

Faculty Commission on Support for Research and Scholarship at the University of Oregon

Charge

The Commission is asked to compile faculty recommendations on ways that the University of Oregon can enhance support for faculty research and scholarship in the upcoming three to five years. In particular, the Commission should bring forth recommendations for *improving faculty research mentorship, promoting interdisciplinary scholarship, and connecting research and undergraduate education* that might be implemented in the coming years. The Commission is encouraged to think creatively and draw insight from aspirational comparators in considering various ways that the university might grow in the three focus areas. The recommendations should be rooted first and foremost in faculty perspectives on the future of research support at the University of Oregon and what faculty perceive to be high-impact resources for achieving excellence in research mentorship, interdisciplinary scholarship, and research-teaching synergy. The Commission is charged with producing a written report summarizing its analysis to the Senate and the Provost.

Questions to consider

Questions the Commission should consider in each of the focal areas include:

Faculty Research Mentorship

What kind of mentoring would be most impactful to new faculty?

How can we continue to provide research career development to faculty at all stages?

What are good models for systematically mentoring faculty across the entire campus?

Interdisciplinary Scholarship

How can the UO help faculty work across disciplines?

What are the barriers to working across disciplines and how can we mitigate them?

What has been effective in the past or at other institutions for promoting interdisciplinary work?

Connections between research and academics

In what ways does faculty research and scholarship support the curriculum?

How can we communicate the value of being at a research university to students?

What are ways that undergraduate researchers be leveraged to support research?

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; open, broad, and representative surveys of researchers and scholars on campus; town hall meetings; conversations with undergraduate and graduate students as well as postdocs about how research and scholarship on campus attracted them to UO and supports their development; and visits of Commission members to department or unit meetings.

The Commission should include in its recommendations not only programs or initiatives but also process- or structure-level ideas. For example, recommendations regarding removing barriers, streamlining processes, and appropriate and efficient administrative structures are welcome.

In addition to suggesting new approaches to faculty mentorship, interdisciplinary scholarship, and research-teaching connections, the Commission can also identify services and structures related to research and scholarship that might be considered for reduction or elimination.

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 Schools and 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 24: Commission empaneled and charged

February 24 - 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. The faculty view this Commission as an opportunity to indicate to the Board and the senior leadership 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 support and infrastructure 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 improving mentorship, enhancing interdisciplinary research, and increasing the connection between research and undergraduate education. 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 far broader and touches on administration across campus including the Office of the Provost and the Schools and Colleges. The Commission is

encouraged to consider as within its scope how to strengthen and grow: 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. As such, 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.