College of Arts and Sciences

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The College of Arts and Sciences is the academic and intellectual hub of the University of Oregon, providing a core liberal arts curriculum to the vast majority of UO undergraduates—even those who will go on to earn a degree in one of the professional schools such as journalism or business.

The University of Oregon was founded in 1876 on a liberal arts curriculum, which has evolved over time to meet the needs of contemporary students. Owing to the breadth and depth of the curriculum provided by the College of Arts and Sciences, the University of Oregon is known as the premier liberal arts institution among the state's public universities.

The fundamental academic mission of the college is to foster a solid and broad general education, which includes the cultivation of quantitative, analytical, and communication skills; an understanding of social and intellectual history; an appreciation of literary and artistic expression; and habits of creative and critical thinking.

Building on its foundational undergraduate curriculum, the college offers 50 major degree programs in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Moreover, the College of Arts and Sciences is the heart of the university's research enterprise. The college has almost 900 faculty members, most of whom are engaged in active research programs and make original contributions to their respective fields of knowledge. Because of this, students have the opportunity to learn from leading researchers while receiving a liberal education that prepares them to be successful global citizens in the 21st century.

Liberal Education

Social, political, and economic change is accelerating at a phenomenal pace. Many careers exist today that did not exist 10 or even five years ago, and the US Department of Labor predicts that young people today will have had 10 to 14 jobs by the time they are 38 years old. Those best prepared for the future will be those who have developed a capacity for resourcefulness, judgment, analysis, leadership, clear communication, and an informed global perspective—in other words, the skills and knowledge that come from a liberal arts education.

Even students who plan to move into specialized postgraduate careers will benefit from an educational foundation that emphasizes how values, history, and context combine with creative thought and informed inquiry to determine the best way forward, in both professional and civic life. Thus a liberal arts education provides an essential framework for a lifetime of work and growth in a world where many professions are undergoing profound, sweeping transformations.

Academic Programs

The College of Arts and Sciences offers numerous disciplinary and interdisciplinary degree programs and majors, a varied selection of minors, and several certificates. These are described in detail in the pages that follow. As part of the requirements for graduation from the University of Oregon, every student undertakes in-depth study in an area of specialization that is the student's major. Many students find it advantageous to complete a minor or certificate in an area of specialization that complements the major. Some minor programs offer a student whose major is in the College of Arts and Sciences the chance to gain expertise in subjects offered by a professional school.

Preparatory Programs

The college has preparatory programs for professional specializations. Information about these programs—those offered by the College of Arts and Sciences and those offered elsewhere in the university—is in the **Academic Resources** section of this catalog.

Undergraduate Research Opportunities

The University of Oregon is smaller than most public research universities because it does not have schools of medicine, agriculture, public health, engineering, or veterinary medicine. This means that it can offer a learning environment scaled for faculty-student interaction that is more like a private liberal arts college than a large research institution.

Undergraduate students are encouraged to participate in faculty research projects. Arrangements must be made with the individual faculty member and the department.

Opportunities are plentiful: last year, almost 800 undergraduates enrolled in research credit hours in the College of Arts and Sciences. In addition, more than 20 departments in the College of Arts and Sciences offer an honors program with an undergraduate research thesis requirement.

Advising

Students who have declared a major, or who are premajors in a particular field, plan their programs with advisors in their major departments. Majors should be chosen by the middle of the sophomore year. Many entering freshmen—and some students at more advanced stages—have not decided on a major or even the general direction of their academic work. These undeclared students are assigned academic advisors by the director of college advising and the Office of Academic Advising.

Preparation for Kindergarten through Secondary School Teaching Careers

Students who complete a degree in a College of Arts and Sciences department are eligible to apply to the College of Education's fifth-year licensure programs in middle-secondary and elementary teaching. More information is available in the **College of Education** section of this catalog.