

Sport and Wellness Initiative Strategic Plan

NOVEMBER 2021



UNIVERSITY OF
OREGON

About the Initiative

The Sport and Wellness Initiative integrates and increases the impact of a wide range of academic fields in sport and wellness to propel the University of Oregon to an international leadership position within this space. The Initiative will provide world-class experiences and educational opportunities to attract and retain students and faculty. It will align itself with advanced research and expertise on healthy living and environmental quality to help people live longer and healthier lives and to promote health equity.

The university has a strong commitment to academic rigor and excellence, a long history of success and a worldwide reputation in athletics, and strong research and athletic facilities. It leverages these strengths to build integrative university programs in human physiology, prevention science, community wellbeing, improving the human condition, data analytics, athletics, and sports industry expertise, including programs in marketing, product management and design, and communications. As host to local, national, and international athletic competitions, **the university understands the power of sport to bring communities together, foster goodwill, and improve overall physical and psychological wellbeing.**

About the Strategic Plan

The Sport and Wellness Initiative is an ambitious endeavor—reimagining how students, faculty, and partners interact, learn, research, and advance sport and wellness. This strategic plan provides an initial path forward for achieving the Initiative’s mission and goals. The intention is not to replace or overshadow existing sport and wellness efforts and programs at the university. Rather, the university will seek opportunities to enhance or amplify these efforts as appropriate.

The plan was developed in collaboration with the provost and a faculty steering committee, and was informed by interviews, surveys, and workshops with internal and external stakeholders. Nexight Group provided facilitation, strategic planning, interview, survey, writing, and design support for this strategic plan.



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Mission and Vision

The Sport and Wellness Initiative will extend the University of Oregon's already strong reputation and leadership in the field by delivering a new model of transdisciplinary education and research that recognizes the integrated nature of sport and wellness fields. Programs, courses, research, and partnerships are structured to train the next generation of leaders in the space and address complex sport and wellness problems with innovative and applied solutions that benefit all people across ages, abilities, and health.

Core Beliefs

Central to the success of the Initiative are the following core beliefs that apply across the goals and objectives:



Athletics and academics

offer synergistic opportunities for mutually beneficial outcomes.



Sport and society

are inherently linked. Initiative efforts must be aligned with and reflect societal needs.



Applied data science and analytics

are key components across the integrated sport and wellness fields.



Health and wellness

are essential to physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. Innovation and advancements in these areas should positively impact people's lives.



KEY CONCEPTS FROM THE BOOK

- HOW TO IMPACT CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF YOUR PRODUCT
- THE STORY CONSUMERS TELL THEMSELVES
- DOES MARKETING REALLY WORK?
- COMPONENTS OF A GREAT STORY
- WORLDVIEW



Sport and Wellness Initiative Overview

The Sport and Wellness Initiative has three goals to achieve its mission and vision.



Foster Transdisciplinary Collaboration

We will foster a culture of collaborative education and research across academic disciplines, athletics, and industry partners to create new opportunities for students and faculty and to accelerate sport and wellness innovation.



Advance Innovative Sport and Wellness Research

We will advance research that breaks traditional boundaries and brings together faculty and students from across the university as well as external partners to achieve innovation, apply results to improve health and performance, and set the global research agenda in sport and wellness.



Reimagine Sport and Wellness Curriculum

We will restructure our academic curriculum through interdepartmental collaboration to create more nuanced, multifaceted, and experiential learning opportunities for students to enable them to differentiate and stand out in their future careers.



GOAL 1

Foster Transdisciplinary Collaboration

Valuable opportunities remain untapped at the intersection of sport and wellness. By overcoming a boundary that has persisted throughout higher education, the University of Oregon can break the mold, set a new standard, and set itself apart as a one-of-a-kind world-class university.



OBJECTIVE 1.1

Increase the Recruitment and Retention of Faculty and Student Population with Diverse Experience and Backgrounds



OBJECTIVE 1.2

Extend International Reach and Presence



OBJECTIVE 1.3

Strengthen Internal and External Communications



OBJECTIVE 1.4

Center Equity and Inclusion as a Key Value of Sport and Wellness



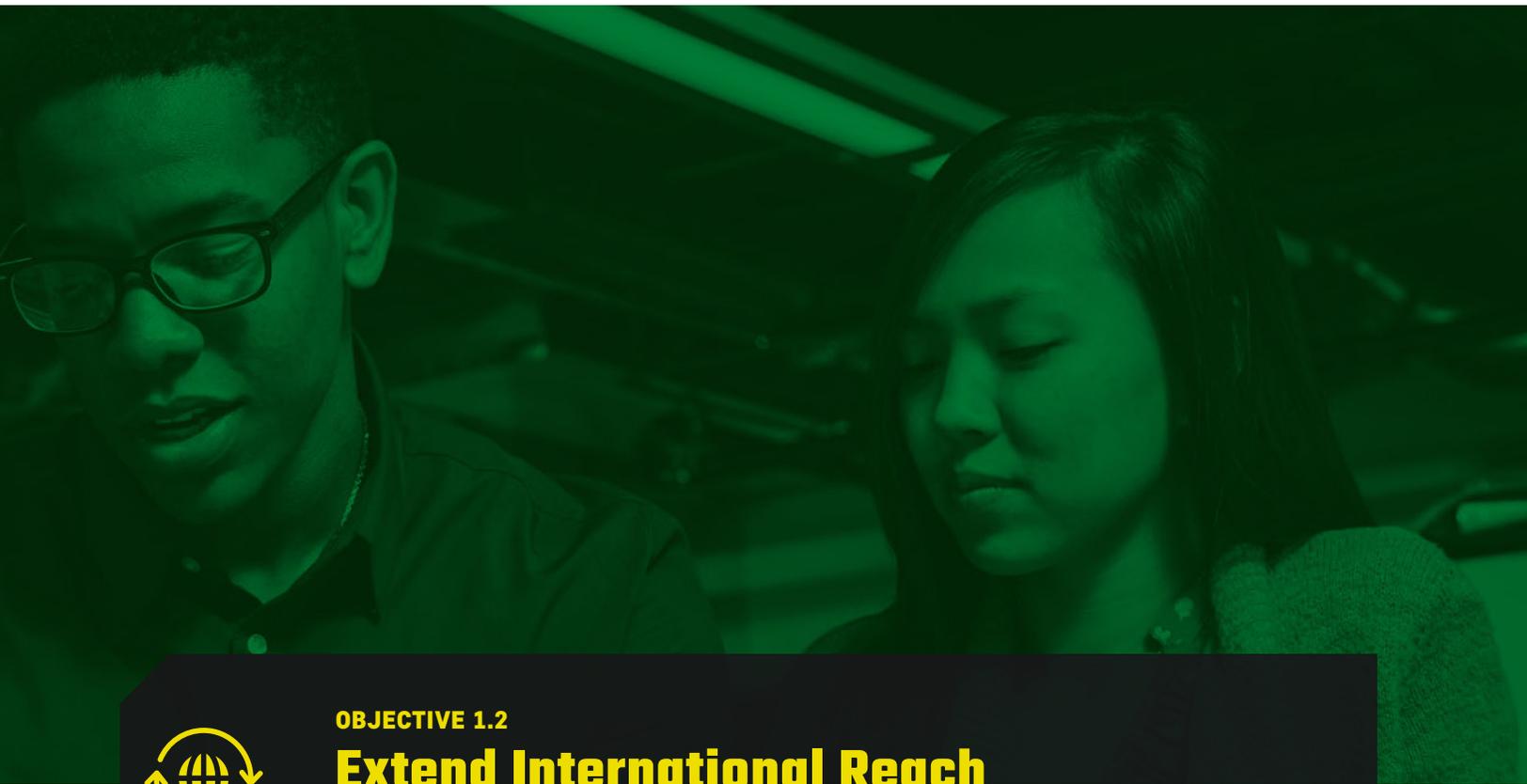
OBJECTIVE 1.1



Increase the Recruitment and Retention of Faculty and Student Population with Diverse Experience and Backgrounds

The university will develop and continuously refine recruitment strategies to enroll and support international and racially and ethnically diverse students and employ faculty members from historically marginalized backgrounds in academia and/or the sport and wellness fields, while also embracing cultural diversity and promoting social justice and equity. Attracting and retaining a diverse and inclusive body of faculty and students will improve learning outcomes, organizational effectiveness, and quality of life for all.

ACTIVITIES	NEAR-TERM 2021-2023 ACADEMIC YEARS	LONG TERM 2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR+
Enhance resources and support for training faculty in recruitment strategies that promote diversity and inclusion	●	
Establish policies and procedures that seek to increase retention of underrepresented racially and ethnically diverse faculty and students	●	
Develop a recruitment plan for attracting international students, faculty, and staff	●	
Strengthen training practices to teach faculty about effective mentorship strategies for students from groups underrepresented throughout higher education	●	
Develop educational materials and internal training programs that teach faculty and others about implicit bias and systemic discrimination and marginalization	●	



OBJECTIVE 1.2

Extend International Reach and Presence

The Sport and Wellness Initiative’s efforts to engage partners in academia, industry, government, professional athletics, health, public health, community-based organizations, and medicine will serve to entrench the University of Oregon’s name in crucial areas of focus. In turn, the university will serve as a central hub for individuals and organizations across all relevant stakeholder groups to convene, discuss, collaborate, and innovate the field of sport and wellness. These connections and conventions of stakeholders are foundational building blocks that will build the University of Oregon’s reputation as a leader in sport and wellness.

ACTIVITIES	NEAR-TERM 2021-2023 ACADEMIC YEARS	LONG TERM 2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR+
Seek mutually beneficial resource-sharing opportunities to partner with international universities and institutions to expand the university’s global reach		●
Convene an international set of academic and business partners that facilitates the exchange of people, ideas, and protocols to help shape a global perspective for the Initiative		●
Launch a marketing campaign to promote the university’s academic and research rankings in key international markets		●



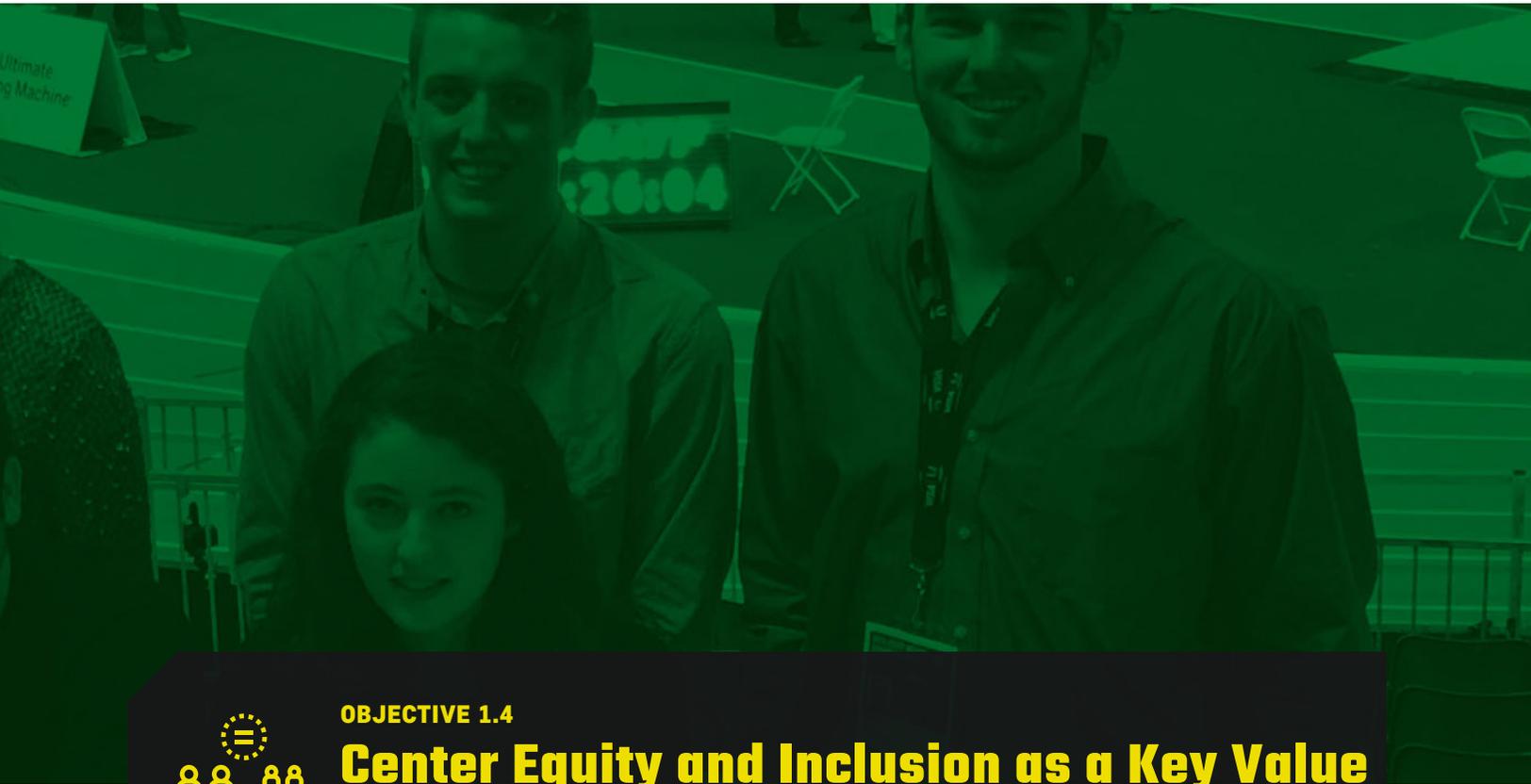
OBJECTIVE 1.3

Strengthen Internal and External Communications

Internal communication protocols, facilitated by central university professionals, will allow valuable information to actively circulate within the University of Oregon and to external stakeholders. A centralized source of communications will reduce administrative burden on faculty while keeping them apprised of highly impactful collaborative research activities.

The Sport and Wellness Initiative will create an interconnected information system across disciplines and departments, and managed by university staff, to highlight opportunities to engage with ongoing efforts and to facilitate new connections that bring together the university’s diverse range of expertise in novel ways.

ACTIVITIES	NEAR-TERM 2021-2023 ACADEMIC YEARS	LONG TERM 2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR+
Establish a communication platform or mechanism to educate faculty about the value of the university’s sport and wellness-related programs and achievements in the industry	●	
Create a process to review communication materials for all initiatives to maximize inclusivity	●	
Coordinate university communications to facilitate new interdisciplinary collaborations and convey a unified message to both internal and external stakeholders	●	

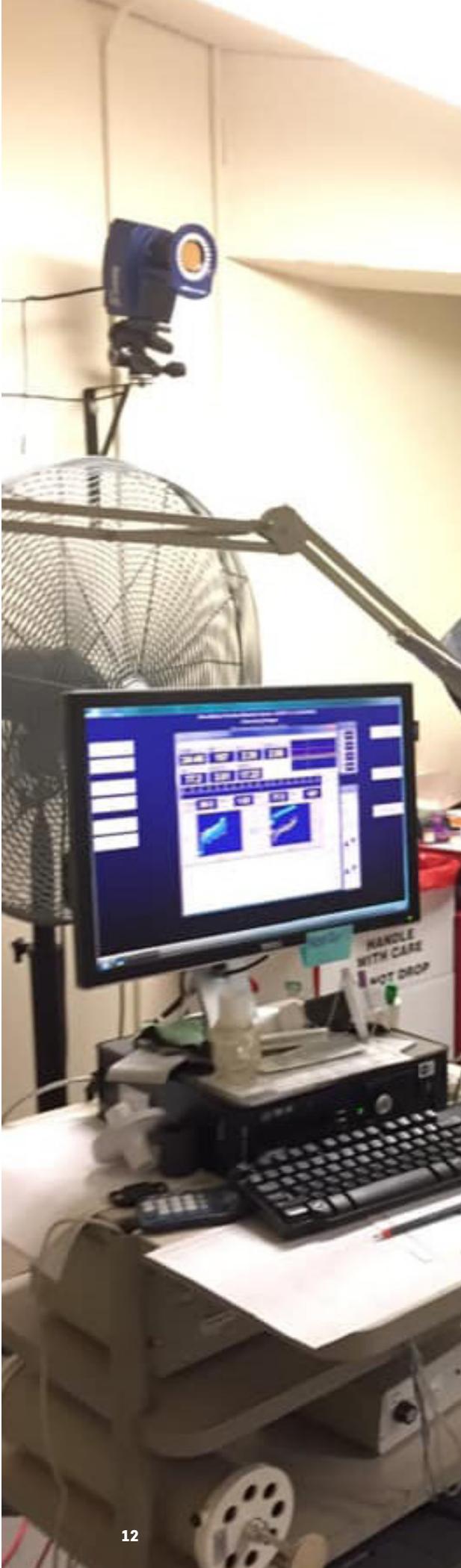


OBJECTIVE 1.4

Center Equity and Inclusion as a Key Value of Sport and Wellness

Sport has become a leading edge for critical and sometimes divisive conversations about equity and inclusion, particularly around gender and race. The Sport and Wellness Initiative will recognize the importance of these conversations and become a convener of events that help to promote equity and inclusion in sport, health, and wellness.

ACTIVITIES	NEAR-TERM 2021-2023 ACADEMIC YEARS	LONG TERM 2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR+
Promote university research that examines equity and inclusion in sport and wellness	●	
Hold conferences focused on gender- and/or race-related impacts in sport and wellness	●	
Develop educational programming to empower female student athletes to use their voices, explore career opportunities in sport and wellness, and navigate name, image, likeness (NIL) opportunities by establishing their personal brand	●	



GOAL 2

Advance Innovative Sport and Wellness Research

Advancing research that breaks traditional boundaries and brings together faculty from across the university, external industry partners, and other stakeholders is a direct step toward achieving innovation and global leadership in sport and wellness. The university will leverage this work through the research opportunities and understand how to translate them into unique educational opportunities for students.



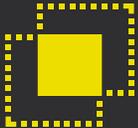
OBJECTIVE 2.1

Stimulate Transdisciplinary Research Opportunities



OBJECTIVE 2.2

Help to Set the Global Agenda for Sport and Wellness Research



OBJECTIVE 2.3

Align Research Initiatives with Societal Interests



OBJECTIVE 2.4

Foster Sponsored Research Opportunities



OBJECTIVE 2.1

Stimulate Transdisciplinary Research Opportunities

Transdisciplinary collaboration—a foundational characteristic of the Sport and Wellness Initiative—will involve strengthening existing university partnerships while actively forging new collaborative relationships. Faculty will have the bandwidth to cultivate new intellectual discourse and cutting-edge research that reaches beyond traditional boundaries to bridge the university’s academic and athletic departments.

ACTIVITIES	NEAR-TERM 2021-2023 ACADEMIC YEARS	LONG TERM 2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR+
Form a dedicated internal committee focused on identifying potential interdisciplinary research teams and project opportunities across departments and disciplines	●	
Create a new department or program major focused on interdisciplinary collaboration and educational experiences		●
Create a plan to develop information and data analytics —a key strength of sport and wellness research—as a common frame to bring programs together	●	
Designate flexible spaces on campus that support active learning and collaboration		●
Work to collect data on university athletes in partnership with athletics that will serve as the basis of future studies to optimize training, performance, and recovery	●	



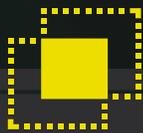
OBJECTIVE 2.2

Help to Set the Global Agenda for Sport and Wellness Research

Distinguishing the university from others means redefining how this research is conducted, identifying over-researched and under-researched topics, building on existing programs, and becoming the source for top-quality research.

ACTIVITIES	NEAR-TERM 2021-2023 ACADEMIC YEARS	LONG TERM 2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR+
Survey diverse stakeholders annually to understand the research and development needs, and publish the topics identified as needing future research*	●	●
Establish a research repository in sport and wellness*	●	●
Establish an online platform that is continuously updated with sport and wellness research and developments*	●	●
Publish a newsletter/blog detailing events and research findings		●
Host “Ted Talk” style innovation talks in sport and wellness		●

* Near-term activities are focused with the University of Oregon and long-term activities are focused on the global community.



OBJECTIVE 2.3

Align Research Initiatives with Societal Interests

Aligning the university’s research activities within community efforts and with the goals of local, regional, and state government will allow the University of Oregon to actively engage with and shape meaningful public health policy throughout the state of the Oregon and the nation.

ACTIVITIES	NEAR-TERM 2021-2023 ACADEMIC YEARS	LONG TERM 2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR+
Provide internal training opportunities to inform researchers about the missions and current research programs of federal agencies to help secure funding for collaborative research endeavors	●	
Convene interdisciplinary research clusters to collect key socioeconomic data and produce influential publications that will build a foundation for the University of Oregon to serve as a resource for policymakers, NCAA, and other key athletic institutions		●



OBJECTIVE 2.4

Foster Sponsored Research Opportunities

Through sponsored research, funders can raise their marketing and brand profiles, acquire academic support on work products, and play a role in the professional development of student careers. Sponsored research by external organizations provides a crucial funding stream that helps faculty modernize their learning materials and deliver more pragmatic teaching approaches, and helps students build relationships with outside organizations and gain real-world experience by solving issues with specific relevance to industry.

ACTIVITIES	NEAR-TERM 2021-2023 ACADEMIC YEARS	LONG TERM 2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR+
Identify and aggressively market the university’s top capabilities to help attract new industry partners and external funders	●	
Form an interdisciplinary committee to identify and facilitate high-impact industry-sponsored research opportunities (e.g., wellness at work studies; interventions on athletes and wellness)	●	
Establish a strategic partnership with an internationally recognized sport apparel company		●



GOAL 3

Reimagine Sport and Wellness Curriculum

A new approach to higher education will equip students with the innovative tools, skills, experiences, and knowledge they need to enter the modern workforce. Students will be able to directly connect to the sport and wellness space through novel academic courses, programs, research projects, internship opportunities, experiential learning, and degrees.



OBJECTIVE 3.1

Explore New Instructional Programs and Subject Areas



OBJECTIVE 3.2

Foster Internship and Experiential Learning Programs



OBJECTIVE 3.3

Promote a Culture of Entrepreneurship



OBJECTIVE 3.4

Provide Access to Resources that Promote Success



OBJECTIVE 3.5

Improve the Health and Wellbeing of Campus and Community Members



OBJECTIVE 3.1

Explore New Instructional Programs and Subject Areas

Sport and wellness work is not contained in a single department, field, or topic. The university will reimagine its curriculum to improve the quality and rigor of sport and wellness-related courses, expand topical focus areas, build on existing programs, and ensure that the curriculum reflects the needs of industry and society and remains on the cutting edge.

ACTIVITIES	NEAR-TERM 2021-2023 ACADEMIC YEARS	LONG TERM 2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR+
Initiate new graduate degree programs and associated curricula in sport and wellness (e.g., M.S. in applied exercise science; PhD in sports product science)		●
Develop an inventory of relevant, extant course offerings, organize them, and advertise them to students to build interest and leverage existing offerings	●	
Modernize curricula offerings to include new sport and wellness technologies and data science tools that will help improve student marketability post-graduation		●
Set mandates for undergraduate students to undertake research projects that encourage more frequent interactions with faculty and collaboration with fellow students		●



OBJECTIVE 3.2

Foster Internship and Experiential Learning Programs

Establishing transdisciplinary learning and internship opportunities across academia, athletics, industry, and government will prepare students for careers that are responsive to the long-term needs of society and the economy.

ACTIVITIES	NEAR-TERM 2021-2023 ACADEMIC YEARS	LONG TERM 2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR+
Create and support interdisciplinary capstone projects for students		●
Create a hub/centralized team to track timing for internships, research outreach cycles, and improve efficiency of internship enrollment and opportunities for students	●	
Propose research projects that advance informatics and data sciences in sport and wellness	●	
Engage key professional sporting leagues to set up research collaborations and internship programs for students		●
Develop internship and fellowship programs with athletics	●	



OBJECTIVE 3.3

Promote a Culture of Entrepreneurship

Encompassing entrepreneurship within sport and wellness research can drive industrial innovation and deliver transformative economic and social benefits. We will build educational excellence and leadership acumen by connecting various disciplines across the university with external industry partners that are willing to fund excellent ideas with meaningful sport, health, and wellness impacts.

ACTIVITIES	NEAR-TERM 2021-2023 ACADEMIC YEARS	LONG TERM 2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR+
Develop new policies that encourage faculty researchers to build relationships with venture capitalists and partners for feeding investments in innovative sports products and service		●
Create a cross-disciplinary entrepreneurship program to help build a talent pipeline of students that pursue entrepreneurial career pathways		●
Convene a group of experienced entrepreneurs from industry to provide career advice to student entrepreneurs through seminars and other mentorship opportunities	●	



OBJECTIVE 3.4

Provide Access to Resources that Promote Success

Encouraging faculty and student success requires providing them with access to programs, workshops, and other resources that will help them reach their education and career goals.

ACTIVITIES	NEAR-TERM 2021-2023 ACADEMIC YEARS	LONG TERM 2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR+
Support opportunities for faculty and students to participate in professional development and mentorship programs including workshops, conferences, sabbaticals, and other opportunities	●	
Create leadership development opportunities for students from underrepresented groups that help develop key interpersonal skills needed to assume leadership positions		●
Participate in a task force at the state (or federal) level to help shape legislation that promotes health and wellness in the state of Oregon		●



OBJECTIVE 3.5



Improve the Health and Wellbeing of Students and Community Members

Applying the outcomes of the Sport and Wellness Initiative will help improve the health and quality of life for the university’s campus community and all Oregonians to promote health equity and address health disparities. This Initiative will work to remove socioeconomic barriers; raise awareness that sport and wellness is for all ages, abilities, and body sizes; and improve access to campus health and wellness resources. Meanwhile, the collaborative relationships across university departments and with external organizations will help provide new techniques, services, and programs responsive to the needs of all students, student athletes, and Oregonians.

ACTIVITIES	NEAR-TERM 2021-2023 ACADEMIC YEARS	LONG TERM 2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR+
Collaborate with on-campus and nearby sport and wellness groups to grow and expand data collection efforts to support mutually beneficial efforts to improve health and wellbeing	●	
Form a partnership with Oregon Health and Science University, communities, and other organizations to leverage collective expertise and resources to serve communities across the state		●
Introduce an innovative and holistic approach for improving treatments and services for students, engaging with student organizations to have their members take on leadership positions		●
Work with stakeholders to advocate for state-level policy efforts to support health and wellness		●
Create a public seminar series to help build community and reduce barriers between athletics and academics		●

Conclusion

We will achieve our **mission of redefining sport and wellness** by collaborating across academic disciplines, athletics, industry, and government. These boundary-breaking connections will create valuable and impactful programs, resources, and centers dedicated to empowering and enabling people who are invested in the improvement of health and wellbeing for all.

Faculty will engage with each other and with students in new and interactive ways to take on modern challenges in sport and wellness as part of a culture that **encourages meaningful risk-taking and rewards the impactful solutions that follow.**

The Sport and Wellness Initiative champions our university's unique **culture of innovation** and will actively seek to push boundaries in approaches to academic experiences, tenure, research, and external partnerships.

Based on the foundational characteristics of this Initiative, and the guiding force of our unwavering commitment to academic and athletic excellence and leadership, we will **establish ourselves as global leaders in the sport and wellness industry, innovate academic experiences for the next generation of leaders, and tirelessly pursue the discovery of valuable research outcomes that will translate into meaningful and positive health impacts for the state of Oregon and the world.**

