

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

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## **Meeting Summary – Monmouth Field Trips April 26, 2022**

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### **Community Leaders Roundtable**

**Western Oregon University, Werner University Center, Columbia Room  
345 Monmouth Ave. N.  
Monmouth, OR 97361**

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

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

Non-Member legislators present: None

The task force met at 8:00 AM at Western Oregon University for a roundtable discussion with education and community leaders in the mid-Willamette Valley area. The meeting included invited guests from a variety of backgrounds, including: presidents, student government representatives, and current and former board members of Western Oregon University, Oregon State University, Chemeketa Community College, and Linn-Benton Community College; the superintendent of Central School District; and representatives of community-based and student advocacy organizations. Representative Alonso Leon, Chair, prompted discussion by asking what each stakeholder could do to ensure student success for underrepresented students. Discussion touched on a number of topics, including: the value of student support and mentoring programs such as TRIO; the importance of adopting trauma-informed approaches to student support; the need to diversify the higher education workforce to better reflect the demographics of the student body; improved alignment between the K-12 public education system and higher education, particularly at points of transition; strategies for maintaining student engagement and reducing absenteeism; the importance of sports lottery funding from the state; the balance of institutional budgets between tuition revenue and state appropriations; cultural disengagement from higher education in areas with high levels of poverty, particularly in rural areas; the cost of providing mental health and other wraparound services to students; the importance of training Oregonians to fill jobs created through economic development initiatives; state and federal funding for career-technical education (CTE) and work study programs; wages earned by students through work study and internships; the cost of institutional compliance with state mandates; and funding methods for student resource centers and other student supports.

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## **Faculty and Staff Roundtable**

**Western Oregon University, Werner University Center, Columbia Room  
345 Monmouth Ave. N.  
Monmouth, OR 97361**

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

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

Non-member legislators present:

The task force came together at 10:00 AM at Western Oregon University to meet with local faculty and staff. The discussion addressed issues concerning resources to support students, stable funding, student workers, students' basic needs, workers' basic needs, advising and mentoring support for students, student teachers, WOU's move toward Hispanic-serving institution status, bridge programs for incoming students, mental health supports, emotional labor, invisible labor, upper administration pay and purpose, audits of university budgets, documentation of disability requirements, accessibility for students with disabilities, sense of belonging for high-needs students, a proposal for a state-funded work study program similar to Colorado's, coordination of services, earlier information for students on financial aid awards, higher education as an ecosystem, the unique role of regional universities, need for evening and weekend classes, need for child care, faculty professional development, retention of underrepresented faculty, diversity scholarships, student family housing, and the importance of clubs and club sports.

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## **Student Listening Session**

**Western Oregon University, Werner University Center, Willamette Room  
345 Monmouth Ave. N.  
Monmouth, OR 97361**

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

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

Other legislators present: None

Approximately 25 students from Western Oregon University, Linn-Benton Community College, Oregon State University, and Chemeketa Community College attended the

listening session. Task force members sat individually 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 25 minutes to meet with each group of students.

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### **Site Tour of Western Oregon University**

**LOCATION(s): Weber University Center, Richard Woodcock Building, Academic Programs and Support Center**

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

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

Other legislators present:

Members were welcomed to the school for a tour led by Dave McDonald, Caitlin Wheeler, Melissa Ontiveros, Aundrea Aldan, Blanca Jimenez, and Moshe Martinez. At the Werner University Center, the tour included the Multicultural Student Services and Programs (MSSP), the Non-Traditional Student Center, the Freedom Center, the Career Center, the Veterans' Center, and the Center for Equity and Gender Justice. At the Richard Woodcock Building, task force members learned about WOU's educator preparation program, its bilingual teacher scholars program, community health, and the need to make educator preparation practicums into work-study opportunities. At the Academic Programs and Support Center, task force members learned about the need for capital improvements on campus.

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