

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

Meeting Summary – Eugene Field Trips April 25, 2022

Community Leaders Roundtable

**Lane Community College, Building 19, Room 102
4000 E. 30th Ave.
Eugene, OR 97405**

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

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

Non-Member legislators present: None

The task force met at 8:00 AM at Lane Community College for a roundtable discussion with education and community leaders in the Eugene-Springfield area. The meeting included invited guests from a variety of backgrounds, including presidents, vice presidents, student government representatives, and current and former board members of Lane Community College and the University of Oregon; the superintendent and board chair of Eugene 4J School District; local business leaders; college access organizations; community-based organizations; local workforce boards; and the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs. Representative Alonso Leon, Chair, prompted discussion by asking what each stakeholder could do ensure student success for underrepresented students. Discussion touched on a number of topics, including: identifying and students' mental health needs; the rising cost of living for students; high debt loads leading students to choose more lucrative career paths; rates of food insecurity among underrepresented groups; efforts to expand access to members of federally recognized tribes; the effects of mentoring before and during the college admission process; Oregon's college savings account program; identifying challenges faced by students at points of transition from early learning through higher education; reducing barriers to applying for higher education, such as separate applications and testing requirements; urging increased investments in state-funded financial aid programs; the importance of one-to-one personal relationships for students; integration with the K-12 public education system; debt loads for students who stop out before graduation; challenges in supporting students who are veterans; underutilization of financial aid; and the ratio of resident and non-resident students of color at Oregon's public universities.

Faculty and Staff Roundtable

**Lane Community College, Building 19, Room 102
4000 E. 30th Ave.
Eugene, OR 97405**

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

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

Non-member legislators present:

The task force came together at 10:15 AM at Lane Community College to meet with local faculty and staff of Lane Community College and the University of Oregon. The discussion addressed issues concerning counseling, student self-advocacy, resources and funding, staff needs, invisible labor, needs of rural students of color, intentional connections with high school students, retention of faculty and staff of color, students who arrive from impoverished backgrounds going deeper into poverty as a result of pursuing higher education, career and technical education, the higher costs associated with educating high-barrier populations, the importance of local institutional efforts, intersectional identities of students, existing programs, faculty assumptions, inflexibility of many academic programs, faculty training, needs of part-time faculty, students' basic needs, wraparound services, collaboration, Hispanic-serving institution status, financial aid, mentoring, affordability, full Pell plus full Oregon Opportunity Grant adding up to \$11,000 per year, classified staff contract hours, and the needs of graduate student employees.

Student Listening Session

**University of Oregon, Lyllye Reynolds-Parker Black Cultural Center
1870 E. 15th Ave.
Eugene, OR 97403**

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

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

Other legislators present: None

Approximately 20 students from Lane Community College, Western Oregon University, and the University of Oregon attended the listening session. Task force members sat individually or paired at tables with groups of four or five students. The students described their educational experiences and responded to questions from the task force

members. Task force members rotated tables approximately every 30 minutes to meet with each group of students.

Site Tour: University of Oregon

Black Cultural Center, Moss St Children’s Center, Erb Memorial Union

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

Members Excused: Rep. Zika, Sen. Findley, Sen. Robinson, Sen. Frederick

Other legislators present:

Members were welcomed to the school for a tour. Taylor McHolm and Ella Meloy led a tour of the Black Cultural Center, the Moss St. Children’s Center, and the Erb Memorial Union. The Black Cultural Center provides resources for the Black community on the University of Oregon campus. The Moss St Children’s Center provides child care to the university community, and the Erb Memorial Union houses several centers to assist underrepresented students, including the women’s center, the veterans’ center, the multi-cultural center, and the LGBTQSIA+ student union. Throughout the tour, task force members and tour guides discussed the needs of students and the services provided by the University.