



Corban University

Corban University in Salem, Ore., is offering a new ag science program.

# Corban University digs deeper with inaugural ag science program

By Dr. SUSIE NELSON  
Director of Agriculture Science

What started as a small Christian institute 87 years ago is now a flourishing university situated on a beautiful, forested hillside overlooking Oregon's capital — offering academic excellence to prepare students for careers as business leaders, educators, medical professionals, politicians, ministry leaders and more. We have grown into a diverse teaching facility that equips Christian students to help solve our world's problems on multiple fronts, including our food supply.

Three years ago, we started our ag business curriculum — a business degree with an ag business concentration — and have had at least 16 students every year. But we realized we needed to broaden and deepen that focus, so we're readying for our first ag science class in fall 2022. We're seeing far more global-savvy students now who want to help save the planet and reduce pollution and carbon footprints. They're going into more environmental, agricultural, and biological sciences, so Corban's new Ag Science focus — the only Christian program of its kind in the Pacific Northwest — will be more focused around a sustainability approach versus strictly commercial or industrial.

Education and agricul-

**EDUCATION BY THE NUMBERS**

- 1 million:** The number of associate's degree awarded in the 2018-2019 school year. Of that number, 61% went to women.
- 1.9 million:** The number of bachelor's degrees awarded; 58% went to women.
- 695,616:** The number of master's degrees awarded; 64% went to women.
- 163,677:** The number of Ph.D.s, M.D. and other doctor's degrees awarded; 56% went to women.
- 86%:** Percentage of full-time undergraduate students receiving financial aid at a four-year college.
- 16.6 million:** Total enrollment at four-year colleges.
- \$10 million:** The amount of scholarships available through the Oregon Office of Student Access and Completion.

National Center for Education Statistics

ture are similar in that you plant something today in hopes you'll get a great yield somewhere down the road, but you need both foresight and patience to envision what could grow. As we plan Corban's Ag Science curricula, we want to maximize the technologies that allow us to better conserve and measure our impacts.

For example, irrigation soil monitors are so dialed in they can apply water as needed instead of watering on a set schedule; that kind of technology has developed so much more even in the past two years, with greater successes in both conserving water and preventing leaching and contamination.

And while the notion of looking at soil as a living microorganism isn't new, it's becoming more critical. Soil is a living environment, so we must look at the whole as well as the parts and adjust our efforts to keep it all healthy.

As ag science matures, we'll need to pay more

attention to combining all the parts into the bigger picture. Then, when our students go back to their farms, or ag service companies, or even into a mission field somewhere with depleted and abandoned ground, they'll have the knowledge and tools to be able to complement the soil as a living system and boost sustainability. We want to train them on both regenerative agriculture and sustainable agriculture.

We recently attended state FFA Conventions to recruit students for the new program where we connected with hundreds of FFA leaders and students to share the innovation our program has to offer. We also proudly awarded 2021-2022 Oregon State FFA President, Isabel D'Acquisto, with her acceptance letter to Corban's Ag Science program along with a scholarship.

We hope to see many more students like Isabel who share the passion for Christian agriculture education enroll for the inau-

gural class.

"Being a five-year FFA member, I'm extremely passionate about the ag industry, and knew I wanted to pursue a degree in this field," D'Acquisto said. "I always said that my ideal college would be a Christian university that would push me in my faith and wasn't too far from home. I chose Corban for its well-known reputation and many positive interactions with Dr. Susie Nelson. Following my dream

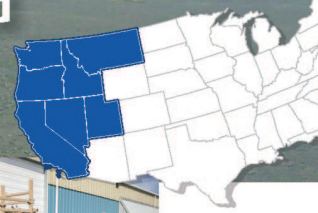
of becoming an agricultural educator and FFA Advisor, I'm so excited to be part of the Corban family."

Open to all applicants (with some restrictions), we are celebrating the program launch by granting Ag Science Scholarships valued at a minimum of \$5,000 to 20 first-time freshmen who enroll in the program for this Fall. Learn more about the program at <https://www.corban.edu/aca>




demics/majors-programs/mathematics-science/agriculture-science.

Susie Nelson, Ph.D., is the Assistant Professor and Director of Agriculture Science at Corban University. Having been around agriculture her entire life, she has managed her family farm for the past several decades and appreciates teaching and shaping the next-gen of farmers from a biblical worldview. <https://www.corban.edu>

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