

Joint Task Force on Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education

**Meeting Summary – Portland Field Trips
March 30, 2022**

Community Leaders Roundtable

**Vanport Room, Room 338, Smith Memorial Student Union
1825 SW Broadway
Portland, OR 97201**

Members Present: Rep. Alonso Leon, Chair; Rep. Ruiz; Sen. Dembrow; Sen. Wagner;
Sen. Frederick

Members Excused: Rep. Owens; Rep. Zika; Sen. Findley; Sen. Robinson

Non-Member legislators present: None

The task force met with a group of higher education stakeholders in a roundtable format. Participating stakeholders included representatives of Portland State University, Oregon Health & Science University, Oregon Institute of Technology, and Portland Community College, in addition to Portland Public Schools, student groups, local business leaders, and community-based organizations. Representative Teresa Alonso Leon, Chair, welcomed the group and prompted discussion by asking what could be done to promote better outcomes for underrepresented students. Discussion points included the importance of creating a sense of belonging for students, mentoring and summer programs for first-generation students, difficulties faced by students in meeting their basic needs, the diversity of faculty and staff on campus, the role of higher education institutions in providing wraparound services,; students' difficulties in navigating financial aid and transfer applications, services and programs for adults with low literacy and numeracy, eligibility requirements for students to access public benefits, and the share of state financial resources allocated to higher education.

Faculty and Staff Roundtable

**Vanport Room, Room 338, Smith Memorial Student Union
1825 SW Broadway
Portland, OR 97201**

Members Present: Rep. Alonso Leon, Chair; Rep. Ruiz; Sen. Dembrow; Sen. Wagner;
Sen. Frederick

Members Excused: Rep. Owens; Rep. Zika; Sen. Findley; Sen. Robinson

Non-member legislators present: None

The task force met with faculty and staff from Portland State University, Oregon Health and Science University, Portland Community College, and the Oregon Institute of Technology. Representative Teresa Alonso Leon, Chair, welcomed the group with opening remarks and asked participants how to support students. Discussion focused on supports both in and out of the classroom, the role of technology in higher education, educator diversity, educator compensation and parity, the need for partnerships, the need to lower or eliminate tuition, the role of high schools in assisting students with access to higher education, pathway programs, food and housing security, transitions, mental health supports, the use of data to identify students in need of support, the need to destigmatize supports, career readiness and advising, the nature of the problems facing students and institutions, students' financial literacy or lack thereof, the need for need-based aid, flexibility for students, the need for clearer data, and the need for underrepresented students to feel a sense of belonging in higher education.

Student Listening Session

Room 296, Smith Memorial Student Union

1825 SW Broadway

Portland, OR 97201

Members Present: Rep. Alonso Leon, Chair; Rep. Ruiz; Sen. Dembrow; Sen. Wagner

Members Excused: Rep. Owens; Rep. Zika; Sen. Findley; Sen. Robinson; Sen. Frederick

Other legislators present: None

Approximately 25 students from Portland State University and Oregon Health & Science University attended the listening session. Each of the attending task force members sat at tables with groups of four or five students. The students described their educational experiences and responded to questions from the task force members. Approximately every 30 minutes, the task force members rotated to new tables to talk with each group of students.

Site Tour

Multicultural Center, Room 228, Smith Memorial Student Union

1825 SW Broadway

Portland, OR 97201

Members Present: Rep. Alonso Leon, Chair; Rep. Ruiz; Sen. Dembrow; Sen. Wagner

Members Excused: Rep. Owens; Rep. Zika; Sen. Findley; Sen. Robinson; Sen. Frederick

Other legislators present: None

Task force members toured several facilities on the Portland State University (PSU) campus. The tour began at the Multicultural Center in Smith Memorial Student Union. Members learned about the student support services provided at the Multicultural Center, the Basic Needs Hub, and various student resource centers that serve specialized populations. The tour continued to the Transfer & Returning Student Resource Center in Fariborz Maseeh Hall, where the task force members learned about the services offered to students who transfer to PSU, who comprise a majority of the student body. The tour then led to Lincoln Hall, where members observed a music class in progress and spoke to the students about the task force's purpose. The tour concluded with a visit to Portland Community College's (PCC) dental clinic located at the Vanport Building (1810 SW 5th Ave), where the task force members learned about workforce preparation and career prospects for graduates of the dental assistant and dental hygiene programs.
