EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSES
December 12 and 13, 2013
Cascades Hall, College Way, Bend

Community input on the community presentations accepted online December 12, 2013 to January 31, 2014.

Oregon State University - Cascades began the conversation with the community at the Community Open Houses (Dec. 12 and 13, 2013) about possible uses of the selected sites for the future four-year branch campus, with two presentation/open house meetings attended by 270 community members. The meetings were the beginning of a long-term community engagement process to gather input towards the creation of a new four-year campus in the under-served and diverse environment of Central Oregon. To view the full presentation, visit http://www.osucascades.edu/4/past-4-events.

I. Introduction and Background

OSU-Cascades Vice President Becky Johnson and Campus Expansion Advisory Committee Co-Chair Matt Shinderman, on respective days, discussed Central Oregon’s 30-year effort to bring a university to their community; Oregon State University’s expansion to meet the state’s education goals and OSU-Cascades’ role in achieving those goals; the steps taken by the branch campus and community to locate the campus in this community, and the qualities that a new 21st Century university should adopt.

Kelly Sparks, OSU-Cascades Associate Vice President for Finance and Strategic Planning reviewed the overall schedule for the campus development, emphasizing the desire for community engagement and feedback, and highlighting the scope of Phase One development and the overall campus Master Plan schedule.

A team of design consultants retained to investigate the potential for campus development on the combined 56-acre parcels discussed site characteristics, opportunities for site development and restoration, sustainable strategies, and the elements of campus activities and policy which can be modified to best support community connections and livability.

Following the presentation the community was given the opportunity to share their thoughts and concerns with representatives from OSU-Cascades and their design consultants. Three major topics were identified to frame, but not limit the topics of conversation: Site Development, Sustainability and Connections & Pathways. Within
those topic discussions, general comments were captured requesting: additional background on the decision to analyze the potential of the SW Chandler properties in lieu of other locations; how a four-year university could influence quality of life and taxpayer liabilities; and requesting broader communal format for community input.

II. Site Development

In her presentation on site development, Barbara Swift of Swift Company identified the qualities which give this site a strong sense of place, then shared three options on how the topography of the site could be modified to support building placement and provide accessibility and connections throughout the site. Three options – the Terraced, Canyon and Rim options – were developed to test the viability of the proposed location prior to purchase of property. Considerations were given to site topography and geotechnical conditions, connections and impact to surrounding community, capacity of site in order to maintain a balance of open space to buildings, and distribution of program usage under the overall concern for economic, political and environmental sustainability.

To understand the potential impact to the local and regional area, the community wanted to understand the near and long-term capacity and growth goals that have been identified for the campus planning effort and how this growth might affect the infrastructure and culture of Bend and the broader Central Oregon region.

OSU-Cascades wants to develop a culture that reflects the values of “Oregon State University with an Edge” and that also reflects the Central Oregon community within the physical organization of the campus. This requires developing a campus environment which engages a population that appreciates the active and outdoor lifestyle available in Central Oregon, has respect for natural environments, and provides the opportunity for direct and transparent exchange of ideas. A variety of recreation areas will be defined and developed on-site to serve both the campus and community population in relationship with off-site partnerships.

Creating a sense of community on college campuses involves many factors, but for smaller educational institutions the importance of residential communities is critical in establishing a strong identity with peers and place. Providing on-site residential offerings will also support the goals of reduction of transit demand between living and learning environments and provide residential options in the tight housing market currently existing in the Bend/Central Oregon region. The immediate goal of providing housing for 30% of the Phase One student population in 2015 anticipates approximately 300 beds. As the campus population grows, residential offerings are planned to keep
pace or, depending on possible public/private partnerships, increase in percentage to the overall student population. This is an important consideration as it addresses community concerns regarding any impact of the college population on Bend’s westside neighborhoods and potential traffic congestion by a commuting population not using alternate transit options.

III. Community Input

A. Sustainability

OSU-Cascades wants to create a campus which leads by example for the broader community about the importance of sustainable development and practice. The goal has been identified to be one of the first net-zero college campuses in the country which means generating as much energy as is consumed by the functions on-site. In the presentation Craig Curtis of Miller/Hull discussed how the previous activity on the site can be repaired, what qualities of buildings support ease of access across the site, and incorporate sustainable strategies appropriate for this site and the Central Oregon environment. The comments from the community were positive regarding developing a sustainable campus. The local community has many members who are informed about sustainable strategies, and these experts are a tremendous resource for the campus development.

B. Connections & Pathways

Phill Worth of Kittelson & Associates presented a contextual overview on the proposed campus location highlighting the existing amenities in close proximity to the site and how these amenities can tailor the campus development to minimize impact and integrate naturally into the community. General community comments identified concerns with overall transit strategies and capacity of existing infrastructure.

Many participants were very supportive of expanded transit opportunities in the community although stressed the importance of reinforcing and expanding current offerings through improved local and regional transit routes and frequency of schedules. Some participants felt it would be difficult to change current commuting behaviors, but the evolution of the campus population’s values towards parking and driving are difficult to predict if alternate strategies are established.
There was concern expressed about parking capacity proposed on-site. A traffic study is currently underway to analyze various scenarios of campus capacity based on the transit options provided which balance single-occupancy auto trips with alternate modes of transit. A transportation policy will be developed and enforced to ensure the proper quantity of parking is provided without creating a parking nuisance scenario in the adjacent business district.

Much of the pathways and connections discussion focused on the importance of bikeway networks in an overall transit strategy. The success of incorporating bicycle mode transit to the OSU-Cascades campus will rely on development and refinement of bike lanes, beyond the immediate neighborhoods, that are safe and enjoyable to attract cyclists.

IV. Summary and Rating

The consensus from multiple constituents who attended the event is that the community meetings successfully introduced the preliminary thoughts for the potential home of OSU-Cascades. As on-going forums occur, OSU-Cascades wants to demonstrate that they are listening and addressing community concerns in a positive and productive manner which will result in a successful integration of a four-year university to the Central Oregon community.

OVERALL RATING: 4.17

Completed attendee Feedback Forms (scale of 1-5 with 1 being Not Informative and 5 being Extremely Informative)