

Good morning Legislative Members,

My name is Leslie Soriano-Cervantes and I am a Counselor at Lane Community College. First of all, I want to confess that this is not in my cultural up bring to talk about myself. But, what I share today has a lot to do with the skill set I have and provide to the students, the college and the community. I do so with humility. I have been a Counselor at Lane for 17 years, during these 17 years I have been:

1. The Colleges one and only bilingual counselor, I am culturally fluent and culturally competent
2. The campus and Lane Community knows me and I am consistently referred students by Lane and campus members by name.
3. Professional partners: Lane ESD, Eugene 4J, Springfield School district have asked for my collaboration and expertise
4. I am one of the main people on campus that understands how to serve complex immigration issues of students, families and community members
5. Increasingly students have been asking to see me specifically because I share common lived experiences and they feel seen, validated, affirmed and understood.
6. My counseling colleagues and I teach:
  - a. College Success
  - b. Human Relations at Work and
  - c. Back on Course
7. All the roles the center counselors and I play, we are vital to the diversity of hiring committees. We are consistently asked to be on committees.

Oregon like the rest of the world has been emerging from this global pandemic; unfortunately, we're still in the midst of this pandemic. We have all been through and continue to go through a dramatic trauma. The psychological impact on students of what they and us have survived and are currently surviving is unknowable.

Data has demonstrated clearly that at a disproportionate impact of Covid19 has harmed the health of communities of color more dramatically than any other community. The need for culturally competent and culturally fluent, skilled counselors is at an all-time high.

Counselors that see and serve this diverse pool of students are few and far between, especially here in Oregon. Here at Lane the Counselors of Color are culturally confident and culturally fluent, we are a limited resource.

I strongly recommend and urge you to support programs that intentionally fund counseling treasured programs like ours, that can serve and understand diverse students at community colleges.