

Nichole Smith

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Joint Committee on Capital Construction

Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Letter of Support for Western Oregon University's \$1.4 Million Article F Bond Request

Dear Co-Chairs and Members of the Joint Committee on Capital Construction,

My name is Nichole Smith, and I'm the Head Coach of WOU's Women's+ Rugby Club. I am writing to you on behalf of my team, as well as those who utilize the turf field for various reasons. I respectfully submit this letter to express an urgent and united need: to returf our turf field. That field is so important to so many different individuals, from club and intramural sports to individuals not affiliated with a sport within WOU. By doing so, WOU is dedicated to supporting the growth, safety, and success of our club and intramural sports programs and helping to increase physical activity for other students. Therefore, I strongly support the \$1.4 million Article F Bond Request, which will fund crucial improvements to athletic facilities on campus.

Club sports at WOU play a vital role in fostering leadership, teamwork, and school spirit across campus. Our program offers inclusive opportunities for athletes of all skill levels to compete, build community, and represent our university with pride. However, our current facilities are no longer meeting the needs of this growing program, and there are concerns regarding safety in such a physical sport as rugby. A new turf field would drastically reduce maintenance needs, allow year-round use, and provide a reliable, high-quality surface that elevates the students' experience.

This new field would also serve the broader campus and local community. Intramurals, recreational activities, youth clinics, and regional tournaments could all benefit, strengthening WOU's role as a hub for sports and community engagement. I can't speak for other sports, but from a rugby standpoint, we host the high school rugby championships every year, recently hosted a USA Rugby clinic, and have plans to host clinics in the future. All of this is to engage with the community, build relationships, and provide information to individuals to become future students at WOU.

I recognize that such an investment requires thoughtful planning and resources. However, the long-term benefits (enhanced high school and transfer student recruitment, improved student retention, increased alumni engagement, and targeted revenue sources) make this a wise and forward-thinking initiative. We are confident that, together, we can create a facility that not only meets today's needs but inspires generations of Wolves to come.

Thank you for your continued support of student initiatives and for considering this essential step forward for Western Oregon University.

Sincerely,
Nichole Smith
Head Coach
Women's+ Rugby Club