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UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
Environment Initiative

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS REPORT

A Sea Change in Higher Education

September 2023

Land Acknowledgment

The University of Oregon is located on **Kalapuya Ilihi**, the traditional indigenous homeland of the Kalapuya people. Following treaties between 1851 and 1855, Kalapuya people were dispossessed of their indigenous homeland by the United States government and forcibly removed to the Coast Reservation in Western Oregon. Today, descendants are citizens of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community of Oregon and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon, and continue to make important contributions in their communities, at UO, and across the land we now refer to as Oregon. (Ref: UO Native Strategies Group and the UO Libraries)

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This Academic Programs Report represents the collective effort of faculty, administrators, and staff from across the University of Oregon. It captures the significant curricular work of the UO Environment Initiative's 2021-23 "Phase 1: First Wave" to inventory existing academic programs and identify opportunities for growth. Those who developed this report share a common goal - to build a campus-wide integrated intellectual hub for teaching, research, and community engagement focused on higher education's role in addressing climate change and preparing our students to contribute to a just and livable future.

Adell Amos
Executive Director
UO Environment Initiative



A Sea Change in Higher Education

This 2023 Academic Programs Report is a case for transformational philanthropic investments in academic programs that have the potential to place the University of Oregon at the **forefront of public universities**—to respond to climate change, to prepare students for **meaningful careers**, and to build on the **tremendous foundational strengths in climate and environmental education** at the University of Oregon.

Erin Moore
Director of Academic Programs
UO Environment Initiative



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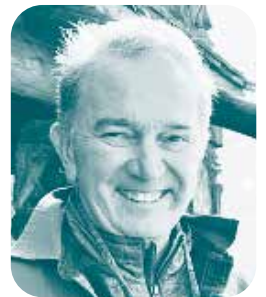
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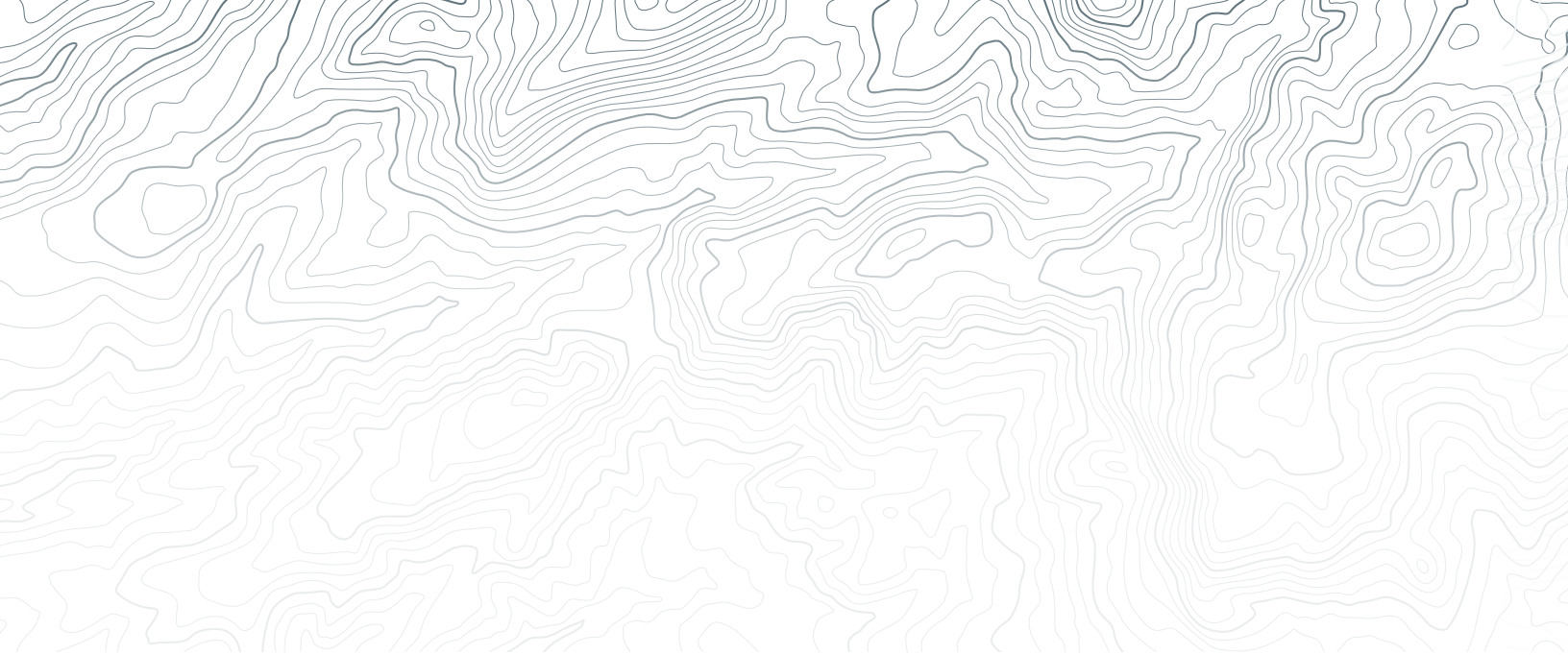
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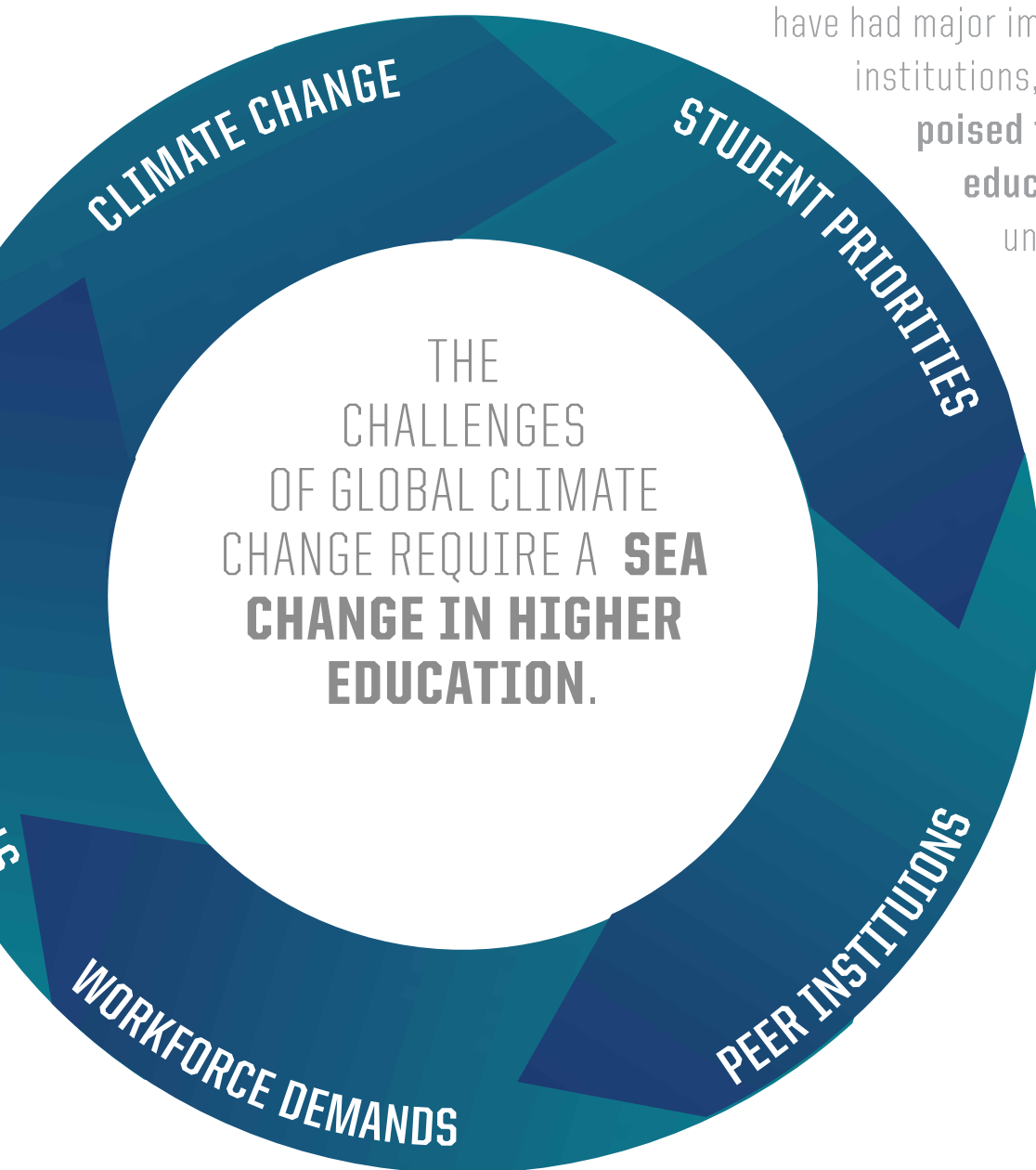




STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

CLIMATE CHANGE IS AN UNPRECEDENTED **DISRUPTOR** IN HIGHER EDUCATION

As global climate change directly affects students' lives, **student priorities and demographics are changing**. As new skills and knowledge are required, **workforce demands are changing**. In response, **peer institutions are adapting**. Where historical global conflicts and socio-economic disruptions have had major impacts on educational institutions, **climate change is poised to transform higher education** at an even more unprecedented scale.



We are entering a pivotal time of change. Government policy, private sector investment, and public sentiment support a rapid response to climate change. Institutions of higher education have an important role to play in informing and shaping this transition, but only if they are organized in a way that can relevantly engage. Even a delay of a year will reduce the ability of an institution to effectively participate.

Prof. Greg Dotson, Senior Faculty Fellow,
UO Environment Initiative

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CLIMATE CHANGE IS A DISRUPTOR

Climate change is impacting students

UO faculty report that it is common for students to miss classes and assignments because they are feeling the impacts of extreme weather, flooding, fires, and economic hardship in their families and home communities.

Jobs and climate change are top issues

Given the inseparability of climate change and economic insecurity, it is reasonable that younger generations most often rank “jobs and the economy” and “climate change and the environment” as their top two most important issues. [1]

Climate events are interrupting education

As the Brookings Institute reports: “Across the globe, schools and entire communities are regularly upended due to severe floods and hurricanes, all expected to worsen in intensity and frequency due to climate change.” [2] UO students report that they are impacted both directly and psychologically by global climate events as they navigate community upheaval and climate anxiety.

Climate change is a higher education opportunity

This disruption presents a necessary paradigm shift for higher education where according to the authors, “colleges and universities have an opportunity to reimagine their internal and external initiatives to prioritize direct engagement and investment in transformative social change toward more just systems locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.” [3]

Students are less interested in the question of “what are you going to be when you grow up” and more interested in the question of “what problem do you want to solve and what do you need to learn to solve it? “

Kris Winter, Interim Vice President for Student Life

Case Study: Chico State

In 2023, students at Chico State issued a campus ballot initiative **calling for climate change to be taught across all disciplines.** It passed with 84% of the student vote. The university responded with funding for workshops and plans to revamp dozens of courses.”^[7]

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STUDENT PRIORITIES ARE CHANGING

Commitment to environment is a deciding factor

Staying relevant on climate and environment is necessary to maintain high level recruiting and enrollment. In survey of prospective students, the Princeton Review found that a majority (67%) of respondents indicated that information about a college's commitment to the environment would contribute to their decision to apply to or attend the school. [4]

Students are worried

When asked to identify the word that best describes their feelings about climate change and their future, 75% of students nationally say they're worried. [5] UO faculty report that UO students have many questions about how climate change will affect their lives livelihoods.

Students are demanding new curriculum

92% of students in an international survey agree that "sustainable development is something which all universities and colleges should actively incorporate and promote." 40% report "low or no coverage of sustainable development concepts in their course curriculum." [6, 7, 8]. Faculty and professional advisors at the UO report that students are frustrated with lack of options for climate change-relevant coursework, and with lack of access to limited existing options.

Students want to help

Students are feeling the impacts of climate change in their own lives, and they are hungry for academic experiences that empower them to respond.

Climate-focused philanthropy is growing

In 2022, philanthropic giving to climate change mitigation increased 25%, compared to an 8% growth in overall philanthropy.(9)

InsidePhilanthropy writes in 2023 that “. . . . university development officers are winning more and more checks for **university campaigns related to the climate crisis**, potentially tapping a **huge new base of support for action**”(10)

Recent major gifts in higher ed

Center for Climate Solutions Initiative, Stony Brook University (Simons Foundation and Bloomberg Philanthropies \$150 million, 2023)

Climate School, Stanford University (John Doerr, \$1.1 billion, 2022)

Salata Institute for Climate and Sustainability, Harvard University (Melanie and Jean Eric Salata, \$200 million, 2022)

Duke Climate Commitment, Duke University (\$36 million in initial gifts, 2022)

Wilkes Center for Climate Science and Policy, University of Utah (\$20 million, Clay and Marie Wilkes 2022)

The Bullard Center for Environmental and Climate Justice, Texas Christian University (\$5 million, Waverley Street Foundation as part of larger HBCU initiative and current \$350 million commitment, 2023)

Institute of the Environment and Sustainability, UCLA (\$1.5 million, 2022)

Resnick Institute, California Institute of Technology (\$750 million, Stewart and Lynda Resnick, 2019)

The Ronald and Leslie Sherwin Initiative for Environmental Protection, USC Dornsife (\$50 million, 2023)

Water, Climate and Health Program, University of Nebraska (\$5 million, Dr. Anne Hubbard, 2023)

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PEER INSTITUTIONS ARE CHANGING

Major gifts are launching new programs

Both public and private institutions are benefiting from major investments in programs on the climate and environment.

Students have many choices at peer institutions

Peer institutions are offering graduate and undergraduate degrees that combine knowledge with impact and that center sustainability and climate change.

Coursework connects “applied” disciplines

Investments in new programs as peer institutions are connecting core arts and sciences disciplines with translational, or applied disciplines. In some cases, this is a new school (i.e. Columbia’s “Climate School”). In other cases, this is a new interdisciplinary department or program that encompasses professional programs including in policy, law, engineering, and medicine.⁽¹¹⁾

The UO is competitive and distinctive

The UO’s unique profile as a major public research institution with a national reputation for leadership in sustainability and environmental justice and nationally ranked professional schools mean that it is well-positioned for legacy investments that leverage existing strengths for ground-breaking work.

COMPARATOR INSTITUTION DEGREE OFFERINGS

Arizona State University	BA in Sustainability with concentrations in: Society and Sustainability, Policy and Governance in Sustainable Systems, International Development and Sustainability, Sustainable Urban Dynamics
Bard College	BS in Climate Science and Policy
Colorado College	Bachelor's in Environmental Studies with concentrations in: Environmental Studies, Environmental Science, Environmental Justice and Equity
Columbia University	BA Climate and Society
Cornell University	Bachelor's in Environment and Sustainability with concentrations in: Environmental Biology and Applied Ecology; Environmental Economics; Environmental Humanities; Environmental Policy and Governance; Land, Air and Water Resources
Duke University	Bachelors in Earth and Climate Sciences
Georgetown	Masters of Science in Environment and Sustainability Management
Georgia Tech	Masters in Sustainable Energy and Environmental Management
Harvard University	Masters in Sustainability
Johns Hopkins	BS in Energy Policy and Climate
Louisiana State University	BS in Climatology and Climate Change
MIT Sloan	Masters Certificate in Sustainability
Northern Arizona University	BS in Climate Science and Solutions
Northwestern	Master of Science in Energy and Sustainability

Oregon State University	BS in Climate Science, BS in Sustainability with concentrations in: Sustainable Communities, Human Impacts on Ecosystems, Environmental Economics and Policy, Social Dimensions of Sustainability, Environmental Sociology, Society and Natural Resources, Natural Resource Economics, Environmental Ecology, Sustainable Environment and Science, Sustainable Management and Organizations, Urban Sustainability.
Plymouth State University	BA in Climate Studies
San Jose State University	BS in Climate Science
UCLA	BS in Climate Science
University of Colorado Boulder	Masters of the Environment with concentrations in: Environmental and Natural Resources Policy, Renewable and Sustainable Energy, Sustainability in the Outdoor Industry, Sustainable Food Systems, Urban Resilience and Sustainability
University of Florida	BA in Sustainability Studies in: Ethics, Culture and human Behavior; Productions Systems and the Built Environment; Ecology and Environmental Stewardship
University of Nebraska-Lin-	BS in Applied Climate Science
University of Washington	Climate Science Minor
University of Wisconsin	BA in Environmental Studies, Sustainability Certificate; Environment and Resources PhD and MS, Water Resources Management MS, Environmental Conservation MS, Environmental Observation and Informatics MS
Vanderbilt University	Bachelor's in Climate Studies
Washington University St. Louis	BS in Sustainability with concentrations: in Sustainable Environment and Science, Sustainable Management and Organizations, Urban Sustainability

Katherine Mangan writes in the Chronicle of Higher Education in 2023 that “Last year **Microsoft** and the **Boston Consulting Group** released a report that warned of a “huge sustainability-skills gap” facing the roughly 3,900 companies that had signed climate pledges and were having trouble finding workers with the needed expertise.

The report **called on colleges to strengthen and expand their sustainability programs**. Companies need people with specialized skills, like using data analytics to assess climate risks or finding creative solutions for removing carbon. . . .

What’s also needed, the report noted, are **people who can communicate the urgency of climate change and workers who can redesign products and processes** with factors like emissions, water, and ecosystems in mind.”(12)

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WORKFORCE DEMANDS ARE CHANGING

Climate change requires re-tooling

Climate change requires areas of expertise that do not fully exist in higher education. Re-tooling at the speed and scale required will take significant investments.

Education is not keeping up with demand

“LinkedIn reports that job postings requiring green skills have increased by 8% over the past five years, even though the green talent pool has only grown by 6% during the same period. To achieve a net-zero planet—a world where greenhouse-gas emissions are virtually nonexistent—it’s estimated that companies will need to create more than 300 million additional green-collar jobs by 2050.”^[13]

Climate jobs require translational skills

Graduates need skills at the intersection of knowledge and impact. They need to understand leading-edge climate justice and environmental science, and they need skill sets to put this knowledge into practice in translational fields such as journalism and communication, business, education, art and design, architecture, policy, law, and governance.

2023 Climate and Environment Jobs KEY WORDS AND REQUIRED DEGREES

	Total	Bachelors	Masters	Doctoral
"climate change"	9,167	6,944	6,800	840
"environmental science"	8,838	823	10,687	692
"environmental policy"	2,203	1,716	2,417	134
"sustainable design"	2,192	1,739	2,192	21
"environmental studies"	1,926	1,734	260	168
"environmental justice"	1,111	629	916	181
"environmental law"	448	253	419	100
"climate justice"	247	124	169	25
"climate policy"	170	91	146	24
"climate education"	96	30	32	34

From a sample job search at Indeed, July 5, 2023. <https://www.indeed.com/>.

Case Study: University of California-Santa Cruz

According to UC Santa Cruz Professor and Provost Flora Lu et al in *Inclusive Sustainability: Environmental Justice in Higher Education*, the University of California-Santa Cruz has begun to “shift from sustainability as a technical, expert-oriented activity focused on aspects such as built environment, climate, energy, food and water,” to center on inclusive sustainability, including on issues of power, difference, and ethics.

The authors write that “as the campus undergoes significant demographic change (e.g., UCSC’s undergraduate population is 66% non-white and 43% are first generation college students), **framings of sustainability must resonate with these increasingly diverse populations**. The People of Color Sustainability Collective (PoCSC) is a groundbreaking partnership between UCSC’s Ethnic Resource Centers, Colleges Nine and Ten, and [the] Sustainability Office. PoCSC’s efforts to recognize, celebrate, and validate diverse understandings and expressions of sustainability is a response to evidence of exclusion among certain sectors of our student population.”

At UC Santa Cruz, a recent campus-wide survey found that white, non-Hispanic students participate at a higher rate and rate mainstream environmental concerns such as conservation of biodiversity as more important, while **environmental justice issues such as food access** were rated more important to students of color.” The study also found many areas of convergence between the two groups, including broad agreement about the importance of environmental topics.[14]

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS ARE CHANGING

Diverse students in a historically white institution

According to the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), high school graduating classes in the US western region have become significantly more diverse over the last decade, from 52% in all categories other than white in 2010 to 61% in 2020. In the last 10 years, the number of Latinx high school graduates has increased by about 100k (40%), and the number of white graduates has declined by about 40k (11%).^[15] This means that investments in quality of educational experience and outcomes for students from historically underrepresented groups are critical—both to temper the impacts of a likely decline in enrollment by white students, as well as to build capacity to better serve a more richly diverse student body.

The UO is an emerging Hispanic-Serving Institution

The UO has a current Latinx undergraduate enrollment of 16%, and is likely to be at 25% within 8 years, qualifying for federal designation as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI).^[16]

Under-serving Latinx and BIPOC students

According to the UO HSI Task Force, “Latinx students received 22 percent of all Oregon high school diplomas, yet only 8 percent of UO freshmen are Latinx Oregon residents,” suggesting obstacles for Oregon students such as cost relative to household income, gaps in recruiting Oregon Latinx students, and relatively weak bridging from community colleges. There is also need to improve retention rates and academic success, especially in the sciences. According to HSI Task Force Chair Prof. Laura Pulido, becoming a “Latinx-thriving institution” will require purposeful investments and will “allow UO to reach its full potential as an R1 by contributing to a diverse academic pipeline and serving all of the people of Oregon.”^[17] Similarly, WICHE data shows that there are also significant gaps in serving Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, Asian, and American Indian/Alaska Native, and Asian students in western region higher education.^[18]

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Climate change concern and impact


Latinx and BIPOC community members are reporting proportionally more impact and more concern about climate change and environmental pollution. A recent Pew Research Center survey found that 71% of Hispanic adults report that climate change is affecting their local community, compared to 54% as reported by non-Hispanic adults. According to the same research, “the largest differences between Hispanics and non-Hispanics came on air pollution (70% vs. 49%) and safety of drinking water (56% vs. 38%). Hispanics (along with other non-White racial and ethnic groups) are disproportionately affected by air pollution, and are less likely to have access to drinking water that meets federal health standards.”[19]

Environment majors are not in UO Latinx undergraduate top 20

Latinx undergraduate students are not choosing Environmental Studies and Environmental Science in their top 20 majors at UO. According to the HSI Task Force report, department heads and faculty indicated that other majors were most popular because they “offer clear pathways to careers in the helping professions, such as medicine, law, counseling, or physical therapy.”[20] Lessons from the UO HSI Task Force and research from the geosciences suggest that aligning new climate and environmental justice curriculum directly with requirements in Latinx Studies and Indigenous Race and Ethnic Studies (IRES), along with emphasizing the altruistic aspects of climate and environment studies over “working outdoors” aspects will begin to help close the gap.[21]

UO majors with highest Latinx enrollment

Major	2013	2015	2017	2019	2021	Unit	
Psychology	146	178	190	233	304	CAS	<
Exploring	253	224	240	248	262	n/a	
Pre-Business Administration	177	222	258	248	241	LCB	
Business Administration	52	69	51	115	222	LCB	<
Human Physiology	107	156	171	150	169	CAS	
Political Science	58	74	103	135	137	CAS	<
Biology	86	122	121	135	100	CAS	
Advertising	39	39	52	91	85	SoJC	<
Spanish	68	74	74	86	81	CAS	
Family and Human Services	30	43	58	48	68	CoE	
Computer & Information Science	20	51	61	57	67	CAS	
General Social Science	22	81	79	80	67	CAS	
Architecture	29	25	43	54	66	CoD	<
Art	13	20	27	28	56	CoD	<
Public Relations	16	36	45	53	56	SoJC	<
Sociology	55	61	59	71	55	CAS	

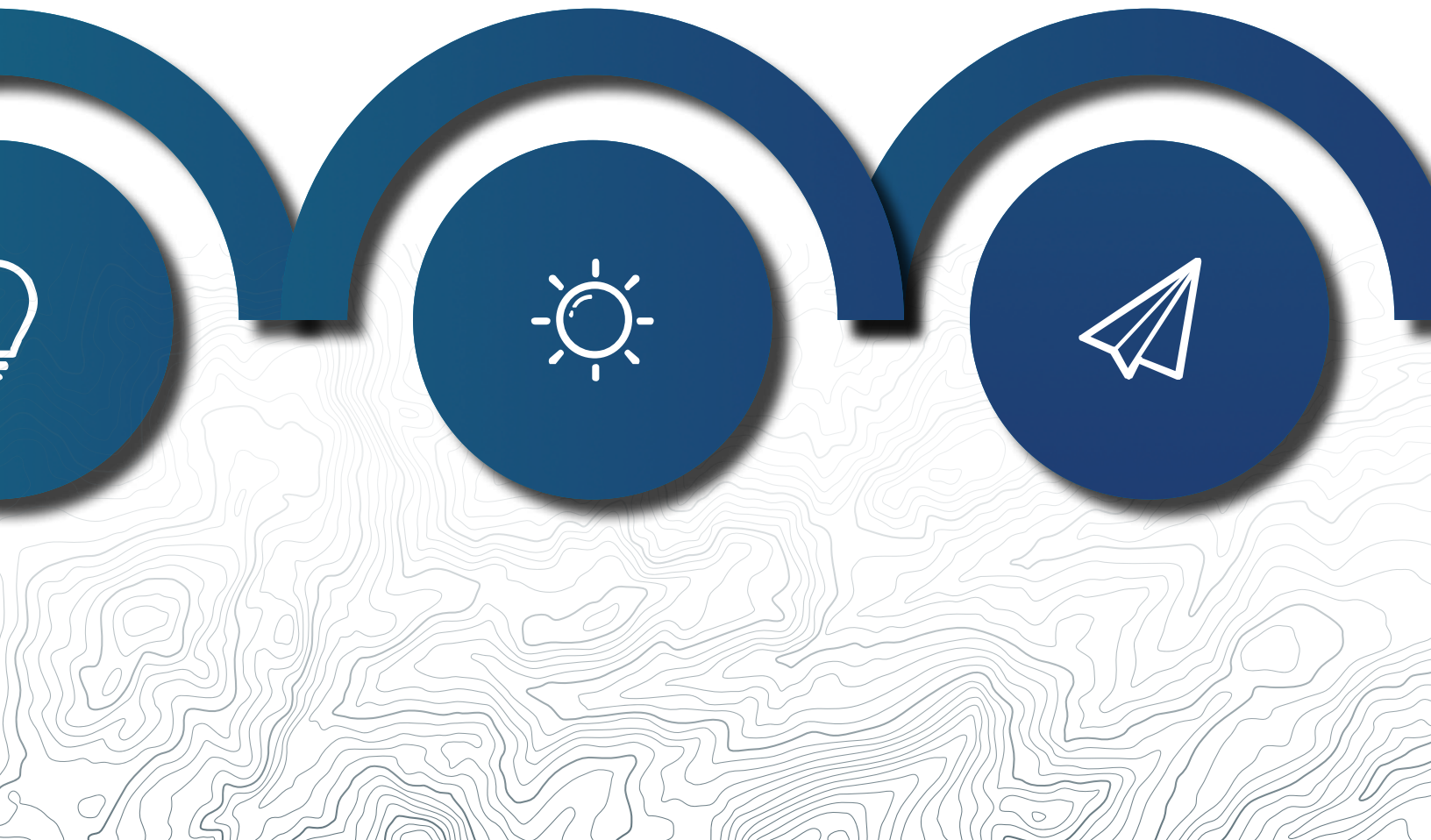
 indicates professional school or college program

< indicates upward trend over this time period.

Adapted with permission from 2023 HSI Task Force report, page 14.2



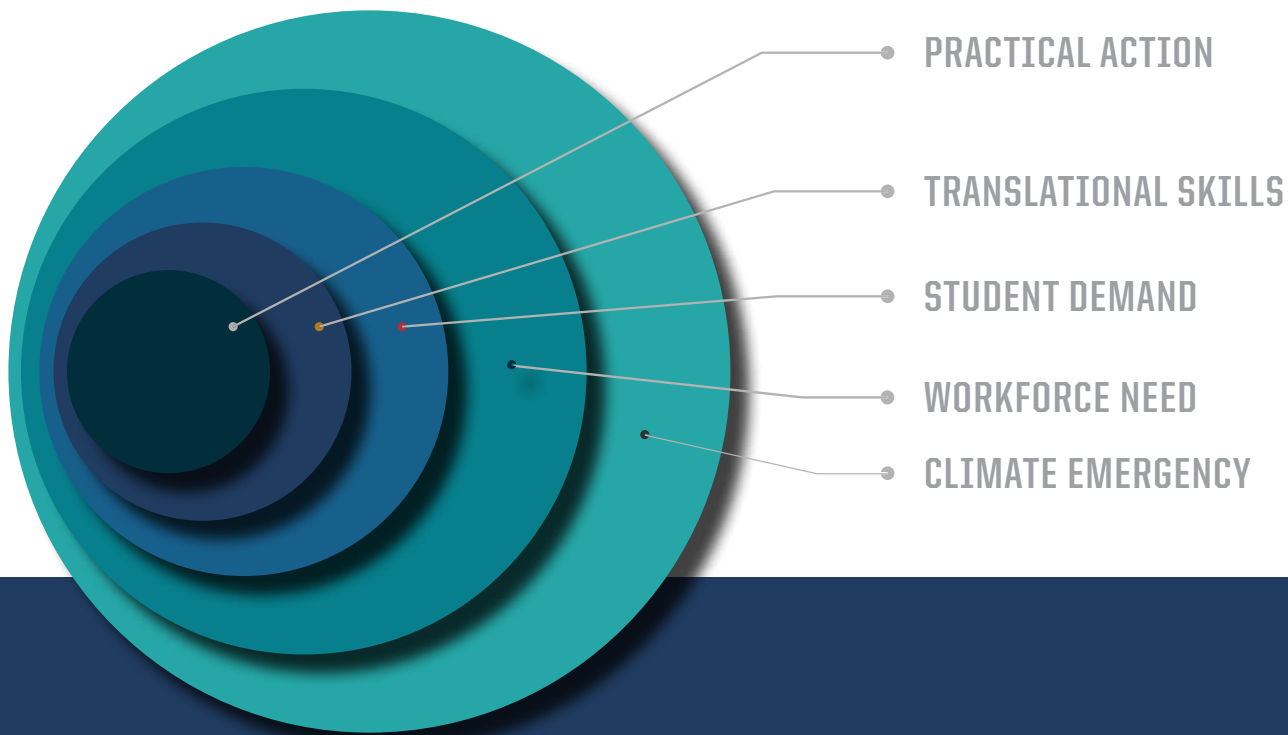
Transformational Investments 3





The Charge

As a large public research institution with strong professional schools, the UO is uniquely positioned to prepare students to put leading edge knowledge into practical action. UO has an immediate need for overarching academic program infrastructure and new interdisciplinary programs that leverage knowledge in the arts and sciences with tools from design, education, business, policy, law, journalism, and communication.



We are hearing loud and clear - from state and federal lawmakers, from Tribal leadership, and from community partners across the region, that adapting to and addressing climate change is an **all-hands-on-deck moment**. Government, and community leaders are looking to the UO to rapidly position graduates who have expertise and skills, and who will hit the ground running.

Adell Amos, Executive Director, UO Environment Initiative



1

*Research
stature*

2

*Public
mandate*

3

*National leadership
in sustainability*

4

*Expertise in
environmental
justice*

5

*Translation and
real world impact*

Anchor here: Oregon

The University of Oregon is *the* place to anchor academic program innovation for climate change response. The UO is unmatched in:

1. Research stature

The UO is poised to translate leading-edge research to innovative teaching for just climate futures. The University of Oregon is ranked in the Carnegie Classifications as an R1: Doctoral University with “very high research activity.” As a member of the Association of American Universities (AAU), the UO is one of the top 32 public research institutions in the nation, one of two AAU members in the Pacific Northwest, and the only one in Oregon.

2. Public mandate

The UO is a state institution with a public mandate to serve Oregonians. The state and the ecoregion needs the University of Oregon to lead in teaching for just and livable climate futures.

3. National leadership in sustainability

Climate change may be the biggest sustainability challenge yet, but the foundations are in place at UO and they are strong. Newsweek magazine recently ranked the UO among the top 7 greenest college campuses in the nation.⁽²²⁾ The UO has a long history of leadership on the environment: in campus operations, research, and teaching.

4. Expertise in environmental justice

The work of making climate futures fully just requires deep expertise that exists at UO more than anywhere else in the nation. The UO has a national reputation in teaching, research and community engagement at the intersection of environmental and social justice, especially in the environmental humanities, social sciences, law, and planning and public policy. Most recently, the Mellon Foundation-funded Pacific Northwest Just Futures Institute for Racial and Climate Justice launched by the UO Center for Environmental Futures has supported ground-breaking work on anti-racist social and environmental futures that reflects faculty research and teaching excellence and best practices in community engagement.

5. Translation and real world impact

The UO has strong arts and sciences along with ground breaking programs in science innovation and professional schools that teach students to put leading-edge knowledge into real world impact. The UO is uniquely poised to position students with expertise and translational skills for climate-relevant careers at the intersection of knowledge and impact—including in design, business, planning, communication, education and law.



Name a New Institute or School

A true sea change in higher education will require new academic infrastructures, dedicated leadership, and dedicated teaching faculty.

New academic programs will bridge strengths in these professional programs and the arts and sciences to connect leading edge knowledge with pathways for real world impact.

Workforce demand and student demand for new skills and expertise on climate change mitigation, and on environmental justice, is expanding rapidly. New institutional structures will make it possible to quickly advance academic programs that are ambitious and problem-centered, and that transform the role of higher education in shaping just climate futures -- on a time frame that matches the urgency of the need.

The UO has existing strengths in interdisciplinary teaching on the environment. New programs will build on these strengths to expand capacity for new enrollment growth, new coursework, and new degree programs.

New coursework and academic programs will center student demand for relevant, impactful career development and experiential learning that positions students to shape just and livable futures.

Transformational Investments

- **Vice President for Climate and Sustainability or Vice Provost for Climate Education**
- **Distinguished faculty fellows and endowed chairs**
- **Post-doctoral teaching fellowships**
- **University committee on climate curriculum**
- **Professional academic and internship advising focused on climate and environment**
- **Climate and environment campus center with a focus on teaching, resilience, and student experience**



New Undergraduate Majors

New undergraduate majors should be problem-driven and solution-centered. While undergraduate majors should serve as a broad educational foundation, all new climate change-response majors should:

1. Connect leading-edge research and emerging knowledge with **real-world impact** by leveraging strengths across professional schools, arts, and sciences
2. Build new and **elevate existing strengths**—avoid creating “scarcity” in existing programs
3. **Explicitly center difficult questions** in equity, inclusion, and justice.
4. Create overall enrollment **growth**.
5. Establish stature of new programs that **spotlight and amplify** existing/emerging programs
6. Position graduates for **action and impact** in justice-centered climate mitigation (governance, policy, design, media, education, technology).
7. Be **ambitious**, risk-taking, and impactful.
8. Have clear, **accessible academic pathways** for all students.

THESE MAJORS. Proposed new majors represent areas that are solution-centered, that have the potential to synthesize existing strengths, that reflect demand from current students, and that reflect interest shared with recruiters by prospective UO students.



Undergraduate Majors

Each of these proposed new majors connect areas of existing teaching expertise with areas of translational impact.

Climate and Community

01

Focus on climate change, community resilience and environmental justice. Coursework in natural sciences and environmental humanities with focus options in policy and governance, design and planning, communication, or business.

Climate Education

02

Focus on K-12 education and youth well-being. Coursework in education and in the environmental sciences and humanities with focus options in psychology, policy, and human physiology.

Coastal Studies

03

Focus on coastal marine environmental sciences and policy with a term of coursework in residence at the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology. Focus areas in environmental policy and law, hazards and resilience, community sustainability, and indigenous futures.

Energy Transitions*

04

Focus on renewable energy transitions with cross-disciplinary studies in chemistry, business, and policy and with focus area options in design, law, tribal sovereignty, and community resilience.

Climate Law and Policy

05

Interdisciplinary focus on climate law and policy with coursework in law, planning, environmental justice, and the natural and social sciences with focus options in water, climate, and cities.

Food and Water Systems

06

Focus on food and water systems with coursework in landscape architecture, urban design, policy, the environmental humanities, and the natural sciences.

*This major was identified by Associate Vice President and Director of Admissions Erin Hays and by Senior Assistant Director for Multicultural Recruitment Luis Renteria as most likely to recruit new students, and most resonant with prospective student interest.




New "Climate
Justice" ARC

New Coursework


New major options will require 1) new coursework at the introductory level, 2) new courses or seats in existing “translational” programs, and 3) the regularization of upper-level topical coursework.

Introductory courses




New introductory level, large-enrollment courses will make interdisciplinary, climate solutions-focused content accessible to undergraduate students in all schools and colleges and will relieve pressure on existing 200-level courses. These new courses will serve as a shared foundation for all new interdisciplinary climate majors and will fulfill core educational requirements for all UO students.

Translational disciplines



As new climate and environment majors introduce more students to translational fields such as design, policy, law, communication, business, and education, new courses are needed that connect topics in the environmental sciences and the environmental humanities to frameworks in the professional degree programs. This should include courses in land use and policy, urbanism, community resilience, and environmental communication.

Advanced coursework



Upper-level coursework is typically connected to current faculty research. There are currently many of these courses already offered at UO that would enrich each of these proposed new majors. Investments are needed to regularize courses and their prerequisites and to ensure that there are clear curricular pathways for major students.



New Program Foundations

Students in new courses and degree programs will:



Learn **foundational**, disciplinary concepts and theory.



Learn how to apply **contemporary tools** (e.g., outreach practices, design principles, policy instruments, communication strategies, data sensing, mining and modeling).



Immerse themselves in **real climate-related problems** and questions facing a region and community.



Apply an understanding of **climate and environmental justice**.



Work in interdisciplinary partnerships to **propose and test solutions** that address climate-related problems and that advance equity and justice.



Ramp Up

Student Services & Enrollment Management (SSEM), Academic Residential Communities (ARCs), Freshman Interest Groups (FIGS), and a focused advising structure are foundations for growing and supporting student enrollment.

SSEM	Significant new UG overall enrollment growth in climate and environment majors.	Spotlight new and existing majors in climate and environment. Spotlight new Climate Justice Field Stations.
ARCs	New “Climate Justice” ARC.	Builds on popular “Environmental Leaders” and “Sustainable Cities and Public Good” ARCs.
FIGS	New “Climate Leadership” and “Climate Science” FIGs	Builds on other “Going Green,” “The Future We Want to Build,” and “Science and Society” FIGs.
ADVISING	New “Climate and Environment” cross-campus advising	Clarifies confusing pathways for students who are taking courses across schools and colleges. Ensures direct and accessible course planning.

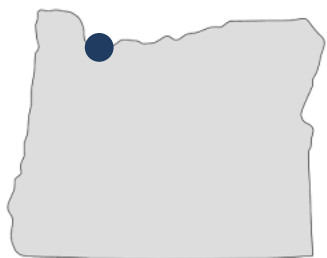
GAME CHANGING INVESTMENT. A new residence hall focused on climate resilience could showcase emerging ideas in design for climate change, house the new “Climate Justice” ARC, support growing enrollment in the areas of climate and environment, and serve as a laboratory for strategies in building just and livable futures.



Climate Justice Field Stations

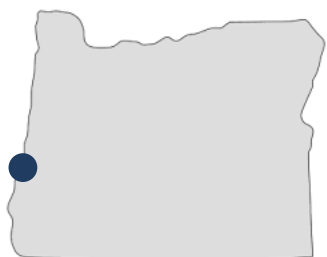
Community Learning and Ecoregional Impact

The UO has campus locations on the coast in Charleston at the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology, in the High Desert at Pine Mountain Observatory, and in Portland at the Ballmer Institute. With investment, students could take a term or a capstone year of community-centered coursework in these locations. This would center UO's research and impact-centered teaching on climate and environment, and grow regional centers for community-led research and teaching, ecoregional impact, and experiential learning for students. This would build on the Environmental Leadership Program, the Institute for Policy Research and Engagement, and the Resource Assistance for Rural Environments program, to expand the reach and impact of this public-serving institution.



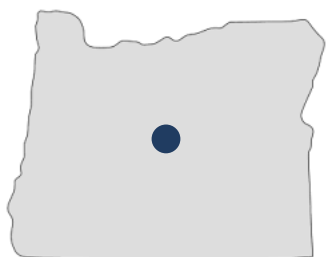
PORTLAND

Environmental, economic, and racial justice.
Housing and public health.
Residential learning communities.
Urban farms and carbon landscapes.
Climate change and children's health.



CHARLESTON

Regional planning for hazards mitigation
Tribal environmental leadership
Watershed communities and climate change
Renewable energy transitions
Humans and salmon
Traditional ecological knowledge



PINE MOUNTAIN

Water, wildfire, climate and community
Ecology and food systems
Atmospheric monitoring and citizen science



Climate Justice Field Stations

- Experiential learning that connects coursework on climate and environment with emerging topics in environmental justice.
- Direct pathways to impactful, values-driven careers.
- Community-engaged research and teaching with regional impact and national stature.
- Agile framework for applying multi-disciplinary expertise to emerging problems.



HOUSING JUSTICE



HEALTHY
WATERSHEDS



URBAN FARMS
AND FOOD



REGIONAL HAZARD
MITIGATION



CHILDREN'S HEALTH
AND CLIMATE



RACE AND
ETHNICITY



TRIBAL
LEADERSHIP



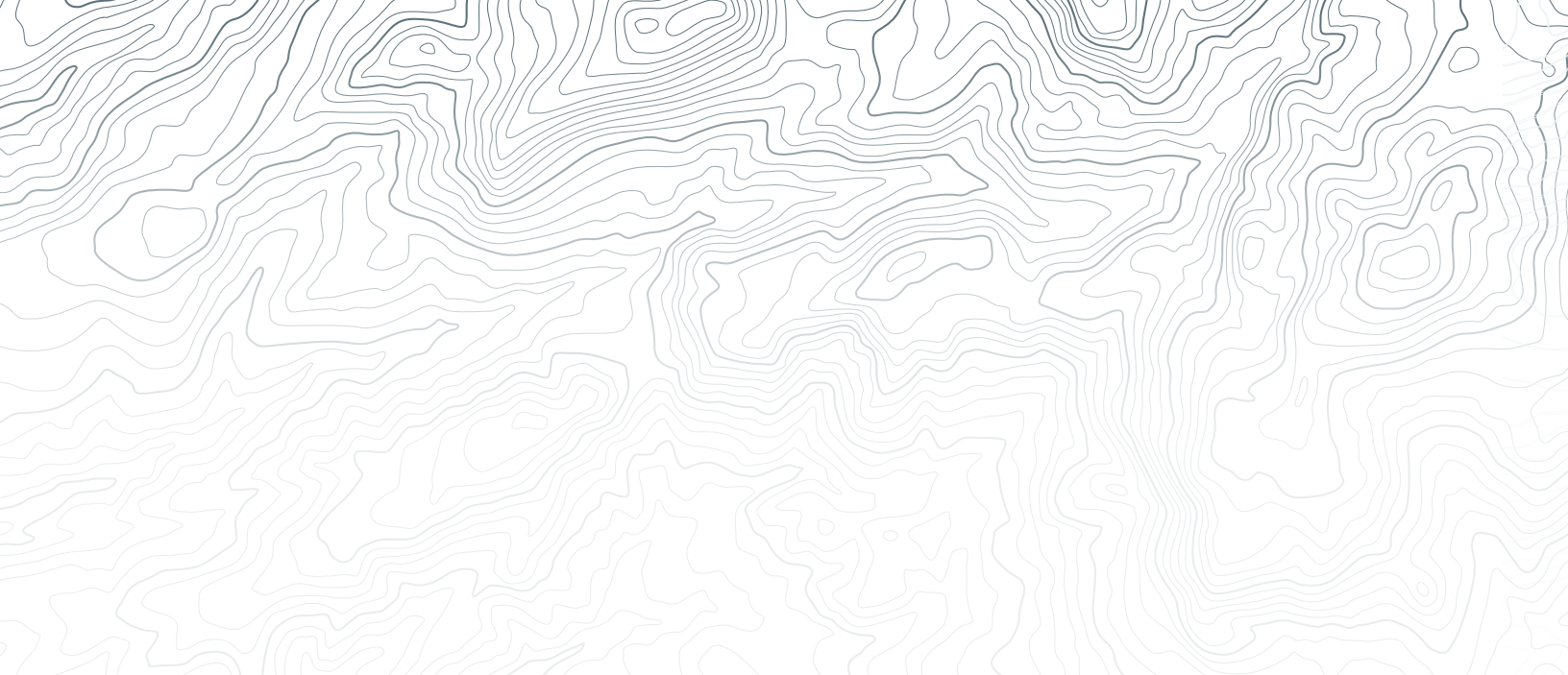
ENERGY
FUTURES



CARBON
LANDSCAPES



BIODIVERSE
NEIGHBORHOODS





Foundational Strengths and Needs

The University of Oregon is an R1 research institution with foundational strengths in sustainability and the environment. As an institution, we are uniquely positioned to lead higher education's response to the challenges of climate change.

Sustainable Operations and Administration

The UO is a recognized national leader in sustainable operations and administration. Since 2017, UO has earned a Gold rating from the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS).

Campus Planning and Facilities Management, including the UO's Office of Sustainability, implement sustainable planning, design, and construction principles as guided by the Oregon Model for Sustainable Development within the Campus Plan. This effort integrates the Climate Action Plan, the Comprehensive Environmental Policy, the Strategic Energy Management Plan, and the Zero Waste program.

The UO is well-established as an institutional leader in carbon and energy decision-making.

Graduates of the UO Environmental Studies program, Sustainable Business minor, and the College of Design's Schools of Architecture & Environment and Planning, Public Policy, and Management are well-regarded leaders in institutional sustainability at UO and in government, business, and non-profit organizations.

Student Leadership

Through the Student Sustainability Center, students have the opportunity to take on leadership roles related to sustainable operations, administration, and planning that give them skills in project management, stakeholder



engagement and coalition building, and other abilities vital to building and maintaining sustainable systems and spaces.

ARCs

Students have the option to live and study in Academic Residential Communities (ARCs) including in the Environmental Leaders and Sustainable Cities and the Public Good communities.

FIGs

Students have the option to explore introductory coursework First Year Interest Groups (FIGs) including in sustainability-themed areas such as Analyzing Our Environment, Edible History, Environmental Design, Food & the Garden,

Food Matters, Planning for the Planet, and Future We Want to Build.

UO Libraries

UO Libraries support in-depth climate and environmental teaching and research activities through data publishing and geographic information services, laboratories, maps, and aerial photography collections, as well as significant special and archival collections related to the history of environmental movements in the region, including political, economic, policy, legislative and protest movements.



Undergraduate Education

Current undergraduate offerings include majors and minors with an explicit interdisciplinary or translational focus on the environment, and programs that have a critical mass of teaching expertise on the environment within interdisciplinary frameworks.

Majors

- Earth Sciences with a concentration in Environmental Geoscience
- Environmental Design
- Environmental Science
- Environmental Studies
- General Social Sciences with a concentration in Globalization, Environment, and Policy
- Geography with concentrations in Environment, Economy, and Sustainability; Water Science and Policy; and Environmental Systems
- Political Science with a concentration in Sustainability, Development and Social Action

Minors

Climate Studies
Environmental Humanities
Environmental Justice (in development)
Food Studies
Science Communication
Sustainable Business

Areas of Teaching Expertise on Environmental Topics

Architecture
Art and Design
Biology
Business
Chemistry
Education
English
Economics
History
Indigenous Race and Ethnic Studies
Landscape Architecture
Latinx Studies
Legal Studies
Media Studies
Marine Biology
Planning, Public Policy and Management
Native American and Indigenous Studies
Philosophy
Sociology



Graduate Education

Current graduate offerings include master's and doctoral degrees, and terminal degrees in professional fields along with specializations and certificate programs that have an explicit applied, translational, or interdisciplinary focus and that include study on climate and environment.

Graduate Degrees

- Juris Doctor (concentrations in Environment & Natural Resources Law or Ocean & Coastal Law)
- Master of Advertising and Brand Responsibility (sustainable brands)
- Master of Architecture (Certificate in Ecological Design)
- Master of Business Administration (specialization in Sustainable Business Practice)
- Master of Chemistry (Electrochemical Science and Technology focus)
- Master of Chemistry Knight Campus Graduate Internship Program in the area of Photovoltaic & Semiconductor Device Processing
- Master of Community and Regional Planning
- Master of Environmental Studies⁵
- Master of Landscape Architecture
- Master of Public Administration (focus on evidence-based policy-making)
- Masters of Conflict and Dispute Resolution (concentrations in Environmental Conflict: Climate Change, Land use, and Water)
- PhD in Architecture (focus on Sustainable Architecture and Integrated Design)
- PhD in Environmental Sciences, Studies and Policies
- PhD in Planning and Public Affairs (concentration in Sustainable Transportation and Cities)




Undergraduate Education

Undergraduate education on climate and environment in existing key programs is currently marked by demand, growth, and bottlenecks. Current core educational requirements do not include basic competency in understanding climate change.

Core Educational Requirements

Undergraduates currently take core education electives in the areas of Arts and Letters, Science, Social Science, Global Perspective, and Difference: Inequality and Agency. There are not currently any core educational requirements that ensure basic understanding of topics in climate change and very few of the courses that fulfill existing core requirements include topics related to climate change.



FOUNDATIONAL NEED. To encourage core competency in the area of climate change, students should have the option to fulfill core educational requirements with regular instances of a new large-enrollment, easy-to-access course that focuses on climate and environmental solutions and that is rooted in a rigorous understanding of climate change (for example “**Climate and Community**”). With additional faculty and teaching support, this could be developed and offered in the Environmental Studies Program or in the UO Libraries, with a focus on inquiry methods and research data for topics in climate and environment.

Environmental Studies (ENVS) has recorded exceptionally strong majors growth between 2019 and 2022.

YEAR	2019	2020	2021	2022
MAJORS	286	270	306	331

Advising in the College of Arts and Sciences reports bottlenecks in the Environmental Studies Program (ENVS and ESCI majors) where interested majors have difficulty securing seats in the 200-level courses, where many of these seats are filled by students whose FIGS and ARCs require these courses and by those who may choose to take these courses to fulfill core education requirements. In 2023-24, the Environmental Studies Program will offer an additional 190 seats in ENVS 203 Introduction to Environmental Humanities, 60 new seats in ENVS 345 Environmental Ethics and 160 additional seats ENVS 225 Food Studies to try to meet demand. ENVS 435 Environmental Justice is also extremely popular and needs expanded capacity.

Strengths of the Environmental Studies Program include the Environmental Leadership Program in which students do coursework and fieldwork with community partners, and the unique ENVS 411 series of research-informed elective courses that are designed and taught by ENVS graduate students each year.



FOUNDATIONAL NEED. Course requirements for both the ENVS and ESCI majors span multiple academic units and elective courses are often taught as experimental courses and/or infrequently, and so are different each term and year. Investments are needed in expanded cross-campus, environment-focused advising for these and other majors in order to offer clear academic pathways for students.


Environmental Science (ESci) has recorded exceptionally strong growth between 2019 and 2022.

YEAR	2019	2020	2021	2022
MAJORS	186	216	246	317

Environmental Science is a popular major within the Environmental Studies program that draws on courses in the natural sciences in departments such as Geography, Earth Sciences, Chemistry and Biology and on courses in policy, social sciences, sustainable design and practice, humanities, and practical experiences primarily in Environmental Studies and in the College of Design in the Schools of Architecture & Environment and Planning, Public Policy and Management.

There are proportionally fewer core faculty in the Environmental Studies Program in the


area of the natural sciences and curricular program administration is shouldered by a single career instructor. Moving forward, it may be helpful to elevate this major to its own department, to connect it more closely to curricular leadership in partner units, or to invest in more fully in teaching faculty who could grow and elevate this important major.



FOUNDATIONAL NEED. ENVS and ESCI are popular majors that together enroll nearly 700 UO undergraduates. In both of these majors, underrepresented students, Pell-eligible, and first-generation students are all less fully represented compared to at UO as a whole. Investments are needed to build coursework and course requirements that align with lived experiences of a broader cross-section of students. Recommendations have included: hiring faculty with expertise/lived experience to develop and deliver required coursework that specifically roots environmental studies and science in BIPOC theoretical frameworks, supporting experiential learning that connects with communities of color in rural and urban spaces, and building research-engaged coursework in areas that relate to community survivance and sovereignty, including related to food, water and energy, policy and governance, and Indigenous Science Studies.

Environmental Design (ENVD) is a new major in the Department of Landscape Architecture that is opening new access to coursework on design and its role in navigating climate change and urban design.

The ENVD degree is housed in the College of Design and is the first degree to open design coursework to students who are not enrolled in professionally-accredited degree programs in landscape architecture, interior architecture, and architecture that otherwise require separate admissions gates. In 2023-24, ENVD will start with its first cohort of 25 students.



FOUNDATIONAL NEED. Although the ENVD is a new degree, it depends on existing courses to meet degree requirements. With increased enrollment in all of these programs, several courses are now at capacity and wait-listed. Investment is needed for expanded coursework in the School of Planning Public Policy and Management and in the School of Architecture & Environment as enrollment in this degree grows.

New Faculty Hires

The UO Environment Initiative is currently recruiting **more than 20 new faculty** to the UO for research and teaching in the areas of climate and environment. The hiring initiative has gained national attention for its scale and ambition.

2024-25 Cohort

Environmental Materials Chemistry
(Chemistry)

Hazards and Extreme Events (Earth Sciences)

Natural Science: Climate Impact Mitigation & Adaptation (Environmental Studies)

Environmental/Natural Resource Economics (Economics)

Ecological Economics (Environmental Studies)

Energy Governance (Environmental Studies)

Global Environmental Politics (Political Science)

Environmental Resiliency

Policy and Administration (Planning, Public Policy, and Management)

Design Innovation for Environmental Resilience (Architecture)

Environmental Law and Climate Justice
(School of Law)

Environmental Communication (School of Journalism and Communication)

2023-24 Cohort

Architectural Determinants of Health
(Architecture)

Ecological Housing/Social Justice
(Architecture)

Hazards and Extreme Events (Earth Sciences)

Natural Sciences and Climate Change
(Environmental Studies)

Social Sciences and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation
(Environmental Studies)

Climate and Sustainability (Geography)

Climate Change Resilience (Landscape Architecture)

Urban Ecological Justice (Landscape Architecture)

US Environmental Justice and Politics
(Political Science)

Environmental Justice (Sociology)

Minors

Minors in the area of climate and environmental solutions are important measures of growing interest and of unmet potential in academic program development.

Food Studies is a quickly-growing and extremely popular minor, with at least 100 students in 2022-23. The minor recently moved from Environmental Studies to the School of Global Studies and Languages. Students in this area are often interested in food justice, sustainability and sovereignty, where there is overlap with climate solutions, planning, policy, and environmental justice.


Climate Studies is a minor in the Geography Department that combines climatology with political science and policy, and begins to show the potential of the space between the natural and social sciences and law and governance in pursuing climate solutions. The minor had 10 students enrolled in 2022-23.

Environmental Humanities Environmental Humanities is a recent new minor in the Environmental Studies Program. This minor opens traditional Humanities fields (i.e. History, Philosophy, Literature) to dialogue and collaboration with environmental social movements and the natural sciences.

Environmental Justice minor in the Department of Sociology that promises to be as popular as the heavily-enrolled environmental justice courses that will form the core of the requirement.

Science Communication. This minor gives students the knowledge and skills they need to work on science communication issues critical to individuals and society, from climate change to public health.

Sustainable Business is a minor in the Lundquist College of Business that is designed for non-business majors who want to learn to apply business solutions to address social and environmental challenges.



FOUNDATIONAL NEED. New faculty arriving on campus under the auspices of the Environment Initiative need organizational support to build a meaningful sense of community and shared mission. Continuity of community and robust institutional infrastructure for research and teaching support will pay off in bounds in the long-term success of this exceptionally stellar faculty cohort.

New Curricular Development

Supported by 22-24 UO Environment Initiative Curricular Seed Grants

Envisioning Indigenous Environmental Futurity: Indigeneity, Place, and Cyberspace and Indigenous Methods for Environmental Storytelling



Ashley Cordes, Assistant Professor of Indigenous Studies, English and Environmental Studies & Jason Younker, Associate Professor, Anthropology

Áwna sínwita Ichishkiín! (Now let's speak Ichishkiín!): Honoring Indigenous Knowledges for a Just and Livable Future



Michelle Jacob, Professor, Education Studies & Regan Anderson, Ichishkiín Language Instructor, Linguistics and Northwest Indian Language Institute

Science Communication and Mapping for Climate Justice



Carolyn Fish, Assistant Professor, Geography & Alex Segrè Cohen, Assistant Professor, Science and Risk Communication

Digital Fabrication for Nature Based Design



Mary Polites, Assistant Professor, Architecture, Paul Dalton, Associate Professor, Department of Bioengineering, & Ignacio Lopez Buson, Assistant Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture

People and the Coast: An Introduction to Coastal and Marine Environmental Studies



David Sutherland, Associate Professor, Earth Sciences and Environmental Studies & Maya Watts, Education Program Coordinator and Instructor, Oregon Institute of Marine Biology

Virtual Excursions for Science Learning

Danny Pimentel, Assistant Professor of Immersive Media Psychology & Kelly Sutherland, Associate Professor of Biology and Director of the Sutherland Lab

Broadening Experiential Learning through the Environmental Leadership Program

Kathryn Lynch & Peg Boulay, Co-Directors of the Environmental Leadership Program, Environmental Studies

Indigenous Knowledge Keepers Curriculum Development

Theresa May, Professor of Theatre Arts & Jennifer O'Neal, Assistant Professor of Indigenous, Race and Ethnicity Studies

Technoeconomic Analyses for Decarbonization

Paul Kempler, Associate Director of the Oregon Center for Electrochemistry and Joshua Skov, Senior Instructor of Management

Building Environmental Education Infrastructure at the UO

Sarah Stapleton, Associate Professor in Education Studies Department & Kathryn Lynch, Co-Director of the Environmental Leadership Program and Instructor, Environmental Studies Program

Oregon Students Helping Oregon Communities Address Climate, Equity and Affordability

Marc Schlossberg, Professor, School of Planning, Public Policy, and Management, and Nico Larco, Professor, Department of Architecture and Co-directors of the Sustainable Cities Institute

Graduate Education

Existing UO graduate education on climate and environment is at the center of research on topics in climate adaptation and mitigation, natural hazards, design, communication, education, policy and governance, and in the environmental sciences and humanities. There is unmet need for a academic program structure that builds on existing strengths, leverages the professional schools, and puts UO on the map for climate solutions-centered teaching across the university.

College of Arts and Sciences

Graduate education on climate and environment in the College of Arts and Sciences includes strengths in many areas including in glaciology (in both the humanities and physical sciences), environmental justice, wildfire and smoke, natural hazard risk, natural climate solutions, ecocriticism, and photo voltaic and energy storage chemistry, to name a few. Students who pursue the Master of Environmental Studies and the PhD in Environmental Sciences, Studies, and Policies work with faculty from across the university to pursue interdisciplinary topics in environmental humanities, environmental science and social science, environmental policy, environmental design, and environmental education. Recent hires are building interdisciplinary capacity in the areas of climate mitigation and adaption, including in coastal studies, materials chemistry, and environmental justice.

College of Design

The College of Design has been offering coursework on design for the environment for more than 100 years. Graduate degree programs in architecture have ranked in the top ten nationally in “Sustainable Design” several times in the last decade. Many faculty in the college’s School of Planning, Public Policy and Management, School of Architecture & Environment, School of Art + Design, and the Department of the History of Art and Architecture carry out research-engaged teaching in graduate programs across the college that focuses on knowledge-based policy and design, and that uses art and design to advance cultural thought on topics related to climate and environment.

College of Education

Graduates of the College of Education's numerous master's and doctoral degree programs are formative in shaping the future of teacher education, counseling, and school counseling, curriculum, and policy. Existing courses on climate and environmental education are heavily enrolled--often wait listed--and graduate students have expressed interest in more opportunities in this area. The College of Education's new Ballmer Institute in Portland is especially well-positioned to lead in knowledge-based support of regional youth, including in response to the of the impacts of climate change.

Lundquist College of Business

The Master of Business Administration (MBA) with the option of a specialization in Sustainable Business Practice has the potential to rapidly expand offerings in the area of environment and sustainability, with the possibility of 6 new tenure-track faculty hires that each have the option of a focus on environment/sustainability.

School of Law

Faculty in the School of Law hold international stature for their work on climate, water, and environmental law, and for their experience working in state and federal government in environmental law and policy. The Environmental and Natural Resources Law Center is ranked in the top 10 nationally. A new hire in the area of environmental law and climate justice promises to continue to build stature and global impact for the School of Law.

School of Journalism and Communication

The School of Journalism and Communication Master of Advertising and Brand Responsibility emphasizes communication skills for current social issues, including sustainability. A new faculty hire in environmental communication will build capacity in this school.

Summary

As a large public research institution with strong professional schools, the **UO is uniquely positioned** to offer students the skills to build impactful professional pathways that put **leading edge knowledge into practical action**. There is immediate need at UO for overarching academic program infrastructure that leverages knowledge in the arts and sciences with tools from design, education, business, policy, law, journalism, and communication, for **new flagship programs in climate and environmental solutions**.

Such a transformation will require new investments in academic program infrastructure that builds on existing strengths to offer students **tools and knowledge to respond to the challenges of climate change**.

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