

Hello Chair Alonso Leon and Task Force Members,

My name is Eddy Sanchez and I am a Sophomore transfer student at Western studying Education with a focus on math and a minor in Spanish. I am here to share my story as a student. I am a first generation student at Western.

I moved to the United states at 14, one of the struggles I had was not being able to speak English. When I started my freshman year in High School I could not communicate with my teachers. I was placed in an English Learning Development class. There was one translator who really helped me by sitting with me during Lunch and going over flashcards with English on one side and Spanish on the other. With her support, she taught me how to speak English.

For my last year, my senior year, I joined the Diversity Education Pathway which is a program to help students to become a teacher. That year they helped me fill out FASFA and find scholarships. They have been instrumental to me because they are my main support in my dream to be an educator. To this day they help me find internships in the summer, and schools to be placed with in order to find a job.

At Western the Bilingual Teachers Scholarship helped me as well. They gave a scholarship of \$3,000 for two years. I received the scholarship and used it to be able to pay my tuition and my rent. There is a class with the scholarship. It is one credit they give you 10 hours per term they are attending events on campus to meet new people in school. It got me more involved with school and meeting new people.

When you start at a university vs a high school the resources are completely different. In high school they ensure you have access to food and education itself. In university the financial burden of paying tuition it's a lot when as a high schooler you never had to think about being able to afford to learn. These programs and scholarships I have been in really helped bridge the gap and make me more successful as a student.

Access to higher education could be improved if you continued to fund these types of programs and that specifically seek out Students of Color from different cultures to mentor and support to become teachers. Also these programs need more people to be recruited to them. I believe some of the new programs should be focused on specific communities so Black, Asian, Latina/Latino, Indigenous, students can be recruited and supported in their journey to be a teacher.

I urge this task force to remember my story when developing legislation around accessing higher education in Oregon. Please invest in students like me.

Thank you for your time.

Eddy Sanchez