

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

**Meeting Summary – White City Field Trips
July 21, 2022**

Community Leaders Roundtable

**Rogue Community College, Table Rock Campus
Building C, Room 220
7800 Pacific Ave
White City, OR 97503**

Members Present: Rep. Alonso Leon, Chair; Sen. Dembrow; Sen. Wagner; Sen. Frederick, ex-officio

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

Non-Member legislators present: None

The task force met with local campus and community leaders in a roundtable discussion format. Rep. Alonso Leon, Chair, and RCC President Randy Weber jointly greeted the attendees and explained the meeting format. Rep. Alonso Leon, Chair, then began discussion by asking what each of the participants' organizations was doing to promote student success for underrepresented students in higher education settings. Discussion touched on the following topics:

- the decentralized nature of the state's workforce development system;
- longitudinal data systems and data-sharing partnerships across the education and business sectors;
- the importance of soft skills development for students to transition into the workforce;
- grants made available under the Future Ready Oregon initiative;
- the social determinants of health for students, including wellness and financial stability;
- various uses of Medicaid dollars for promoting health and wellness, leading to better educational outcomes;
- the complexity of applying for various public benefits programs and the value of the benefits navigators positions created by HB 2835 (2021);
- widening the definition of "student success" to include learning acquired without earning a degree or certificate;
- a perceived stigma surrounding Adult Basic Skills programs;

- affordability concerns, including tuition and fees, housing, childcare, elder care, and transportation;
- characteristics of an open admissions policy;
- outcomes of programs such as Pathways to Opportunity and TRiO;
- partnerships between K-12 districts and community colleges, including dual credit programs; and
- the relatively simple funding distribution method under the Student Success Act.

Faculty and Staff Roundtable

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White City, OR 97503**

Members Present: Rep. Alonso Leon, Chair; Sen. Dembrow; Sen. Wagner; Sen. Frederick, ex-officio

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

Non-Member legislators present: None

The task force met with faculty and staff of Southern Oregon University in a roundtable discussion format. Rep. Alonso Leon, Chair, greeted the attendees and asked how each participants' perspective on working with students helped their understanding of how to promote student success for underrepresented students. Discussion touched on the following topics:

- challenges faced by the campus library system;
- proposed changes to the Community College Support Fund distribution formula;
- proposed mandatory minimum staffing levels, as exist in law in other states;
- some students' relative lack of basic knowledge and skills needed to succeed academically, as well as a reluctance to seek help;
- inadequate access to technology and the Internet in rural areas;
- severe housing cost burdens faced by students due a shortage of housing units in the region;
- limitations of the Oregon Promise Grant program;
- challenges faced by LGBTQ2IA+ students who live in rural areas;
- high student-to-counselor ratios;
- the importance of student government advocacy;
- challenges of accessing public transportation across multiple counties and transit systems;

- a campus-wide reporting system for alerting counselors to attend to students in crisis;
- the potential for new student orientation events to expose students to available support resources;
- student employment opportunities on campus beyond those available via the Federal Work-Study program;
- the “benefits gap” faced by students who are eligible for some public benefits and not others;
- recent temporary expansions of public benefits programs during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- importance of multilingual education for undocumented students; and
- housing costs and shortages in the region since the 2020 wildfires.

Student Listening Session

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

Members Excused: **Rep. Owens; Rep. Ruiz; Rep. Zika; Sen. Findley; Sen. Robinson; Sen. Frederick, ex-officio**

Non-Member legislators present: **None**

21 students from Rogue Community College attended the listening session. Rep. Alonso Leon, Chair, welcomed the students and task force members and explained the meeting’s purpose and structure. Task force members sat individually at tables with groups of seven students. The students described their educational experiences and responded to questions from the committee members. Approximately every 40 minutes, task force members moved to new tables to talk with different groups of students.

Site Tour

**Rogue Community College, Table Rock Campus
7800 Pacific Ave
White City, OR 97503**

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

Members Excused: **Rep. Owens; Rep. Ruiz; Rep. Zika; Sen. Findley; Sen. Robinson; Sen. Frederick, ex-officio**

Other legislators present: **None**

The task force embarked on a tour of several facilities on the Table Rock campus. The tour began in the Health Professions Building (Building C), where task force members observed a high-fidelity simulation lab, the medical assist lab, the phlebotomy lab, and a functioning dental clinic. Next, the task force visited Building B, where Gary Heigel, a professor and chair of the college's paramedical program, presented the emergency medical services (EMS) program, which features an immersive learning approach. Lastly, the task force visited the college's manufacturing lab, including the visual design program, commercial driver's license (CDL) program, second chance program, diesel program, and high-tech manufacturing center. The task force members also learned about the Newbridge High School Partnership Program within the Rogue Valley Youth Correctional Facility. Task force members also discussed housing challenges, including land, zoning, and construction costs, and the challenges faced by employers to find qualified workers with advanced skills as soon as possible.
