is experiencing a sharp increase in the number of veterans attending EOU. We work closely with our military science program—the ROTC Gold Program—and enjoy one of the strongest such programs in the state. We also work closely with city and county veterans services organizations, and housed the Union County veterans’ services officer until funding for that position was eliminated at the state level.

Alternatives
We currently “add” the duties that such a specialist would fulfill to existing staff members already dealing with our students in an overall sense. However, these needs of our veterans are very specialized and have unique characteristics that need to be addressed. In addition, given the recent staff reductions we have undergone in order to stay on track with our sustainability plan, we cannot fulfill these veterans-specific functions by adding the duties to existing staff over the long term. Nor, given the recent budget and staff reductions, are we able to reallocate existing resources to such a position.

Impact on Others/Outcomes & Connection to State Goals
While the impact of this proposal on other statewide agencies and constituencies is minimal, the impact of the proposal on local and regional veterans would be incalculable. Data show that retention and completion rates for returning veterans is much lower on average than for students in general, and a veterans retention specialist would provide a concrete means of helping these students be more successful, both immediately and over the longer term.

Of the three outcome measures under the Completion category of the current OUS/OEIB Achievement Compact, this proposal relates directly to the first two: the number of bachelor’s degrees awarded to Oregonians & the number of bachelor’s degrees awarded to rural Oregonians. In addition, under the Connections category of the Compact, this proposal directly addresses the number of bachelor’s degrees awarded to transfer students from Oregon Community Colleges.

<table>
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<th>Summary of Additional Investment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
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**Preliminary Capital Request**

**Deferred Maintenance Request:** $2,559,000

This funding request for capital repair at EOU represents upwards of thirty projects across campus to address the growing backlog of deferred maintenance. Various projects from sidewalk snow melt systems, roofing replacement and repair, lighting replacement and repair, HVAC system repair/upgrades, and building access improvements are all greatly needed on the EOU campus in order to preserve and protect current physical state infrastructure and investment.

**Capital Project Request for the Eastern Learning Commons:** $25,000,000 XI-Q State-paid Debt

**What is the Eastern Learning Commons?**
The Eastern Learning Commons will be a multi-use facility connecting all aspects of on-campus and off-campus academic life. It will house two primary programs that are the heart of EOU’s educational mission: Campus Technology and the Learning Center. Currently, these programs are dispersed across campus in spaces put together out of necessity, utilizing available space and facilities. The current facilities are becoming crowded and compromised. This causes inefficiency for both staff and students who rely upon these essential services. Combining these programs will create a campus technology hub and a complete learning-centered environment that will be the nexus of technology and communication on campus.

**21st Century Learning Community**
Achieving Oregon’s ambitious 40-40-20 goals will require engagement of a broad array of students, including non-traditional earners, first-generation students and returning veterans. A growing number of these are “hybrid” students, using a fluid mix of on-campus and on-line programs and classes. As the University has modified its curriculum and outreach to serve this changing learning community, its facilities and technological services have not kept pace. The Eastern Learning Commons is envisioned as a facility specifically designed to meet the changing needs of the University’s on-site and on-line body and programs.

**Improving Educational Delivery**
The ELC will significantly improve student achievement by making the Writing Center, Math Center, First Year Experience, Office for Disability Services, Testing Services, and Group Tutoring easy to access in one integrated facility. By combining these programs with the University’s IT/Communication Services, the ELC will provide students and instructors with highly adaptable, technology rich learning labs and live-capture distance learning classrooms. This will create a convenient and efficient hub for academic resources both on- and off-campus.