

APPENDIX E—EQUITY ACHIEVEMENT INVESTMENTS

Oregon TECH

**Office of Diversity, Inclusion, &
Cultural Engagement (DICE)**

& Title IX Compliance

Access, Retention, and Career Readiness Programs for Underrepresented Students at Oregon Tech – Equity Investment

As the state of Oregon’s official Polytechnic University, Oregon Tech recognizes that our students have a unique set of challenges that require specific types of intervention to ensure their success. Oregon Tech is committed to supporting our underrepresented students through holistic support programs and student wraparound services that address our students’ lived experiences and the unique challenges in Oregon Tech education may present.

I. Bridge Programs

Investing in bridge programs that can be uniquely tailored and offered to upper-level high school students and additionally for students transferring from a two-year college. These programs are intended to provide a seamless connector between K-12 and college. These programs are vital to Oregon Tech students who are often applying for highly sought-after programs of study. Oregon Tech Students are also presented with the additional challenges presented by our inverted curriculum.

- Concurrent course programming
- Collaborative pre-college academic counseling and advising
- College and Career pathway counseling that address the specific needs that OIT student encounter

II. Peer mentorship programming

Oregon Tech’s unique inverted curriculum makes the necessity for peer mentorship programming even more imperative. Oregon tech students are submersed in their academic programs early in their college careers. Pairing students with more experienced peers in their program of study is proven to improve overall academic performance and retention.

III. Develop rural student outreach programs to encourage rural populations to enroll in college - extension programs promote literacy in college access and admissions and are crucial to developing strategic partnerships.

a. Pre-college academic counseling and Advising

- i. students who receive precollege academic counseling and advising inter-college programs were prepared and with greater success. Career exploration is often the first step in academic counseling. Providing rural students access to career exploration and academic counseling dramatically increases the odds that a rural student will select a four-year university instead of pursuing the job market or a vocational school. This precollege counseling and advising is critical in educating rural communities on the importance of four-year education and dispelling common cultural myths about return on investment for four year degrees.

b. Consistent presence to encourage access

- i. Extension programs offer the opportunity to expand educational access through service-learning and community involvement. Community involvement is crucial in attracting local students. Rural students in particular benefit from these connections as the demonstrate how educational institutions and communities can work together to improve the community life.

IV. Institutional Emergency Grant Fund

a. TRIO Emergency Fund

- i. Last year Oregon Tech established an Emergency fund to assist students overcome unexpected financial hardship related to COVID-19 in an effort to increase and encourage retention of low-income students. Low-income students, a historically marginalized population in Higher Ed, currently make up approximately 60% of OIT students.
- ii. This fund was hugely successful as administered through our TRIO/TOP program. Unfortunately, this program is only grant funded to serve approximately 160 students on the Klamath Falls campus currently.

b. Institutional Fund

- i. Oregon Tech hopes to extend the benefits of such an emergency fund to all OIT students at all OIT campuses.
- ii. The success of the TOP fund demonstrates the need for this particular population on our campuses with historically low retention and completion rates.

V. Externship Grants

- a. As Oregon's premier polytechnic University our students are often faced with unique challenges in completing their degree programs. OIT's emphasis on applied learning requires many students to take on externships that are often unpaid and quite be restricting and obstacles to student completion. As such OIT would like to establish externship grants that allow students, who may not have persisted, to complete their externships without the added burden of loans.

VI. DACA Allyship and International Student Funds

- a. Translation services to increase access to program information.
- b. Bi-lingual admissions counselor
- c. DACA Allyship training funds
Training that addresses supporting undocumented students in admissions and financial aid.

Trauma-informed

Oregon specific training

These training programs would allow Oregon Tech to exceed the expectations of HB2787

Current programs to expand at Oregon Tech to help support Equity Investment

Oregon Tech (OIT) provides Polytechnic education and has designed an implemented a range of programming and services to address access, retention, and career readiness in our students. These programs may not be present at all OIT campuses as the result of funding and/or needs of specific populations may vary. Additional funding may be utilized to expand existing programs and add services to campus sites that are currently not supported.

TRIO Educational Talent Search and Upward Bound - TRIO ETS and UB are federally funded pre-college/access programs which support ~800 first-generation, low-income, and/or students with disabilities. Upward Bound supports students to improve study skills and academic plans in high school, develop their career, and education plans, and help to succeed in higher education. Talent Search is an educational access and information program that assists students in learning about careers and college majors.

TOP- The current, federally funded TOP program serves 160 first-generation students, low-income students, and students with disabilities who demonstrate academic need. The program's most recent graduation rate (2013 cohort) was 52%, which is 9% higher than the most recent graduation rate of TRIO eligible students not served. TOP's projected graduation rate for this year (2014 cohort) is 58% and for next year (2015 cohort) it is 70+%. The program's most recent persistence rate (Fall 2018 to Fall 2019) was 87.5%. Also, 94.4% of TOP students ended the 2018-19 academic year in good academic standing.

The institutionally funded TOP would serve 185 first-generation students, low-income students or students with disabilities on the Klamath Falls campus. This is 25 more students than the current federally funded TOP. The program will utilize the TRIO retention model to increase retention of TRIO-eligible students to 85% (a 12% increase) and the 6-year graduation rate to 53% (a 10% increase). The revenue benefit of achieving these objectives will equal \$339,295 in tuition and fees annually. Please see the TRIO Program proposal for details.

Oregon SOAR-ing to Success- SOAR is OIT's pre-orientation Bridge Program that was designed to focus on the integration of incoming students to our campus. When applying for the grant we had initially wanted to focus on 100 low-income, first-time, first-year students due to our efforts to help close the

opportunity gap. Understanding that Oregon “12% of low-income students receive a post-secondary credential by the age of 25.” As we began planning the program, we shifted to 25 students, having 21 go completely through the program.

From the assessment results that we collected we were able to see the impact that our program had on our students: Below are some data points that we found exciting to see:

- 42% are first-year students living off-campus; 58% living in on-campus housing
- 57% Oregon residents; 43% out-of-state residents
- 52% historically underrepresented racial/ethnic identity (students of color)
- 81% of our students are concerned about course load and assignment before coming to Oregon Tech
- Our results end in a 95% retention rate from the fall to winter term

Oregon MESA- The Oregon Tech Klamath Falls campus has recently joined Oregon MESA. This program serves more than **600** middle and high school students who are historically underrepresented in STEM fields. The foundation of Oregon MESA is to provide a school-based invention education program — the only adaptable, prototype-driven math, engineering, and science program for traditionally underrepresented students that takes an ecosystem approach to education.



Equity Investment Priorities

OSU has a number of effective programs that aid in equalizing success for underserved populations, as well as some promising new strategies on the horizon. An additional investment from the state would help strengthen, expand, and in some cases launch new programs and initiatives that would improve access to attend OSU, student's ability to persist and graduate, and strengthen OSU students' success in advancing to a career after graduation.

College Access

Access OSU: Families and communities are best served when they have clear information and preparation regarding the alternative pathways, benefits, and costs of pursuing university education. Access OSU is a new initiative led by OSU's Division of Extension and Engagement and the Division of Student Affairs to connect with community partners and provide prospective students and their families with knowledge and resources to prepare for and gain access to college. This program endeavors to work with communities across the state to engage both rural and urban families. Intended outcomes include:

- ✓ Oregon families believe in what an education at OSU can do to support their prosperity.
- ✓ Oregon families understand how to navigate applying to and funding college.
- ✓ Students experience a supportive community and resources at OSU.
- ✓ Underrepresented students have a positive experience at Oregon State University.
- ✓ Families and communities develop trust in OSU.
- ✓ Graduates return to their communities.
- ✓ Oregon communities and families thrive.

OSU is investing resources into this effort and a state investment would allow for a broader and more repaid impact.

Persistence and Completion

Academic Readiness: Students come to OSU with varying levels of readiness to jump into college-level courses and can benefit from a content refresher just before the term begins. OSU has started to offer content refresher sessions during OSUWelcome at no additional cost to students. Some of these sessions prepare students for a specific course (such as College Algebra or Differential Calculus) that they will begin the following week, while others focus on more general skills that can be applied across a number of course types such as writing sessions or tips and tricks from the Academic Success Center. Additional funding would allow for the expansion and scaling up of these offerings during OSUWelcome.

Supplemental Instruction: The Supplemental Instruction (SI) program at OSU delivers academic support for students in traditionally challenging courses. Students participate in SI study tables outside of class as a form of high impact group tutoring that builds community and confidence while practicing course content. SI has been shown to increase student course grades, student pass rates, and student retention; at OSU, students who complete SI regularly earn an average of a third of a letter grade higher than their peers in the class who did not participate, and SI participants successfully complete the course at a rate of 10% higher than non-SI participants. These results are particularly noteworthy for students of color, who participate in SI at higher rates than the general population in SI-supported courses.

SI supports courses that predominantly enroll first-and-second year students and that are often required for their major. Success in those courses is an important step in degree progression and completion. When students need to retake these courses due to low grades it increases their time to graduation and overall cost of attendance. Students who participate in SI appreciate help mastering the course content as well as the sense of belonging they experience. This broad-reaching program at OSU has historically served approximately 1,500 students per year (12,000 student contact hours); additional funding would allow for expansion of this successful practice.

Transfer Student Support: OSU has consistency seen an increase in transfer student enrollment, most notably in Ecampus, over the last ten years. Fall 2021 transfer enrollment was the highest it's been with 36% of the undergraduate student population having transferred into OSU. As more students transfer into OSU, the retention rate for this population has remained consistent the last 5 years, 81.8% of our Junior standing transfer students are retained the following year. While OSU does have a dedicated staff member who centers transfer students in their work, more comprehensive support systems are needed in order to help this student population be successful. State funding would allow OSU to expand critical support for transfer students, including the creation of a transfer student center that will focus on helping transfer students to acclimate to OSU culture, foster connections and community, and empower them to reach their educational goals.

Experiential learning for underrepresented student populations: Experiential learning opportunities such as internships and undergraduate research opportunities are considered [“high-impact” practices](#) according to the American Association of Colleges and Universities; this means that experiential learning not only impacts post-graduation prospects but may also help students stay in college and increase their engagement in school. Currently, about 50% of OSU students participate in experiential learning; our goal is that 100% of students participate in experiential learning. In order to make these opportunities more accessible to low income and first generation students, it is important to offer and help them locate paid opportunities. Programs like the PROMISE Internship Program at OSU, which guides students through the application process, support students through their internship experience, and ensure that students receive compensation, can help reduce these barriers. Funding would allow us to support a program like this with adequate staffing and to expand the scope to encompass a wider array of experiential learning opportunities.

Advancement

Beyond OSU (re-envisioning Career Development): Beyond OSU is a university-wide approach to career development at OSU wherein career readiness and development are intentionally built into the student experience. There is evidence showing how career learning can greatly influence retention among low-income students and we know when students create career-related goals they are more likely to make positive persistence decisions than students who report having no job-related goals. By integrating career into the curricular and co-curricular experience, we ensure that all students, regardless of race or socio-economic status, are prepared to pursue meaningful work upon graduation and beyond. Through career preparation and experiences, all students will develop career ready skills and gain connections to help them achieve their goals. This student-centric design allows for every student to receive: co-curricular activities that help connect to potential careers, tailored career support in their field, preparation through career relevant curriculum, and connection to employers and alumni in the fields/industries they desire. A state investment would allow this vision for career development at OSU to come to fruition and to be sustained for the future.

Oregon State University Equity Investment Priorities



University of Oregon Priorities for the Equity Investment Framework

GETTING IN (COLLEGE TRANSITION PROGRAMS)

FIRST YEAR TRANSITION PROGRAMS

Summer Bridge – Division of Undergraduate Education and Student Success

UO received \$1,100,000 (Geer Funding and GF Funding) for summer bridge programming and corresponding support during the academic year for students who were adversely impacted by the pandemic. Awarded funds support students during the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic years through two primary initiatives: 1) Early Move-In Summer Bridge Programs, and 2) First-Year Transitional Support. UO's efforts focus on first-year student transition for low-income, first-generation and students of color. The program enrolled 296 students in 2021. While we are in early stages to fully understand the long-term impact of this program, majority of the participants reported positive impacts on their successful transition to college and all participants are still actively enrolled at the UO.

STAYING AND PERSISTING

WRAP AROUND SERVICES

Located in Oregon Hall at UO campus, the wraparound programs provide coordinated and holistic support for students aiming to reduce the challenges of navigating support resources traditionally spread across the institution. The services often include comprehensive advising support (academic, financial, personal), academic support (tutoring, coaching, skills courses), community building programming (mentoring, orientation, and workshops) and proactive and continuous outreach and connection (check ins, and timely nudges).

Center for Multicultural Academic Excellence – Division of Equity and Inclusion and Division of Undergraduate Education and Student Success

Since the 1980s, CMAE, originally known as the Council for Minority Education (CME), then Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA), has served underrepresented students at the UO. CME/CMAE worked with recipients of the Underrepresented Minorities Achievement Scholarship (UMAS – now the DES), a scholarship created by the Oregon State System of Higher Education (OSSHE) in 1987 to increase the enrollment of URM students across the state's four-year public colleges and universities. CMAE's mission is to promote student retention, persistence and academic excellence for historically underrepresented and underserved populations through programs and services such as advising, tutoring support, cohort-based writing classes, and resource lending library. CMAE has four student multicultural academic counselors who advise underrepresented and underserved populations, undocumented and tuition equity students, serve as retention specialists, complete target outreach and programming for ADPI, Black/African American, Latine/x and Native and Indigenous students. CMAE also supports UO's Diversity Excellence Scholarship (DES) students. DES is awarded to



about 350 academically qualified students each year who demonstrated their contribution to equity and inclusion in their communities or campus. In addition to the financial support, DES students receive wraparound support from CMAE advisors. In 2020, 87.3% of first-time full-time DES students persisted to second year compared to 84.1% of full-time first-time non-DES peers. 75.3% of FTF DES students graduated in four years in 2020 compared to 60.9% of non-DES peers. While CMAE's demonstrated impact on underrepresented students' success and increased number of students who benefit from CMAE's support, the center has not grown in size since it's early development. The primary priority for our institutional investment would be to focus efforts in CMAE in order to expand capacity and wraparound support for underrepresented students.

Accessibility Education Center - Division of Undergraduate Education and Student Success

The Accessible Education Center provides disability services and accommodations support to UO students and promotes universal and inclusive design to UO community. Five full time access advisors facilitate students' accommodations process and support. The number of students who experience disability has exponentially increased over the past years and approximately 10% of undergraduate students are registered with AEC. This is an area of growth for the institution to adequately support students with disabilities for their success and add transition for post-graduation career readiness skills.

Intercultural Mentoring Program Advancing Community Ties (IMPACT) - Student Life

The Multicultural Education, Engagement, and Student Success program is a place that helps connect students of all races and backgrounds to collaborate around cultural programming and education and create a stronger community. The office leads IMPACT, a peer-to-peer mentoring program for students of color and first-generation college students. IMPACT student coordinators support first-year and transfer students with their transition to the UO. The student coordinator team develop topics and presentations that encourage intentional conversation and support the IMPACT cohort. Each family group help participants navigate the first year of college by connecting with campus resources, providing information about classes and majors, and building connections with cultural organizations with support systems. Getting connected as a family group also includes social excursion opportunities such as going to play laser tag, cooking dinner together, or working within study groups. The program is supported by a partial professional FTE and student staff.

SAFE SPACES WITH SUPPORT PROGRAMS AND ADVOCACY

With increased number of students with intersectional identities, a multi-purposed building dedicated to underrepresented students and their support programs and resources would be an asset to the institution. An inclusive large center that would complement current cultural centers like the Black Cultural Center, Many Nations Longhouse, and the limited space within the Multicultural Center), could create a physical home for underrepresented students to congregate, build community and sense of belonging. The space could also house wraparound services, support and advocacy programs where students are supported.



Dreamers Workgroup

Dreamers Working Group is consisted of dedicated members including faculty from academic departments across campus. The workgroup fosters the unique gifts and talents of Dreamer students at the UO and to promote their sense of belonging and safety, as they pursue their higher education goals. They use the term “Dreamers” to refer to Undocumented, DACAmented, Tuition Equity, and students of mixed status families. Since the spring of 2019, \$177,300 in Dreamer scholarships have been awarded to 18 Dreamer and undocumented students who are ineligible to apply for Federal aid, including \$54,000 for the 2021-2022 academic year. This program only has a .50 administrative support and staff volunteers.

Nontraditional and Veteran Student Engagement and Success

A dedicated staff member serves both nontraditional students and veterans. Nontraditional students may be 25 or older when beginning or continuing their first undergraduate degree; married, partnered, divorced, or widowed; a parent or caregiver of a family member; returning to college after a break or career change; a student veteran or on active duty in the military; and may be working full-time or close to full time. Student veterans in particular are a population that has required a great deal of support in transitioning to the university community. Nontraditional aged students represent 5% of the undergraduate population. 14.4% of Nontraditional aged students identify as an underrepresented minority. 67.7% of Nontraditional aged students are Pell eligible and 38.5% are First Gen. With an added position, these two critical populations can have dedicated support to expand services.

GETTING OUT

EQUITABLE CAREER OUTCOMES

DucksRISE

Launching in spring 2022, DucksRISE (Research, Internship, and Student Engagement) grant-funded program (with one year additional institutional match) focused on equitable career outcomes for underserved students, centering Pell-eligible and underrepresented minority populations. Through an integrated approach to continued academic preparation and career readiness embedded into the core of the student experience, both in and out of the classroom at an R1 research university, the cohorts will participate in a course and associated co-curricular workshops and professional development opportunities intended to build community and foster a sense of belonging while developing career skills and NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) competencies. The core of the DucksRISE program will culminate with placement in three-month career readiness mentorship experiences (e.g. internships, externships, research/creative work experiences) to expand professional and industry networks; bridge the connection between undergraduate research and career exploration; and gain the tools to be competitive in post-graduation opportunities. The program is supported by a one-year Strada Education Network Beyond Completion Challenge Grant. Permanent and increased funding could rapidly expand our students post graduation career outcomes.

Oregon's Rural University

Eastern Oregon University serves the largest percentage of Pell-eligible students of in the state. Many of these students, both traditional and adult learners, are in underserved rural and frontier regions of the state where access to education and social support services are extremely limited.

Dramatic shifts in regional demographics sees an increase in need for increased services for all students from diverse backgrounds, orientations, ages, and abilities, to ensure their success in gaining an education to guarantee their futures.

Along with serving rural students both on campus and online, EOU is on the path to becoming Oregon's first Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI), due in part to the long-term partnerships EOU has with numerous nations in the pacific islands.

These draft proposals outline key investments in EOU's diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging efforts.

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EOU Equity Investments 3.2.2022

Better outcomes for students

Putting student needs first

The proposed investments in equity programs are focused on increasing student retention and success before, during and after attending EOU through direct supports in existing university services and effective new practices.



Pre-college engagement

Connecting with students throughout the K-12 system is critical in helping them understand and actively participate in plans for post-secondary opportunities.

- Diverse student outreach coordinators in rural and frontier school districts
- Summer bridge programs to assist students in preparation for college
- Dual-credit programs for students to gain credit for classes they are already taking in high school and ensure those credits expedite degree completion
- Early College Initiatives resources to develop collaborations with schools

Current student success

Key investments are needed to enable the retention and persistence of underserved students throughout their college experience.

- Increase student peer mentorship programs to connect experienced and new students to ensure they have a positive experience and the advocacy they need to be successful
- Increase multicultural staffing in EOU Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion
- Expand funding to host area and regional cultural and diversity-based community events and gatherings at the university
- Invest in teacher prep and other pre-professional programs such as EOU's Oregon Teacher Pathways and Center for Culturally Responsive Practices
- Resources to develop diversity in existing curriculum and pedagogical practices
- Community outreach and engagement staff with EOU Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging office to liaison with local and regional communities
- Supports to recognize and reward programs and employees that engage in diversity initiatives to impact student achievement

Graduation and career readiness

Preparing students for life after gaining their degree is critical in developing a lifetime of success.

- Resources to support scholarships for internship and experiential learning opportunities for diverse and underserved students
- Career services support in preparing for the job market or graduate school



Access, Retention, and Career Readiness Programs for Underrepresented Students at Portland State University | Equity Investment Framework

Background: As of Fall 2021, **18,045** undergraduate students were enrolled at Portland State University. **48%** of the student body are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), **46%** are first-generation college students and **79%** are Oregon residents. In Fall 2020, PSU welcomed its first majority BIPOC class and a majority first-year BIPOC faculty cohort. PSU's long-standing focus on equitable student success is evident through our access, retention, and career readiness programs campus wide.

Central to our approach in supporting underrepresented students is recognizing students' lived experiences from an asset-based lens and providing holistic support programs that address the hidden curriculum (the unspoken or implicit values, behaviors, procedures, and norms that exist in an educational setting) pervasive in presenting barriers to accessing college, staying enrolled in school, and pursuing meaningful career pathways. Below are our recommendations for the Equity Investment Framework.

I. Develop culturally relevant outreach and access programs to encourage college enrollment | Demystify the hidden curriculum of college access and admissions through early college exposure, family engagement, and strategic partnerships.

PSU's competitor analysis suggests that of our Fall 2020 admits, 19% of first-year students and 43% of transfer students did not enroll in college. To increase access to higher education and prepare Oregon students for success, there's a need to develop culturally relevant outreach and access programs through family engagement and strategic K-12 education and community partnerships, with special attention to the growing diversity of the state. The 2020 US census shows Oregon's population becoming more diverse with a 37.6% growth in Asian Americans, 21% growth in African Americans, and 30.8% growth in Hispanic and Latin American populations.

Further, data collected by the [College Attainment Network](#), shows that 47% of Oregon's class of 2021 high school graduates did not complete the FAFSA, with 41.4% of those students being Pell-eligible FAFSA applicants. The state of Oregon left ~\$33,270,352 of total Pell grant dollars on the table by the class of 2021. FAFSA completion is strongly associated with immediate postsecondary enrollment, and it's demonstrated that if states can improve FAFSA completion rates that students will benefit.

Expansion of culturally relevant outreach and access programs that dispel financial aid hurdles and navigating college applications will help to ensure more Oregonians are set on the path to greater social mobility. Activities of these programs include: early outreach middle and high school programs, matching counselors with partner districts and community based organizations and providing multilingual, topic-based programming to bridge the college knowledge gap and increase cultural capital, such as navigating complicated multi step process in completing college prep coursework, navigating the financial aid process, addressing financial literacy, social and emotional well-being, and college preparation success.

It also includes the expansion of promising programs such as the grant funded Knowledge for Freedom initiative, which provides opportunities for underserved high school seniors from Portland to participate in a seminar and civic engagement program, exposing secondary students to campus life early and supporting a seamless transition to entry to college by providing wrap around support for college applications and navigating the FAFSA.

II. Improve support for underrepresented students by increasing support for minoritized faculty and staff | Demystify college success through improving representation.

According to PSU institutional data, one-year retention rates for the Fall 2020 cohort demonstrate equity gaps for Black (-1.8%), Native American (-23.1%), Hispanic (-0.4%), Pacific Islander (-8.6%), and Multi-racial students (-3.6%). Inequity also exists when looking at six-year graduation rates, with Black (-10.0%), Hispanic (-1.6%), Multi-Racial (-2.5%), and Native American (-14.3%) students experiencing equity gaps. Addressing these equity gaps are made possible by the intentional recruitment, hiring, and retention of minoritized staff and faculty who play a key role in providing culturally relevant retention services, culturally affirming pedagogy, and providing identity-based spaces where students find community and cultivate a sense of belonging.

Support for minoritized faculty and staff include: 1) expanding PSU's inaugural leadership academy for underrepresented staff and faculty, connecting high potential leaders with underrepresented identities with leadership training meant to address the cognitive and socio-cognitive needs of professional development; 2) financial investments to support the ongoing professional development of faculty and staff.

In addition, there's a need to expand wrap-around support to consider additional areas of opportunity, such as addressing the need to increase support for men of color on college campuses, and to other identity groups such as students who identify from the Middle East, North African, South Asian diaspora. Funding is needed to hire staff to expand holistic advising, peer mentoring and engagement, and financial support.

III. Develop underrepresented students' leadership and professional development capacity and expand resources for high impact career preparation programs | Demystify the workplace and career.

Research increasingly suggests that even with a college degree, graduates who are first-generation¹, women, and BIPOC² are not experiencing the same economic benefits as their peers who have college educated parents or are not underrepresented. Factors that influence these disparities include opportunity gaps in accessing career preparation programs, internships, and other high impact experiences which provide students with mentorship, sponsorship, and career competency building opportunities. In addition, underrepresented students need support in attaining the cultural capital necessary to navigate their first job and preparation for their first promotion.

Activities to support these efforts include funding staff for dedicated professionals to cultivate the development of a leadership academy and/or a transition class for underrepresented students in their last year of college. This leadership academy or course will include both the transactional and transformational know-how required to navigate the hidden curriculum of career preparation, selection, salary negotiation, impostor syndrome, being the only underrepresented person in the workplace, and iterative professional development required to advance in their career. The curriculum of the leadership academy will be developed from an equity lens, recognizing the challenges that underrepresented students might face in varying industries.

Further, career preparation programs in industries which warrant additional diversity and demonstrate exponential outcomes for the public good and the vitality of the state of Oregon should be provided expanded resources to serve and support more students. For example, career preparation programs which support the growth of diversity in Oregon's traded sector involve industries such as professional, scientific and technical services, public administration, education, health care, finance and insurance, and more. Research conducted by the [Value of Jobs Coalition](#) indicates that growth in the traded sector is a critical part of the growth of the region's economy as traded sector employees earn significantly higher wages. Diversifying the traded sector workforce translates to economic mobility for underrepresented communities. Other areas of impact for career preparation include addressing climate action and supporting diversity growth in green job creation, as well as high-value industries with significant underrepresentation such as healthcare and law.

¹ [First-Generation College Graduates Lag Behind the Peers on Key Economic Outcomes. Pew Research Center \(2021\).](#)

² Exploring Equitable Postsecondary Value. [Value Framework Data Tool.](#)

Programs at PSU which help support the need for an Equity Investment Framework

Pre-College/Access

TRIO Educational Talent Search and Upward Bound - TRIO ETS and UB are federally funded pre-college/access programs which support ~800 first-generation, low-income, and/or students with disabilities. Upward Bound supports students to improve study skills and academic plans in high school, develop their career, and education plans, and help to succeed in higher education. Talent Search is an educational access and information program that assists students in learning about careers and college majors.

Oregon MESA- Oregon MESA serves more than 600 middle and high school students who are historically underrepresented in STEM fields. The foundation of Oregon MESA is to provide a school-based invention education program — the only adaptable, prototype-driven math, engineering, and science program for traditionally underrepresented students that takes an ecosystem approach to education.

Retention

Multicultural Retention Services: The mission of MRS is to ensure the academic success, retention and graduation of first-generation, low income students from historically underserved backgrounds. MRS strives to empower and inspire students by providing academic support, advising, mentorship, advocacy, and leadership development. MRS services and programming build a sense of community and belonging essential to successfully navigate Portland State University. MRS offers four first-year retention programs to incoming PSU students. Each program is uniquely designed to connect students with a diverse community at PSU and focuses on the college experience of a specific cultural community.

Cultural Resource Centers: The Cultural Resource Centers at PSU include the Multicultural Student Center, the Pan-African Commons, the Pacific Islander, Asian & Asian American Student Center, La Casa Latina Student Center, the Native American Student and Community Center, the Middle Eastern, North Africa, South Asia Student Center, and soon to come- a Dreamer Resource Center.

ATMOS program: The ATMOS program within the School of Business at PSU supports diverse and underrepresented undergraduate business students of color and is a promise of academic, career and community support to help create an avenue for a brighter future. Participants in the ATMOS program have a **97.1%** retention/graduation rate and each student receives tailored career support and are connected to opportunities in the business community. To date, ATMOS has served **125** underrepresented students.

Career Preparation Programs:

Explore the Law: Student Legal Services hosts the Explore the Law (ETL) program, a career exploration opportunity founded in 2012 that pairs students with attorney mentors and community learning sessions to help students prepare for law school and careers in the legal field. In this current cohort, **50%** of ETL students are BIPOC, first-generation college students, **40%** speak English as a second language, and **41%** come from households with an income level less than \$25,000. To date, ETL has prepared **350** pre-law students.

IGNITE: Ignite is a leadership and mentorship program for diverse, low-income, and first-generation PSU pre-health students in pursuit of clinical healthcare careers. Ignite provides social, career, and academic-oriented support while reducing financial barriers (through a \$5000 scholarship) to increase time students have available for activities to increase their success. **78%** of student participants identify as BIPOC.

LSAMP: The LSAMP-ISS Climate Resilience Internship program is an innovative pilot program launched in AY 2021 to provide LSAMP (Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation) students with opportunities for professional development and skill growth that advances their career readiness and post-graduation goals. LSAMP students are historically excluded undergraduate students majoring in STEM disciplines. The Climate Resilience Internship program provides 2-3 academic term paid internships in the climate change and climate/disaster resilience areas. The pilot LSAMP-ISS Climate Resilience Internship program is currently supporting **12** underrepresented students during AY 2021-2022.



Investing in Equity at Southern Oregon University

March 2022

Southern Oregon University (SOU) provides a range of programming and services designed to support underrepresented student college access, persistence, and degree attainment. This document describes 1) the three current demonstrably successful programs in each of these areas; 2) the challenge presented in maintaining these programs; and 3) considerations for how additional funding could be used to support and enhance program success by creating formal structures between them that center the experience of the populations they are designed to serve.

Current Programming

The following SOU programs operate separately from one another, though with significant overlap in the populations served.

- ◇ Pre-College Youth Programs;
- ◇ The Bridge Program at SOU; and
- ◇ Success at Southern/Trio Student Support Services

[Pre-College Youth Programs](#) offers enriching and dynamic educational programs to K-12 students in southern Oregon. Programs include summer camps, enrichment classes and workshops, regional academic competitions, and early college credit programs for high school students. The program has a strong focus on underrepresented populations and to that end, prioritizes high-quality, affordable programming, including those specifically designed for Latino/a/x and Native learners. While the Alameda/Obenchain fires and COVID-19 impacted attendance, the program continues to draw participants, ending the 2020-21 academic year with a positive fund balance for the program and robust engagement following program administrator outreach to effected youth and families. On average, program participants become SOU matriculants at the following rates: Latino/a/x programs – Academic Latina 22%; Pirates to Raiders 26%; Early College Credit 30%.

The [Bridge Program at SOU](#) (Bridge) mission is to increase the academic achievement, persistence and graduation rates of underrepresented students first-year experience helps promising students transition to college by supporting their social, emotional, and academic strengths. Bridge focuses on Oregon helping underrepresented Oregon students thrive in their first year of college. With Strong Start grant funding, the program expanded in the 2021-22 academic year to support new students whose experienced adverse learning outcomes as a result of COVID, Strong Start funding from the State of Oregon allowed SOU to expand the program to link. SOU received 117 applications for the 2021-22 academic year and accepted 97 students of which 75 enrolled, including seven American Samoan students and six non-binary students.

Through Title IV funding, [Success at Southern \(SAS\)/Trio Student Support Services \(SSS Program\)](#) (Trio) serves students who meet eligibility for Federal Student Financial Assistance (grants, work-study and or loans) and have a need for academic support in order to successfully pursue a postsecondary educational program. Trio participants must also be first-generation college students, meet low-income eligibility criteria, or have a documented disability. Trio far exceeds approval rate eligibility requirements for participation in the federal program year-to-year, with particularly notable success in meeting academic standing and graduation rate for program participants. Trio’s funding supports a maximum of 190 students in the provision of tutoring, academic and financial advising, scholarship classes and workshops, and guidance on applying for admission to graduate programs. In the 2020-21 academic year, 20% of Trio’s participants were Latino/a/x, 12% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 7% African-American.

In addition, SOU’s [PEAK](#) program (Professional Experience, Achievement, and Knowledge) is designed to provide students with on-campus employment opportunities that encourage rich relationships with faculty and staff, foster professional curiosity and competency, and engender a sense of substantive contribution to the SOU community. Current program data shows low levels of participation among underrepresented students but also some success among students placed in accordance with the program’s intentions.

The Challenge

Supportive programming like Bridge, Trio, and Pre-College Youth Programs de-mystify the educational experience for historically underrepresented students and their families, from pre-college to degree attainment – necessary because academe does not generally center the experiences of racially minoritized, low-income, and/or first-generation populations. However, these same wrap-around services and programming, even when successfully created and executed, can become siloed, relegated to “add-on” status, and significantly challenged in maintaining funding to meet the needs of the students served—a population growing in size, with needs that have increased over the last ten years, and that show few signs of decline.

In addition to research data supporting the value and effectiveness of wrap-around programming and services, research data also supports the value of exposure to and engagement in professional contexts in structured, undergraduate programming. Data shows first-generation professionals cite such experiences as a highlight of their academic careers and *chief among the reasons for their success*. Such success serves not only the individual student, but also supports a rise in socioeconomic level for a family, increasing the likelihood of the same for the generation that will follow it.

Formal Connections

Currently, the wrap-around services and programs described in this document experience an overlap in populations served but no formal ties between their operation. While there is evidence to show programs like PEAK successfully support both persistence toward attainment and professional success beyond it for underrepresented populations, SOU’s program at its current

usage is not optimized to support these populations. Additional funding would allow SOU to support these programs and leverage them for greater effectiveness by formalizing ties between them, and creating the structures to sustain them to support access, enrollment, attainment, and professional success.

Currently envisioned is a structure that formalizes and supports connection among Pre-College and Youth Programs, Bridge and SAS/Trio, and PEAK. Additional funding could be used to strengthen and grow the individual programs. Concurrently, we would analyze the data of the programs' shared populations~ identifying the range of informal, organic connections between them that support student persistence and attainment, and develop the infrastructure necessary to maximize the benefits of the connections by formalizing and sustaining them in a way that supports students both during and after their academic experiences.

WOU Diversity-focused Proposed Investments

Western Oregon University (WOU) is poised to become the first public university in the Pacific Northwest to earn the Hispanic Serving Institution designation. The Education Trust recognized WOU as one a select group of universities that had erased the racial achievement gap.



The proposed activities would support expansion of campus student services that have been proven to be effective and the creation of needed new services that are considered best practices nationally.

Current WOU students Success

Goal: Improve the first-to-second year retention and graduation rates of BIPOC and diverse students at WOU so that underrepresented students have the same or higher retention and graduation rates as WOU's highest achieving ethnic group (Latinx students).

Expand current programs

- Multicultural Student Services and Programs (double the number of students served)
- Teacher Preparation Student Support Program (increase number students served by 200)
- Provide additional funds to support re-engagement and completion grants with a focus on students from under-served communities (Serve 500 students annually)
- Expand the support for Executive Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Enhance faculty and staff diversity training (Serve the entire campus community)

New Initiatives

- First Generation Center (Students served: 4,000+)
- Gender Justice Center (LGBTQ+ and other students served: 2,000)
- DACA Student Success Center (Students served: 200+)
- Pool to recruit and retain faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds (faculty and staff served annually: 200)

Career Readiness

Goals: Increase the graduation rates of all students and improve preparation for career or graduate school entry.

Expand current programs

Expand Career Services and Service Learning (students served: 2,000)

New Initiatives

Paid Internship fund with a focus on teacher education, criminal justice (students served: 4,000)

Pre-collegiate Activities

Goal: Increase the number of BIPOC and diverse students who are prepared to attend college.

Expand current programs

- Expand the Latino Advisory Board to serve school districts outside of Marion County
- Expand the WOU Project to other Willamette Valley High Schools and the coast
- Expand Bilingual and Diverse Teacher Scholars Program

New initiatives

- Coordinator of Pre-collegiate Programs
- Bilingual and Diverse Health Professions Program



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