

Faculty Commission on Research and Scholarship at the University of Oregon

Charge

The Commission is asked to conduct an analysis on the state of research and scholarship at the University of Oregon and its directions for potential growth in the upcoming five to ten years. This analysis should identify promising new domains of research and scholarship that align with the university's mission and also ways for the university to support that growth. The Commission's charge is to identify growth areas and directions without making specific recommendations about how to implement change. The Commission is encouraged to think creatively and look at aspirational comparators in considering areas for growth and ways that the university might support that growth. The focus of the analysis should be rooted first and foremost in faculty views on the future of research at the University of Oregon and what faculty perceive to be essential in achieving excellence in research and scholarship. The Commission is charged with producing a written report summarizing its analysis to the Senate and the Provost.

Suggested activities

The Commission is encouraged to promote an open dialogue about the future of research internally and with the broader UO community in fulfilling its charge. Activities that align with this goal include not only internal discussions but also: conversations with a range of stakeholders about research on campus; systematic evaluation of best practices for fostering growth of research and scholarship on campus and elsewhere; open, broad, and representative surveys of researchers and scholars on campus; town hall meetings; and visits of Commission members to department or unit meetings.

Membership

The Commission will consist primarily of faculty, including research faculty, who are active in research and scholarship. Such faculty produce scholarly and/or artistic works that is often but not always sponsored extramurally. All Colleges will be represented, as well as faculty researchers and scholars at all career stages. The Commission will also include representatives of Officers of Administration and Classified Staff who facilitate research and scholarship. A representative from the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation will also be included.

Timeline

February 1: Commission empaneled and charged

February 1 - March 15: Commission internal meetings and discussion

March 16 - April 30: External meetings and conversation

May: Draft report and solicit feedback

June: Final discussions and revisions; presentation of report to Senate and Provost

Frequently Asked Questions

Why now?

The research and scholarship enterprise at the University of Oregon is at an inflection point due to rapid growth in the faculty, increased scholarly and grant output of the faculty, and generous philanthropic support for research. Collectively, these resources present a significant opportunity to transform research and scholarship at UO. Additionally, the Provost is currently conducting a search to hire a new Vice President for Research and Innovation (VPRI). The faculty view this Commission as an opportunity to indicate to the VPRI what they see as the most promising directions for research on campus in the coming years.

Should the Commission consider budgets and costs?

Financial concerns (such as the availability of seed funding or the cost of specific programs for expanding research into a particular area) should not be the driving force of the analyses, though they will likely be relevant with respect to whether a particular change is feasible. Other questions about research growth might be highly intertwined with financial concerns. For example, maximizing the availability of F&A funds to support growth and determining the most strategic ways to invest those funds is within the scope of the Commission. Still, at this point, the Commission should creatively envision scenarios for the future of research at UO rather than specifically plan routes to achieve those scenarios.

How will other voices be included in this process?

The composition of the Commission is intended to reflect faculty researchers on campus. Though faculty are the primary drivers of research and scholarship, these activities would not be possible without OAs, classified staff, and students. The Commission will solicit input from these groups as part of its analysis and incorporate their insights on the future of research at UO into the report.

How does the Commission relate to the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation (OVPRI)?

The purpose of the Commission is to systematically capture broad and representative faculty input about the current state of research on campus and its future prospects. The OVPRI is an administrative unit that supports and facilitates sponsored research on campus. Some of the ideas that emerge from the analysis of the Commission would likely overlap with the mission of the OVPRI. Yet the Commission's charge is broader. The Commission is encouraged to consider as within its scope: the full spectrum of research, scholarship, artistic, and creative output; non-funded as well as funded research; and not only programs and plans for the future that might be implemented by the OVPRI but also others that might fall under the scope of the Senate, other administrative units, or even faculty individually.

How does the Commission relate to the University Senate?

The Commission is charged with analyzing and summarizing faculty perspectives on the current state and future prospects of research on campus. The University Senate is the delegated representative body of the statutory faculty, which has authority over all academic matters as commonly understood. Research and scholarship are academic matters. So, the Senate is the appropriate body to report on faculty perspectives on academic matters.

Will the Commission report be public?

Yes, once submitted to the Senate and Provost, the report and all supporting materials will be shared publicly on the Commission webpage and the campus community will have the ability to offer feedback about the report.