

2012

to

2015



# **Degree Qualifications Profile in Oregon Year 2 Work Plan Progress Report 2013-14**

## **Eastern Oregon University**

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# Table of Contents

<b>Institutional Characteristics</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Year 2 DQP Work Plan Goals and Objectives</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Progress to Date</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Reflections</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Concluding Thoughts</b>	<b>6</b>

## Institutional Characteristics

Eastern Oregon University (EOU) is the Oregon University System's (OUS') smallest public liberal arts university, serving approximately 4,200 students. Its mission is to serve students in the eastern region of the state, an area approximately the size of Pennsylvania. In addition to providing undergraduate and graduate degrees *on campus*, EOU serves students in rural regions of the state and beyond through two additional program delivery modalities—*on site* degree completion programs at four partner community colleges, and *online* degree completion programs offered through fifteen regional centers and eight community colleges throughout the state.<sup>1</sup> EOU offers online liberal arts and sciences, education, and business administration baccalaureate degrees, as well as online Masters degrees in education and business and a low residency Master in fine arts.

## Year 2 DQP Work Plan Goals and Objectives

1. EOU's participation in Year 2 of the Oregon DQP represents a continuing institutional focus on development of discipline-specific criteria for EOU's University Writing Requirement (UWR) in preparation for horizontal work with the Oregon Summit faculty meeting in late Spring 2014 and vertical work with community colleges either at the same meeting or in a pilot UWR assessment involving EOU and BMCC business faculty.
2. Work with ten (10) major programs to situate the UWR discipline-based criteria within the context of a fifth-year assessment portfolio, which includes program learning outcomes aligned with University Learning Outcomes, key authentic assignments, rubrics, and curriculum map for program learning outcomes, and understanding of specific ways the program baccalaureate and/or Masters foster and assess written communication, informational, and quantitative literacies.
3. Begin discussions about proficiency benchmarks and milestones for written communication and quantitative literacy in the context of Fifth Year Program Reviews (approximately half of EOU's programs are undergoing fifth-year program review this academic year, with the balance to be done next academic year) in preparation for horizontal and vertical work at the Oregon Summit faculty meeting.

## Progress to Date

- a. Describe your progress toward achievement of your Year 2 DQP goals and objectives.
1. During this reporting period, EOU has maintained focus on the Written Communication learning outcome in order to further the work of developing a sound Writing Across the Curriculum assessment program rooted in connections between assignments and discipline-based qualitative learning outcome criteria (in written communication). During Year 1, EOU piloted a successful approach for engaging General Education, History, Mathematics, and Communications faculty in the dialogue required for development of program-level criteria for assessing Written Communication. During Year 2, the WAC Coordinator has or will visit with the following programs: Music, Chemistry, Psychology, PPE, Education, Business, and PHYSH.

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<sup>1</sup> EOU maintains fifteen Regional Centers throughout rural Oregon. On site degree completion programs are maintained through partnerships with Treasure Valley Community College, Blue Mountain Community College, Mount Hood Community College, and the Southwest Oregon University Center.

2. The following programs are engaged in developing a [Fifth Year Assessment Portfolio](#) that provides a holistic analysis of 4-years' of program assessment data, revisits program learning outcomes, details key assignments, rubrics, and curriculum mapping, and forecasts the next assessment cycle: Chemistry, Music, Psychology, History, PPE, Communications, Education, Business, and PHYSH. The UWR, Information Literacy, and Quantitative Literacy—institutional requirements for graduation—are being addressed in the context of the Fifth-Year Program Review.
- b. Describe adjustments, if any, made to current or future work plans resulting from those insights and lessons learned.

In implementing Y2 work plans, EOU encountered enrollment challenges which resulted in convening a Retention Task Force. Administrators, faculty, and staff involved in the Work Group on New Student Engagement and Defining Learning Pathways identified some opportunities to strengthen the curriculum in ways that can be documented in the fifth-year portfolio reviews and that foreground expected DQP learning outcome categories:

- GEC needs a reduced slate of GEC courses offered in multiple sections to begin seeding the intentional pairing of courses to foster the learning capacity of broad, integrative knowledge, as students are lacking the instruction they need in critical thinking, information literacy and inquiry at the right time.
- We have the instruction team at the library researching and evaluating information literacy instruction models, and talking about how we can improve our program to reach more students in the first year in an authentic way, and we have burgeoning interest and buzz on campus about integrative learning.
- We are in an ideal position to explore these challenge areas as an opportunity. Could students be better guided through well-defined, coordinated, intentional learning pathways in their first year? Can we create the opportunity to learn the vocabulary, methodology and ways of thinking in several broad discipline areas (Social Sciences, Sciences, Humanities, Ed and Business), while learning about what scholarship and research looks like in those disciplines, rather than driving students towards narrow career decision-making?

Three opportunity recommendations emerged from the work group that, if implemented, hold promise for a curricular transformation towards a degree profile at EOU:

Recommendation 1: Our first recommendation is to bring faculty into the continuing conversation about what the first year experience looks like - that is everything a student experiences in his/her first year, with the intent to create a first year program that is more than HUM and Core - that involves intentional scheduling, integrative learning opportunities, formalized information literacy instruction, and allows students to explore several disciplines in an introductory way through disciplinary inquiry courses.

Recommendation 2: Research and explore the value of learning pathways that utilize graduation progress benchmarks (aka levels of performance, accountability markers, proficiencies, milestones, etc.) (Fain pg. 23, DQP 2.0).[ Fain, Paul. "Changing Student

Pathways.” *Inside Higher Ed*: Feb. 2014.

<http://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2014/02/20/changing-student-pathways> and Lumina Foundation. *DQP 2.0*. Jan. 2014.

<http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/DQP/DQP2.0-draft.pdf>

Recommendation 3: Attend the AAC&U Institute on Integrative Learning and the Departments, July 9-13, 2014. (EOU was accepted into the Institute on 4/4/14). First and Second Year Experiences, General Education and Liberal Studies will be sites for curricular transformation. Faculty will be looking at program learning outcomes and signature assignments through an integrative learning lens.

## Reflections

a. What influence, if any, has your work with the DQP had on

i. degree or program outcomes?

EOU is guiding development of program degree profiles by using the framework of the Fifth Year Program Review. The faculty are reasonably comfortable with recognizable components of the review template from the program assessment portfolio instituted in 2008. Added features include 1) explicit directions to provide learning outcomes for the minors—to facilitate assessment of the two-minor Liberal Studies degree—and to identify signature assignments and scoring rubrics that align to stated learning outcomes, and 2) a curriculum inventory of institutional requirements that the program directly or indirectly supports and/or assesses (like the University Writing Requirement, Diversity requirement, and tacit requirements like quantitative literacy and information literacy).

ii. teaching and learning?

EOU is pressing forward with external professional development for faculty. The Oregon-ized Summit represents one such opportunity—affiliated with the DQP work of horizontal alignment—which has resulted in planning for a late-May Teaching TALKS II conference focused on inter-institutional faculty dialogue and hands-on work with norming, assessment, and inter-institutional understandings of benchmarks and levels of performance associated with written communication and quantitative literacy. A second opportunity has emerged with EOU’s recent acceptance to send faculty and administrators to AAC&U’s Institute for Integrative Learning and the Departments. These opportunities will enable the faculty to further refine cross-curricular understandings of the University Learning Outcomes framework that contributes to the profile of what a degree at EOU means a student knows and can do.

iii. assessment of student achievement?

Fifth Year Program Review has helped programs see their programs as contributing to the larger profile of the degree. EOU is at a defining moment in the sometimes slow evolution of assessing student achievement. Institutional stress combined with several assessment initiatives either coming to conclusion or ratcheting up has contributed

more attention being paid to the outcomes-based future of higher education.

- b. What recommendations do you have to improve the DQP as a framework for practice?

The 2.0 version was a great improvement. It makes sense, now, for Registrars to weigh in on the feasibility of transcribing student proficiency in learning outcomes. I'm looking forward to what comes of the Oregon Transcription Project, and whether the infrastructure required to transcript learning outcomes is possible in the near future.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

I hope the Teaching TALKS II becomes an annual event—not overly orchestrated—where faculty across the state of Oregon have an opportunity to continue conversations about alignment and benchmarks and learning pathways that are critical to the mobility and success of our future students. I wish philanthropists who benefited from their favorite faculty mentors would step up to fund an annual convening of faculty within every state, because that's where the future of higher education needs to be happening.