

Oregon Tech 2020: Strategic Action Plan

OREGON TECH VISION

Oregon Tech will be a nationally recognized public polytechnic university delivering in-demand, industry-focused degrees and graduates ready to meet workforce needs in Oregon and the Northwest.

OREGON TECH MISSION

Oregon Institute of Technology, the Northwest’s premier public polytechnic university, offers innovative and rigorous applied-degree programs in the areas of engineering, engineering technologies, health technologies, management, and the arts and sciences. To foster student and graduate success, the university provides an intimate, hands-on learning environment, focusing on application of theory to practice. Oregon Tech offers statewide educational opportunities for the emerging needs of Oregon’s citizens, and provides information and technical expertise to state, national, and international constituents.

Core Themes

- Applied Degree Programs
- Student and Graduate Success
- Statewide Educational Opportunities
- Public Service

STRATEGIC PLAN PURPOSE

Oregon Tech’s 2020 Strategic Action Plan documents goals, objectives and actions, built collectively by university stakeholders over the last few years, and serves as a 5-year roadmap to guide our trajectory of student, university and community success. It builds upon previous goals and actions taken by the university, and moves the campus forward to address the changes in and challenges of higher education in the state, region and nation. We will have advanced our strategic vision if we are:

- **Growing and transforming** to meet the needs of the State of Oregon, as its demographics and industry needs change and intersect over time.
- Focusing on and **expanding access for Oregon students** – particularly those who face significant barriers – to meet our 40-40-20¹ obligation and ensure that Oregonians are not left behind; and successfully advocating for the financial resources to ensure students can be supported to stay in college and earn a degree.

¹ 40% of Oregon’s population will have at least a bachelor’s degree, 40% will have a meaningful certificate or associate’s degree, and the remaining 20% will have at least a high-school diploma or equivalent by 2025.

- Operating with **diversified financial resources** that respond appropriately to permanent and temporary shifts in funding sources, while maintaining student affordability and ensuring fiscal stability.
- Creating new and delivering existing applied-degree **programs that are affordable, responsive to industry and student demand**, and meet graduate success targets; and reducing or eliminating programs that do not meet these requirements.
- Building and maintaining **state-of-the-art labs and classrooms** to ensure that our graduates are learning in the same environments and on the same sophisticated equipment that they will encounter in high-tech and healthcare workplaces.
- Advancing the **diversity of our faculty ranks** through success tracks that continue the focus on teaching, and also add an *option* for a “scholarship” track inclusive of applied research with a student engagement component.
- Advancing the **diversity of Oregon Tech staff and faculty** through innovative hiring practices, professional development and the overall inclusive university environment.
- Offering a **safe campus environment** for our students, faculty and staff, and an open and welcoming environment for our community neighbors that reflects our philosophy of engagement, equity, passion for intellectual pursuits, and public service.
- **Leveraging all the assets** of Oregon Tech: A rural residential campus in Klamath Falls (Oregon Tech Klamath Falls), a non-residential urban campus in Wilsonville (Oregon Tech Wilsonville), an online campus (Oregon Tech Online), and extension operations (Oregon Tech Extension).
- Successfully launching Oregon Tech’s **new Board of Trustees** and initiating a new governance structure for Oregon Tech that accelerates our ability to meet our mission-related goals and objectives.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This plan has been collectively developed in the context of several considerations: Oregon Tech’s 67-year history as an Oregon public institution serving student, industry and state needs; our unique degree options delivered by an outstanding and dedicated faculty and staff; and our challenges of constrained state funding, needed diversification of operating revenues, and a restructured higher education system in Oregon.

Our primary assets lie in the quality programs we offer and the students those attract; and the way we deliver those to students through our committed faculty and staff. Oregon Tech’s reputational capital is built on our basic philosophy of hands-on polytechnic education where students learn in a real-world environment; as well as our contributions to rural Oregon, to industries’ talent needs, and to the state’s high-tech and healthcare growth sectors in the suburban areas outside of Portland.



As we collectively communicate who we are and what we do, our terms tell others that:

- **Relevant** means that what students are learning can be directly applied to their current or future job, actually building their resume *before* they graduate.
- **Hands-on** means that students are *doing* not just studying theory about a subject area, and are in the small classes that enable them to practice the skill through project-based learning with the guidance of a professor practitioner.
- **Polytechnic** implies technical, applied and industry-related degree areas that uniquely respond to market needs, including balancing program enrollment with the size and scope of the job market; having a measurable return on investment (ROI) for students, balancing their costs of attendance with their financial and professional career goals and gains.
- **Real world** means that the university is providing experiences and skill sets learned in labs, internships and externships that put the student into the job site doing the same work that they will experience after graduation, all of which make graduates globally competitive professionals on Day 1. In short: *real* skills for *real* jobs in the *real* world.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Each strategic goal summarized below is supported by its own rationale, objectives and approaches in the next section.

#1: **Student Success**

Deliver applied, hands-on educational experiences that provide students with the technical, critical-thinking, and communication skills needed to succeed in and contribute to their chosen fields.

#2: **Faculty and Staff Success**

Attract and retain first-rate faculty and staff who are passionate about teaching and the student-focused educational mission of the university to graduate globally competitive professionals, as well as engage in industry outreach, scholarship and service to the university.

#3: **Economic and Workforce Connections**

Contribute in significant ways to Oregon's competitive strength, global-market advantage, and diverse industries by preparing new generations of engineering, technology, allied-health, management and applied arts and sciences professionals through Oregon Tech's applied degree programs.

#4: **Student Access and Diversity**

Improve student educational access, the university environment and employment opportunities for diverse and historically underserved populations in Oregon, in order to ensure equity in our provision and delivery of education, and to lead and serve as a community example and resource for an inclusive, diverse campus environment in all respects.



#5: University Financial Success

Manage university fiscal, capital and physical resources to sustain and enhance financial viability, and allow Oregon Tech to invest in new opportunities that serve our students and mission, prepare us for unanticipated events, and maintain and improve the quality of our programs, human resources, and public mission.

RATIONALE, OBJECTIVES AND APPROACHES

Goal #1: Student Success

Deliver applied, hands-on educational experiences that provide students with the technical, critical-thinking, and communication skills needed to succeed in and contribute to their chosen fields.

Rationale:

As the state's public polytechnic university, Oregon Tech is committed to educating Oregonians for successful high-wage technical and health-professional careers. We do this in an efficient, affordable manner, while maintaining the high-quality, supportive, hands-on undergraduate-focused education that has become the hallmark of Oregon Tech.

Objectives:

- I. Maintain a graduate success rate² of 90%+ annually.
- II. Improve student retention and graduation rates by increasing the number of pathways to and options for relevant and applied degrees and certificates, including offering more sophomore- and junior-year options for changes in majors, and providing comprehensive, targeted student-support services from staff and faculty at every step along the way.
- III. Enhance the quality and number of student internships and externships by increasing industry partners and the number of field opportunities in order to enrich student applied, real-world, preparatory experiences in their chosen fields, and ensure that students have the experiential learning needed to ensure a 90%+ rate of post-graduate success.

Approaches:

- A. Increase offerings of majors, minors, and certificates through various means (e.g., co-located campuses, online offerings, etc.) for students to achieve their degrees more efficiently, thereby making an Oregon Tech education more achievable in a timely manner, increasing value and affordability, in addition to getting students into the workplace more quickly to meet state economic needs.

² Graduate Success Rate is defined as the percentage of Oregon Tech graduates in jobs or graduate/professional schools within six months of their graduation date from Oregon Tech, as determined by survey responses.



- B. Maintain the in-class student-to-faculty ratio at low levels of 20:1 or less to maximize the quality of learning, the overall undergraduate experience, the distinctiveness of an Oregon Tech education, and student retention on our campuses.
- C. Increase the number and variety of dual-enrollment, transfer, prior-credit, and other credit-counting opportunities for students to improve retention, shorten their time to degree completion and decrease their overall cost of attendance.
- D. Build on and enhance current student-life opportunities on our campuses – including opportunities for undergraduate residential experiences – and focus on building and enhancing a deeper, more meaningful tie between the university and all of our students, irrespective of where they are or how they are enrolled (i.e., enhance university-value connections).
- E. Expand collaborations with community colleges and pre-college school districts throughout Oregon (e.g., South Metro-Salem STEM Partnership, Klamath Promise) to increase the numbers and diversity of students prepared for the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) degrees that form the core of a polytechnic university, and which provide value to graduates, the workforce, and Oregon’s economy overall.

Goal #2: Faculty and Staff Success

Attract and retain first-rate faculty and staff who are passionate about teaching and the student-focused educational mission of the university to graduate globally competitive professionals, as well as engage in industry outreach, scholarship and service to the university.

Rationale

Through the strength of shared governance, partnerships, and education delivery, the core of a university lies with its faculty and staff. Faculty and staff conduct the day-to-day business of the university, and are responsible for helping students achieve success through on-time graduation with appropriate preparation for their post-graduate careers. Faculty and staff must be supported in comprehensive ways so that all are engaged in the overall university direction, quality, and student-achievement goals. Retention of high-quality faculty and staff and the provision of professional development opportunities serve to build an increasingly high-quality university that has the ability to adapt to the realities of changing student demographics and market needs over time.

Objectives

- I. Build and support different tracks for faculty and staff to broaden professional opportunities, improve their retention and work environment, and meet other campus goals, such as revenue diversification and student engagement
- II. Increase recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and staff through inclusive approaches throughout the employment process.



Approaches:

- A. Develop: (1) different faculty tracks that emphasize teaching and scholarship/ applied research (e.g., lecturers, instructors, research faculty, clinical faculty, professors of practice, research professors, etc.); (2) different hiring tracks that allow for a range of employment percentage (e.g., part-time faculty, adjunct faculty, two or more faculty members sharing a single faculty line, etc.); (3) flexible work schedules and locations (e.g., differential loads in different years or terms; including summer as one of three terms taught, with either fall, winter, or spring off), to the extent allowable; and (4) creating opportunities for advancement and professional development across departments.
- B. Provide competitive compensation packages for faculty and staff, as well as a welcoming, open, work environment, by building a fiscal profile that includes revenues from new sources, and redirection/realignment of revenues when possible.
- C. Facilitate more effective teaching and learning opportunities for faculty and staff, including: (1) faculty and staff exchanges, (2) staff and faculty shared among two or more campuses or institutions, (3) other opportunities for faculty and staff to enhance their own teaching/learning experiences as they increase learning opportunities for our students.
- D. Provide additional support for faculty and staff achievements, including: (1) funding for professional-development opportunities, (2) a supported environment in which to innovate, and (3) recognition and celebration of individual and group achievements.
- E. Extend programs and activities that ensure a welcoming, inclusive, and open work environment for all faculty and staff, which contributes to productivity, positive morale and career satisfaction.

Goal #3: Economic and Workforce Connections

Contribute in significant ways to Oregon's competitive strength, global-market advantage, and diverse industries by preparing new generations of engineering, technology, allied-health, management, and applied arts and sciences professionals through Oregon Tech's applied degree programs.

Rationale:

Oregon Tech has risen to prominence in Oregon and the nation through its emphasis on real-world, problem-solving, career-focused education, and its reputation for producing students who are ready for post-graduate careers and/or additional post-graduate education. Oregon Tech graduates will continue to benefit from the long-term, value-added components embedded in their educational experiences, and contribute to the State of Oregon's economy, through our staying true to our polytechnic mission and curricular approaches that are industry-focused and aligned with workforce needs.

Objectives:

- I. Develop a university-wide Academic Master Plan by March 2015 that is reviewed annually, in order to keep current with students and employers' needs, and the requirements of accrediting groups and professional organizations.



- II. Build upon our rigorous, practical, and supportive educational environment at Oregon Tech in order to impart these same qualities to our students and alumni, while also supporting retention of students through comprehensive academic assistance, enhanced student life, and other areas of student support.
- III. Grow and expand Oregon Tech's urban and suburban presence along the I-5 corridor between Portland and Salem, including access for rural communities near the metro area.
- IV. Grow and expand Oregon Tech's rural presence in southern Oregon, as well as our online presence, in order to reach as many rural Oregonians as possible.

Approaches:

- A. Introduce new majors, minors, and certificates, as well as update or phase out less relevant majors, minors, and certificates – as the labor market changes – to continue our focus on student and graduate success while acting prudently within financial constraints; and work with the faculty Program Innovator Team (PIT Crew³), industry advisory groups and other relevant groups to determine short- and long-term program needs.
- B. Expand partnerships with Oregon businesses, chambers of commerce, hospitals, and other entities to increase internships, externships, and career opportunities that improve retention of Oregon Tech graduates within the State of Oregon and build connections with our alumni.
- C. Continue building mutually beneficial relationships – and our reputational capital – with industry, so that our graduates are in even greater demand, and our alumni accomplishments contribute to our reputation and university goals.
- D. Integrate Oregon Tech's sustainability efforts across all aspects of the university enterprise (from teaching to research to outreach), particularly our unique generation of 100% clean, renewable geothermal and solar energy sources and uses in Klamath Falls, and our Renewable Energy Engineering Degree programs; and use this unique, sustainable asset to build partnerships with industry, integrate student research, attract external support, and build an international reputation for practicing the clean, green energy production and applied approaches that we teach in the classroom through all of our degree programs.

Goal #4: Student Access and Diversity

Improve student educational access, the university environment and employment opportunities for diverse and historically underserved populations in Oregon to ensure equity in our provision and delivery of education, and to lead and serve as a community example and resource for an inclusive, diverse campus environment in all respects.

³ The charge of the Program Innovator Team (PIT Crew) is to support development of new programs through holistic planning and entrepreneurial resource allocation. Additional activities include: request and vet preliminary proposals for new programs; provide institutional support for program development – grant writing, recruiting preparation, industry outreach, workforce development, etc.; provide financial support for program development – stipends, supplemental funding to department S&S; provide continued funding and support for newly implemented programs; and develop a plan for evaluating PIT performance.



Rationale:

Diversity at Oregon Tech is inclusive of gender, racial, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation, socio-economic and geographic backgrounds, and other ways of assessing diversity, all of which are important to us. With diversity comes additional quality and perspectives for students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community, teaching students in an environment that will reflect their life and work experiences while on campus and throughout their futures. In addition, the changing demographics of Oregon and the U.S., and our public university stewardship, make it imperative that we provide a means for access and success to the entire population. It is also contingent upon Oregon Tech to have diverse faculty and staff in order to build trust relationships, student confidence and pathways to success for a diverse student population.

Objectives:

- I. Increase the diversity of Oregon Tech's students to reflect the demographics of our campuses' regions and the State of Oregon, as recommended by Oregon Tech's Equity and Strategic Enrollment Management Committees. Develop comprehensive, measurable efforts to recruit, retain, and remove barriers for today's Oregon Tech students with diverse backgrounds and circumstances, including students of color; first-generation students; veterans; single parents; married students; former foster care youth; working adults; and others who do not fit the once traditional student profile of a recent high school graduate who is supported by parents/guardians.
- II. Address the geographical backgrounds of Oregon Tech students and our communities by providing an added focus on rural needs, issues, and degrees at Oregon Tech's Klamath Falls campus, as well as additional co-location opportunities and online offerings that ensure rural access.

Approaches:

- A. Earmark funds and other appropriate resources to expand recruitment, retention and support of underrepresented groups of students, faculty, and staff. Identify and apply for external funding that will provide additional targeted resources to meet the needs of diverse students, particularly in STEM fields.
- B. Increase recruitment and retention of international students, faculty, and staff both to reflect the global environment in which our graduates will work, and to diversify tuition revenues in ways that benefit the entire university.
- C. Provide additional resource support for high-need, student-support programs (e.g., Oregon Tech's federal TRIO program (Student Support Services), which targets underserved students) in order to improve the retention and success rates of these students; use proven approaches in campus retention programs; and replicate successful approaches in other campus retention programs.
- D. Continue to enhance opportunities for diverse and local vendors in acquiring goods and services.



Goal #5: University Financial Success

Manage university fiscal, capital and physical resources to sustain and enhance financial viability, and allow Oregon Tech to invest in new opportunities that serve our students and mission, prepare us for unanticipated events, and maintain and improve the quality of our programs, human resources, and public mission.

Rationale:

As Oregon's public polytechnic university, Oregon Tech has both an obligation and challenge to achieve financial stability and maintain viability in the face of changing economic and higher-education conditions. With decreasing state support and a growing reliance on tuition revenue to fund campus operations, Oregon Tech's financial future must be one that is more stable, more predictable, and more robust if we are going to continue to attract and retain the committed faculty and staff to deliver the affordable, high-quality, hands-on programs on which we have built our reputation. This requires needed investments in human resources, programs and facilities, and appropriate reserves to meet unanticipated and/or urgent campus needs that require capital outlays.

Objectives:

- I. Grow the enrollment of the university by ~1,000 students over the next 5 academic years (by Fall 2020) to reach total enrollment of 5,500, and over the next 15 years to more than 8,000 students, while firmly maintaining the intimate, hands-on experience that has been so crucial to Oregon Tech's success. This level of student enrollment will increase the number of graduates and alumni, and help stabilize university finances through both tuition and development efforts. Focus resources on student growth in four key areas: (1) the Oregon Tech Klamath Falls Campus; (2) the Oregon Tech Wilsonville Campus; (3) the Oregon Tech Online Campus; and (4) The Oregon Tech Extension Campus, i.e., co-located campuses and programs (e.g., Chemeketa Community College, Oregon Dental Service/EOU, Seattle Boeing).
- II. Grow the Oregon Tech Foundation's endowment over the next five years by investing in new resources directed at increasing the percentage of alumni and other donors who contribute to Oregon Tech. This growth will leverage the success of our students, academic programs, graduates, and athletic programs, and in turn build a culture of giving that creates enhanced philanthropy and success.
- III. Develop a university-wide Facilities Master Plan that is aligned with academic, operational and financial goals and resources; and which is reviewed on a biennial basis.

Approaches:

- A. Continue to refine and implement a data- and mission-driven enrollment-management strategy for Oregon Tech that aligns with fiscal needs, and (1) strikes an appropriate balance of Oregon resident,



non-resident and WUE⁴ students, (2) meets diversity and equity goals, (3) targets retention priorities, and (4) increases graduation rates.

- B. Target resources and strategies on extending Oregon Tech’s name, reputation, programs, and successes to a broader audience through development of a university-wide Marketing/Communications Master Plan that is reviewed and updated regularly, and through a comprehensive strategic approach to new program development and current program recognition and outreach.
- C. Continue to develop and implement innovative cost-savings opportunities through: (1) shared services internally and with other university/college partners, (2) revision of obsolete, or redundant procedures, programs and workflow, (3) flexible employment, and (4) non-traditional partnerships with local communities.
- D. Continue to ensure the financial integrity of the university through compliance, adherence to regulations and providing high service levels to students and the university community.
- E. Engage alumni and supporters emotionally and physically, to build connections, pride, involvement, and financial support for students and the university.
- F. Expand development and fundraising objectives and responsibilities to all levels of the university – including college, department, and program – in order to reach students at the point where their commitment and affinity to Oregon Tech is strongest. Provide university-wide resources and training to ensure that there is a consistent, concerted and effective approach that helps us increase and diversify financial resources.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This university-wide strategic action plan is the roadmap from which the other campus action plans will be finalized and measured against for alignment. These other plans include:

- Academic (including sub-plans for academic departments)
- Finance, Administration and Facilities (including sub-plans for departments)
- Enrollment/Recruitment/Retention
- Student Affairs (including sub-plans for departments)
- Marketing/Communications/Public Affairs
- Athletics
- Board of Trustees
- Oregon Tech Foundation

⁴ WUE is Western Undergraduate Exchange in which students from western US states may attend a university in another western US state for 150% of that state’s resident tuition rate.



Each university area should complete the planning process between March and May 2015, with implementation beginning to be staged in immediately thereafter, and in full force by the end of the Fall 2015 term.

Part of each of the strategic plans listed above will be a work/implementation plan that lists specific deliverables and approaches, resource needs, responsible lead parties, deadlines, and metrics or indicators against which each deliverable and objective will be measured. Modest funding will be available to help units complete and achieve their plans.

On an annual basis, each segment of the university will report on their progress, successes, challenges, and revisions to the plan based on what worked and what needs refining. These plans will also be aligned with and prioritized based on the university budget.

MOVING FORWARD

“It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.” --Howard Duff

We are all aware of the need to change and adapt as environments and paradigms shift. We are also aware that being ahead of the change will put us in a better position to continue to meet our mission, sustain and grow this wonderful university that is doing such important work, and serve the students who select us for their post-secondary education.

This strategic action plan takes where we are today and what we are all engaged in, and further hones, targets and aligns our current state with our understanding of what the near future holds. As responsible stewards of the polytechnic educational future in Oregon and the Northwest, we must be prepared for challenging periods by building a strong, nimble university that won't require us to implement any number of crisis-management efforts.

Thank you all for your dedication to public education, and for making Oregon Tech the high-quality university that it is today.

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September 18, 2014

