



Board of Trustees Meeting – February 16, 2022

Appendix B

President's Cabinet Reports | Table of Contents:

- 1) [President Jay Kenton](#)
- 2) Dr. Gary Dukes, Vice President, [Student Affairs](#)
- 3) Mr. Ryan Hagemann, Vice President & [General Counsel](#)
- 4) Dr. Ana Karaman, Vice President, [Finance & Administration](#)
- 5) Ms. Randi Lydum, Executive Director of [Intercollegiate Athletics](#)
- 6) Mr. David McDonald, Associate Vice President, [Public Affairs & Strategic Initiatives](#)
- 7) Ms. Erin McDonough, Executive Director, [Advancement & WOU Foundation](#)
- 8) Dr. Rob Winningham, Provost & Vice President for [Academic Affairs](#)



Board of Trustees Meeting, February 16, 2022 President's Update

COVID:

The omicron surge has been relentless in recent weeks but seems to be subsiding now, though we have many employees and students currently in quarantine, including some of our child development center students and staff. Most cases have been mild. The Governor has announced the indoor mask requirement will be removed by March 31, 2022. We will work with the COVID Safety Team to assess how this will impact WOU.

Vaccination Clinics at Gentle House:

Please get out the word that OHA will be hosting a Vaccination/Booster as well as Flu Shot Clinic at the Gentle House from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. this Friday, February 11, 2022. Other dates and times that we have requested are:

- 2/18/22 from 1-5p.m. or 2-6 p.m.
- 2/25/22 from 10a.m. - 2 p.m.
- 3/4/22 from 1-5p.m. or 2-6 p.m.

Executive Director of Diversity Equity and Inclusion Search Update:

Randi Lydum, search chair reports a strong pool of candidates. Seven semi-finalists were interviewed. Four finalists will be brought to campus soon for campus wide interviews with various constituencies. This position will become a member of the president's cabinet and will be the advisor to the Freedom Center.

Executive Director of Human Resources Search Update:

Tina Fuchs, search chair reports that the committee has identified the semi-finalists that will be interviewed in the next week or so. The goal again is to invite finalists to campus in February/March for interviews/presentations and we hope to have someone selected and in place in April/May 2022.

Enrollment and Other Strategic Initiatives:

Our enrollment management team continues to meet every Thursday morning for 2 hours to go through the various initiatives and to ensure that all handoffs in the process go smoothly with a focus on increased yield and student success. In addition to the initiatives listed below we discuss the implications from placing registration holds for advising, bill payment, need for transcripts, etc.; tuition and fee pricing policies, the value add from the Destination Western program, monitoring retention, persistence and graduation rates, flowcharting the admission and financial aid processes and removing unneeded complexity and steps, changing financial aid award methodology from an early pre-award in November/December that typically understated awards and a second adjusted award in March/April, to a one time award in March/April will full amounts detailed and with the benefit of RNL's financial aid packaging wisdom and strategy discussed below.



Our strategy is using multiple simultaneous initiatives and efforts will produce positive results. Expected enrollment increase Fall 2022 – 10% over Fall 2021 and it could be higher.

Undergraduate Admissions:

Currently, applications for undergraduate admissions are up 14% over last year at this same time and admits are up 16.5% over last year same time. The data are even more impressive for Hispanic students as applications are up 43% over last year and admits are up 38% over last year at this same time.

Graduate Admissions:

Currently applications for graduate programs are up 35% over the same time last year and admits are up 214%, though the N is small, thus somewhat distorting the % increase over last year.

**Western Oregon University
Applications and Admissions Report
Week of February 4, 2022**

Applications	Resident	Non-Res.	Int'l	Fall 2022 Total	Fall 2021 Total	% Chng.
Freshmen						
African American	31	45	-	76	87	-12.6%
American Indian	22	4	-	26	23	13.0%
Asian/Pacific Isl.	76	109	1	186	158	17.7%
Hispanic	743	140	3	886	620	42.9%
Unknown	119	109	15	243	268	-9.3%
White	969	310	-	1,279	1,113	14.9%
Total Freshmen	1,960	717	19	2,696	2,269	18.8%
Transfers	179	73	4	256	331	-22.7%
Graduates	61	24	-	85	63	34.9%
Total Applicants	2,200	814	23	3,037	2,663	14.0%



Admitted	Resident	Non-Res.	Int'l	Fall 2022 Total	Fall 2021 Total	% Chng.
Freshmen						
African American	22	35	-	57	61	-6.6%
American Indian	16	4	-	20	17	17.6%
Asian/Pacific Isl.	65	82	-	147	121	21.5%
Hispanic	534	84	3	621	450	38.0%
Unknown	85	78	14	177	205	-13.7%
White	<u>714</u>	<u>239</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>953</u>	<u>852</u>	11.9%
Total Freshmen	1,436	522	17	1,975	1,706	15.8%
Transfers	135	58	4	197	157	25.5%
Graduates	<u>12</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>7</u>	114.3%
Total Admitted	1,583	583	21	2,187	1,870	17.0%

Key Observations from high school counselor focus group at the Cesar E. Chavez Leadership Conference.

Number of attendees: 13

Representatives from Salem Keizer School District, Newport High School, Wilsonville High School, La Salle Catholic, Woodburn High School, and Beaverton High School. Attendee roles included: Vice Principal, Counselor, Graduation Specialist, Teacher, Migrant Specialist, Community Liaison, and Community School Outreach Coordinator.

Key Observations and proposed actions

1. Affordability is a critical and growing barrier to college for all students, but especially low-income and Latinx students. Affordability is more than actual costs, it also includes knowledge and perceptions. Reading a university billing statement was compared to trying to understand an insurance bill.
 - Focus on being transparent. There was comment about WOU changing scholarship offers to students (this appeared to be the stacking issue where multiple awards added together were capped at a certain threshold, and awards were sometimes lowered to comport with the cap after they arrived).
 - Re-design the bill to make it easy for students and parents to read and understand.
 - Create more student-friendly financial aid information. Convene a student feedback group including high school students to discuss WOU webpage, emails and print materials.
 - Improve the timing of financial aid packages and communications plan.
2. College recruitment was compared to used car sales. College admission counselors are quick to tout the strengths of their schools, but often do not disclose limits. Place the students first!

Office of the President





- Train admission counselors to be truthful advocates for higher education as well as WOU.
 - Use current WOU students. They are viewed as being more credible. Take them to local high schools.
 - The military has been making big strides in increasing student interest. The military is at the schools all the time including during lunch
 - Visit key feeder schools every 2-3 weeks. Connect with different offices including counseling, career readiness, migrant education, Community Outreach, College and Career.
 - Daily announcements about which schools are visiting are not heard in the classrooms. WOU needs to use the CRM to text and email in advance and even the day of visits.
3. Living on campus is too expensive.
 - Provide an explanation of why the costs are higher—RA's, student programs, limits to the number of students per room...
 - Show the value of living on campus...higher retention and graduation rates, NSSE data?
 4. WOU does not mention the dual enrollment program with Chemeketa as an option
 - Make sure that admission counselors are familiar with the partnership activities with Chemeketa.
 - Determine if WOU and Chemeketa mention dual enrollment in print and digital media.
 5. Admission process is confusing and needs to be simplified
 - The citizenship question stops many DACA students; look to add “other” or “non-applicable” or use language similar to what is used by OSAC.
 - Admissions should send out a monthly or quarterly newsletter to high school counselors, and others who work with students. Can be a one-page double sided document. UO and Chemeketa were cited as doing this. Topics include updates, academic programs, campus services, student and faculty profiles...
 - Strengthen and expand the WOU Project and Latino Advisory Board. These programs are very well received by Salem Keizer schools.
 - WOU application form should better reflect WOU's strong commitment to DEI.

Things that WOU does well:

1. WOU is a good partner for high schools and school districts.
2. WOU admissions criteria allow for students to be admitted in multiple ways and supports student access.
3. WOU has a community feel and places student needs first (referenced the Latino Advisory Board).
4. WOU provides personal attention and involves family (referenced the Latino Advisory Board).



5. Students learn about WOU through word-of-mouth.
6. WOU approaches people rather than waiting for students to approach WOU.
7. WOU does a good job of emphasizing that students go to college rather than that they go to WOU only (see WOU Project and Latino Advisory Board)

Other items:

- Benefits Navigator position should link with the Migrant Specialists, Community School Outreach Coordinators (CSOC), Graduation Specialists, and Community Liaisons in Polk, Marion, and Yamhill Counties with a focus on Central, Dallas and Salem. This connection could “support “warm hand-off’s” between the high schools and WOU leading to another enrollment pipeline.
- Offer early admissions to juniors (will need to be a conditional or pre-admit). This is to take the stress off the senior year and to lock students into WOU.
- Offer high school juniors support in writing their college essays for admissions and scholarships. The Writing Center could send tutors to help local high school students.
- Have family nights at the local high schools where WOU focuses on helping families understand the college and financial aid process.
- Use National Student Clearinghouse to identify students admitted for Fall '20 and Fall '21 who did not enroll in any college. Conduct an admissions campaign to connect these students to WOU.

EAB Partnership:

EAB is currently running analyses and assisting with marketing to both non-traditional undergraduate students and graduate students.

EAB ran its undergraduate program portfolio health check and concluded the following:

EAB’s market scoring analyses identified the following programs as best poised for growth among Western Oregon University’s existing undergraduate portfolio. These programs demonstrate high and/or growing labor market demand along with some combination of high or growing completions and few regional competitors:

- BA in Spanish
- BS/BA/BAS in Computer Science
- BS/BAS in Business Analytics (known as Data Analytics at WOU)
- BS/BAS in Psychology
- BS in Cybercrime Investigation and Enforcement
- BS in Criminal Justice (Juvenile Justice)
- BA in Public Policy & Administration

Further, the following programs demonstrate strong labor market demand, but scored lower in competitive opportunity (i.e., high number of competitors and/or decreasing reported completions). These programs indicate potential for growth based on labor market demand, but the competitive landscape may be a limiting factor:

- BS in Computer Science & Mathematics

Office of the President



- BS/BAS in Information Systems
- BA/BAS in Gerontology: Aging and Older Adulthood
- BS in Business
- BS in Public Health
- BA in Communication Studies

All programs received scores relative to each other. Thus, a program described with low regional labor market demand does not necessarily represent low opportunity for growth in absolute terms, but rather lower opportunity for growth when compared to other programs in the undergraduate portfolio.

EAB also conducted a Portfolio Health Check to evaluate the institution's existing graduate portfolio and assess growth opportunities. EAB's market scoring analyses identified the following programs as best poised for growth among Western Oregon University's existing graduate portfolio. These programs demonstrate high and/or growing labor market demand along with some combination of high or growing completions and few regional competitors:

- M.S. Rehabilitation Counseling
- M.S.Ed in Educational Technology (formerly known as Information Technology at WOU)

Further, the following programs demonstrate strong labor market demand, but scored lower in competitive opportunity (i.e., high number of competitors and/or decreasing reported completions). These programs indicate potential for growth based on labor market demand, but the competitive landscape may be a limiting factor:

- M.A. Organizational Leadership
- M.S.Ed in Education
- M.A. in Justice Studies

All programs received scores relative to each other. Thus, a program described with low regional labor demand does not necessarily represent low opportunity for growth in absolute terms, but rather lower opportunity for growth when compared to other programs in the graduate portfolio.

Investing in new faculty/staff: (searches are in process)

- 2.0 FTE in Education
- New Faculty in Business
- New faculty member in Sociology
- New faculty in Computer Science
- Professional advisor in Business

WOU Athletics:

Men's soccer – Update from Stan Rodrigues: I am proud to say that I have close to 40 committed or National Letter of Intent signed players. I am bringing in a very diverse group of student athletes with a common goal of being a competitive team on the field as well as in the classroom.

Office of the President



I am still in talks with other potential student athletes from North Salem and various high school players from the I5 corridor and beyond. I am excited to have players from the Islands of Hawaii, Sierra Leone, Wyoming, Arizona, California, Washington and Nevada. I am still exploring Texas since we have the ability to recruit there. I will not rest until I feel like we have built a quality team and culture. We have 6 students on campus attending now and I am proud that they chose to start and get ready for the spring as I hope to have nearly 10 more begin then.

Our Social Media has been having many engagements and my social media director, Angela, is constantly adding content to bring more attention to the school and our program as well as local news and media outlets to ensure our program is well known and highlighted. Having a new program added to our campus is a great time to bring positive energy and highlights, having a turf field would also add to that positivity!

We are also expanding the rosters slightly in many other sports and hope to add another ~30 student Athletes from this action. And national averages suggest that for every athlete recruited to a university 1-2 (average of 1.5) friends follow.

Partnership Opportunities:

- SWEETER – seeking \$5.0M from the February 2022 Legislature for State workforce development in partnership with SEIU and AFSCME. This is a collaboration between the State, the State's labor unions and Western Oregon University to work on retention and retraining programs for State workers. The goal will be to allow State workers opportunities for job advancement within the state and training programs that increase skill, morale in their current and future jobs. An allocation of \$5.0 million for start up costs, creation of program and curriculum, and enrollment of workers into the program. If funded this would allow WOU to offer upwards of 3,000-4,000 State workers classes free of charge with the State in essence prepaying the tuition.
- SWEETER Plus - support the training and licensure of home care workers – 2nd phase of the program if funded and another 30,000 potential clients.
- Amazon – Career Choice Program – due to our partnership with Chemeketa the Amazon Corporate office is asking us if we would be willing to partner on their Career Choice program (this occurred because of Chemeketa's work with Amazon). This is their internal employee benefits program that allows their associates to take college credit classes, paid for by Amazon. We need to decide if we are willing to comply/partner with them in order to set up the connection. If so, next steps would be to set up a virtual meeting with them and go through the details of how to make it happen. Here are several talking points from conversations with Amazon:
 - Full and part time employees are eligible
 - At the Salem facility, there are currently just over 1,000 employees (keep in mind, this agreement would also cover Woodburn when it is up and running)



- Career Choice just made a change and allows employees to pick ANY certificate or degree. (it used to be limited based on Amazon's choice/list)
- full-time employees are eligible for up to \$5250/year, part-time employees are eligible for half that
- Amazon sets up these agreements with the closest community colleges and universities within a 30 mile radius. However, in their database an employee can look locally, or statewide, and we would come up in both searches.
- They require us to connect with them and set up processes they have developed on two things. • They have a voucher for student payment, where the payment comes directly from Amazon. They would want us to accept their vouchers and payment process.
- There is a data sharing requirement. The voucher already has some kind of FERPA release for the student and they have worked that out with several other institutions. They want two pieces of information: if a student completed successfully (they do not care about specific grades, just if they passed), and notification of when they complete a certificate or degree.

We are also offering multiple sessions of Racial Understanding training classes for various municipalities and other political subdivisions.

Bilingual/Diversity Teacher Scholars and Teacher Education: We have created 60 new diversity scholarships in hopes of recruiting more people of color into the teaching ranks; including a cohort of eight community college transfers funded by Unitus Community Credit Union. Dean Girod has been in communication with most school districts around the State to solicit their assistance in recruiting diverse students who want to become teachers.

International Student Recruitment—Shorelight:

We have signed a contract with Shorelight to help us recruit international students to WOU. There is no up-front cost. However, we must pay them 40% of the first-year non-resident tuition from international students they recruit to WOU and 10% thereafter if the student persists at the university. They estimate they could find WOU 10-15 students for the Fall 2022 class.

Ruffalo Noel Levitt (RNL) Financial Aid Leveraging:

Successes:

- Net tuition revenue drop was more modest (though never a good thing) than the significant drop in headcount and drop in gross tuition revenue.
- Enrolling families have a stronger ability to pay, family incomes of FAFSA filers who enrolled up 8% to \$119K.

Challenges:

- ~38% students of color in first year class in 2021 compared to ~41% in 2020.
- Drop in Pell recipient percentages in first year class – 44% in 2020 down to 42% in 2021 (37% down to 36% in RNL national data – publics).



- Too many high ability students with no merit aid offers, or too low an offer to be effective.
- Awarding challenge – offering effective award levels for as many students as possible.
- Competitor challenge – other Oregon regional publics are more aggressive with merit scholarships.

RNL COVID-19 Research: Key Takeaways

Fall 2020 College Bound Senior Survey (n=531)

- Over two-thirds indicated that COVID-19 has, or may, influence their college plans.
- As a result of the pandemic, students would like to see more financial assistance, communication, technology resources and online course options.

High School Parent Survey (n=3,827)

- Half of the parents attended virtual college informational events.
- Three-quarters indicated financial aid and scholarships will be very important in their child's final enrollment decision.

High School Counselor Survey (n=2,689)

- 85% need information they can easily share via email with students.
- 90% are accessing information via the college website. Make sure your site is up to date!

Enrollment Management Professional Survey (n=397)

- To communicate with applicants, institutions report using video and webchat “a lot” more.
- From the College Bound Senior survey, students report wanting to receive more texts; however, only 19% of institutions report using text a lot more.

Student Success Professional Survey (n=55)

More than 85% indicated they are concerned about Fall 2020 retention, and there is low confidence in their ability to predict retention.

Recommendations

Regardless of other actions:

- Award “grid” merit scholarships without requiring an additional application, first year and transfers.
- Eliminate the “grid” merit scholarship deadline, award throughout the admission and enrollment cycle, first year and transfers.



Three Proposals to Consider for First-year Students:

WOU would promise to all admitted in-state students who are Pell-eligible (to include students unable to file a FAFSA) would receive enough gift aid from Federal, state, and WOU funds to cover the costs of tuition and fees. This could include a cutoff date, or a GPA requirement of 3.00 or some other cut off as a way of reducing expenditure of the program. Also, extended a level of expected aid to all students just above Pell eligibility who have EFC's below \$10,000.

Increase Merits – offer higher merit aid to more students through a combination of increasing the award level, expanding the GPA range of eligible students, and eliminating the cutoff dates. This proposal is for both in state and out of state students.

Combine both – Apply the new merits and then make the promise of tuition and fees in gift aid to all eligible students. In many cases, the higher merit offers are all that is needed to fund the Promise, so it is not double the additional expenditure.

Willamette Promise:

The relationship between Western Oregon University (WOU) and the Willamette Education Service District (WESD) as it pertains to the Willamette Promise (WP) program is primed to yield future WOU students. Although there are currently some technological barriers (as of Jan. 2022), there still are many opportunities to recruit high school students who are earning or have already earned credit at WOU. This initial report identifies assets, opportunities and strategies that serve as the foundation for a strong communication plan that recruits WP students to become WOU students after high school graduation.

- Hundreds of high school students who participate in WP, ranging from high school freshmen to high school seniors
- Contact information for students (though largely this is via their high school email, see WESD action items below)
- Database of students that can be parsed to target specific audience for communications
- Contact information for some parents
- Communications and information technology staff at both WOU and WESD who are eager to maximize this relationship
- Scholarship (Weston) to offer WP students to entice them to attend WOU. Recently has been expanded to continue two years of enrollment instead of one year.

In discussion with WOU and WESD, it was decided that high school students in the first month of their senior year are the best audience on which to focus our immediate efforts. The summer is less ideal because students aren't checking their email (high school email or personal email) during the summertime.

A **September-October messaging campaign** catches students before they've applied to college and while they are preparing to file the FAFSA, which opens Oct. 1.

Office of the President



We can also use it to entice students to come to WOU for fall preview day. Or, perhaps eventually, a WP student-specific event, maybe in partnership with WESD. For the initial effort, the message will be around **“You are already a WOU student! Complete your WOU application today to continue earning your bachelor’s degree.”** Then info about the Joe Weston Scholarship, reminder to file for FAFSA, maybe something about the Dream.US scholarship if appropriate, and testimonials from current WOU students who chose WOU after earning WP credits and graduating high school.

WESD Action items:

- Change registration form to require a personal email in addition to the school email
- Change registration form to include a box allowing WOU to add their contact info to Slate (or make it opt-out? Still checking data-sharing agreement)
- Determine whether the website can be tweaked to NOT encourage students to move their credits away from WOU

WOU action items:

- Change automated message confirming registration to include information about becoming a WOU student or similar message
- Change registration form to include a box opting in to receiving messages from WOU, something like “I want to know how the college credits I earn through Willamette Promise can get me closer to a degree from Western Oregon University”
- Change the website to NOT encourage students to move their credits away from WOU

Immediate communications opportunities:

- Email current seniors (who have earned or are currently earning college credit through WP) to remind them they are already WOU students, and there is still time to apply in time to be eligible for scholarships.
- Email current juniors with the message of “Not sure college is for you? You’re already a WOU student. Let’s keep this going!”
- Text message students for whom we have phone numbers with “Turn your college credits into scholarship funds. Apply to WOU today in order to be eligible for 200+ scholarships”
- DONE – Provide BTS and DTS fliers to high school teachers teaching WP Spanish classes
- Send a “congratulations” email to students after they earn credit (already in the works between Amy Clark, Bev West and Admissions, I believe)
- Plan and create communications campaign for next Sept.-Oct.

2022 Legislative Session:

As you probably know, the 2022 Legislative session started on Feb. 1 and runs for no more than 35 days. This will be Senate President Peter Courtney’s last session in the Legislature and Rep. Dan Rayfield’s (WOU alum) first session as speaker of the house. I wanted you to know the extent of what we are requesting and would

Office of the President



appreciate any assistance you could provide should you happen to know or talk with Legislators.

1. \$16.5M steampipe replacement/utility tunnel system
2. ~\$275K for SEIU raises for "pandemic pay" that the SEIU agreed to help us get funded during the last round of bargaining (this is WOU's portion, but all seven public universities are asking for their share).
3. Up to \$5.0M for a state workforce development program in conjunction with SEIU, AFSCME and WOU. This would fund tuition for numerous State employees to up skill or complete their degrees.
4. \$4.2M (amount updated) for construction inflationary increases on the Student Success Center. (Again, this is WOU's portion, the total ask for all seven public universities is in excess of \$80M).
5. \$1.2M for continued funding for the Strong Start (Destination Western) Program. (WOU's portion, but all seven public universities are asking for continued funding).
6. \$4.1M for the athletic turf field - this would allow us to replace the grass in front of the stadium with field turf, expand the field to accommodate soccer, resurface the track and add new LED lighting.

Total Ask: \$31.3M

Board of Trustees Report – February 16, 2022

Dr. Gary Dukes, Vice President for Student Affairs Report

Fall 2022 Recruitment Update

Applications and admitted student numbers are up from last year and several of the previous years. Applications are up about 23% from last year and Admitted students are up 17%. Admitted transfer students is up 36%

Hosting groups and guests continue to be our biggest recruitment activity. Since November, we have hosted 21 school groups for a total of over 600 students. We also had three **Preview Days** hosting 140 prospective students and 300 total guests. Of the students who attend a Preview Day, 90% have been admitted.

We have many upcoming events including: Health and Exercise Science Careers Day (Feb. 17), Transfer Student Day (Feb. 21), Criminal Justice Careers Day (March 2) and Spring Break Visit. Our 2nd Cesar E Chavez Leadership Conference will occur on April 8.

Financial Aid

WOU has partnered with Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) and their Class Optimizer program. This program allows us to look at each student's unique financial situation in determining their aid package. As a part of this partnership, RNL recommended that WOU change its merit remission process to offer more merit remission to students at all categories. RNL also recommended WOU add an additional merit level for students with GPA's from 3.0 to 3.49. We have moved forward with this recommendation and have notified all the students of their new merit awards. The hope is this will further entice students to come to Western Oregon University. As we get further into our award processing, we will be able to look at each student and get a sense of how much institutional aid they likely need to attend WOU and can be more strategic in our awards.

The conversion from PowerFaid to Banner Financial Aid has begun. This conversion will require significant time from staff in Financial Aid and University Computing Solutions. We have also contracted with a third-party vendor to assist with this process. Converting to Banner Financial Aid should provide a more stream-lined process and provide access to financial aid information to other staff working with students.

Destination Western

Students who participated in Destination Western were retained a significantly higher rate from Fall to Winter term (96% compared to 84%) than students who didn't participate in the program. Students who participated in the program also took slightly more credits. In general, students who participated in Destination Western self-reported they were more comfortable on campus as a result from participating in the program,

and more likely to seek out resources and services. These results are promising and we will continue to track these students throughout the year.

The funding for this program was only one-time funding from the State, but there is legislation in this short session to continue funding for this program.

Health and Counseling

As with the rest of the state, we have experienced a large increase in the number of COVID cases. Within the first two weeks of the terms we had more COVID cases reported than all of Fall term combined. We are starting to see these numbers decline. Students can obtain free COVID tests through the Student Health and Counseling Center and have been utilizing this service on a daily basis. We also partnered with Polk County to shuttle students to a free COVID vaccine and booster clinic. Wolf Ride was available to take students to and from the clinic.

Students continue overwhelmingly to meet with our counselors in-person with just a few choosing to have tele-counseling appointments.

Housing and Dining

We have 866 students living on-campus this year compared to 602 this time last year and 1066 in 2020. We have seen an increase in the number of residential students testing positive for COVID, but nothing different from the general student body. We thought we might need to expand the number of our isolation rooms because of the number of students testing positive, but we were able to keep the rooms to one building.

Reservations for fall 2022 continue to lag from previous years. Our hope is folks are waiting longer to commit in their decisions.

Staffing, especially in dining, continues to be challenging. Couple this with staff testing positive makes providing food service for our students a challenge. Campus Dining is managing well given the circumstances and have been able to maintain hours and variety.

Upward Bound

Upward Bound is a 1.5M U.S. Department of Education TRiO grant which serves 52 first-generation, low-income and/or students with a disability in high school. WOU's grant serves students attending Dallas or Central High Schools. The grant is a five-year renewable grant. Our grant renewal application was due at the end of January for our next five-year cycle. The grant provides tutoring and other college preparatory activities. Because of WOU's involvement with these activities, most students attend WOU for college. We will be notified in summer of our extension.

Veterans Resource Center

The Veterans Resource Center received an ODVA CVRC grant of \$58,635. This grant will help support the salary of the director of this program as well as many programs and services. One element in particular this grant will continue to support is the Peer Advisors for Veterans Education Program (PAVE). This Program utilizes peer student-veterans to serve as mentors to other WOU student veterans or dependents of veterans.

The VRC sponsored the first annual Ugly Sweater Ruck N' Run. About 25 students participated in the event, many carrying 80lb rucks!

Child Development Center

The Child Development Center successfully completed fall term without any cases of COVID needing to close the Center, but then quickly needed to close all three classes at the beginning of Winter term because of COVID. The Center will reopen January 24 and hopefully will not need to close again. The cohort model the Center has been utilizing as well as limiting the capacity of each class has helped in this effort. Tammy Gardner has been doing a phenomenal job in managing the CDC and keeping everyone healthy.

Incidental Fee Process

The Incidental Fee Committee started meeting in January. The Committee will be working over the next three months to establish the incidental fee and determine budgets for the various area funded by the fee. The Committee will likely have to reduce the amount of funding areas receive because of the enrollment decline. The Committee will also re-evaluate charging on-line students the fee.

MLK

During the week of January 17, Western Oregon University held several events in commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr. During the week, there was a fundraiser for the Black Student University scholarship fund. The goal was \$2,022 dollars, but almost \$6,000 was raised. On Wednesday, five Black students shared their lived experiences in a video, "[Sincerely](#)." On Thursday, Dr. Reginald Richardson, was the Keynote speaker speaking on, "A Jailbird's Fight for Freedom." Following his address, Dr. Richardson joined a panel of three students and a WOU alum answering questions from a moderator and individuals attending the program via Zoom.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

In November, the Division of Student Affairs hosted Dr. Luhui Whitebear who spoke to staff on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women. Dr. Whitebear is an assistant professor in the School of Language, Culture and Society at Oregon State University and focuses her research on indigenous rhetorics, indigeneity and reclaiming indigenous identity / gender roles, murdered and missing indigenous women, indigenous resistance movements, and national laws and policies that impact

indigenous people. Over 60 Student Affairs employees attended this event; a recording is available [here](#).

In December, The Division of Student Affairs collaborated with the Division of Academic Affairs and offered Search Advocate training to 30 staff. This training help increase the number of search advocates available to help assist with searches. Several members of the President's cabinet also participated in this training. Search advocates are trained, external search committee members who promote equity, validity and diversity on searches.

In January, the Division of Student Affairs hosted local Portland writer, Emily Prado, a first-generation college graduate and a 2022 Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association Book Award Shortlist finalist. Emily's presentation featured readings from their debut memoir, *Funeral For Flaca*, as well as a student center writing workshop. Emily spoke to faculty and staff and then hosted a writing workshop for students.

NSE

Fall term 2021, five WOU students participated in the National Student Exchange program (NSE). Students attended universities in Florida, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. This winter, one WOU student is attending Boise State University. WOU is currently hosting students from Guam, New York, and Texas. As we prepare for the 2022-2023 exchange, VPSA office has hosted several informational sessions and is actively meeting with prospective students. Despite challenges COVID-19 has presented, NSE continues to be an accessible, closer to home option for students seeking a study-away program. Visit wou.edu/nse to learn more about NSE or read this recent article published on today.wou.edu that highlights a WOU student's NSE experience: <https://today.wou.edu/2022/01/03/national-student-exchange-program-creates-opportunities-for-students/>.

Basic Needs Coordinator

WOU was able to hire a Basic Needs Coordinator as a result of State funding for all the campuses. The Basic Needs Coordinator provides support and assistance to WOU students who are impacted by but not limited to: homelessness, housing insecurity, food and financial insecurity. The Basic Needs coordinator is knowledgeable on a wide range of resources to ensure students are aware of all benefits and resources available to them, provide culturally specific resources for prospective and current students and their families and support students in applying for these benefits. The Basic Needs Coordinator also oversees the Western Oregon University Food Pantry.

Men's Rugby Team Places 3rd at the National Collegiate Rugby Championships

The WOU Men's Rugby team capped an unprecedented season by finishing 3rd at the National Collegiate Rugby Small College Championships in Houston, Texas. The team [qualified](#) for the national championships after winning their conference and regional championships this fall. After a loss in the national semi-finals, their victory in the 3rd-place match was especially impressive as the team was down to zero substitutes (due to injuries and some players being unable to make the trip). Despite this, the team used a [late comeback](#) to defeat the College of Charleston by a score of 32-24 to capture 3rd place.

Board of Trustees Report—February 16, 2022

Ryan J. Hagemann, Vice President & General Counsel, Board Secretary

Board's Office

- Dedicated significant time and effort to WOU's presidential search, including working with Committee Chair Gayle Evans, the presidential search committee, and Anthem Executive, the search firm assisting the board and university with the search.
- Worked with the Office of the Governor on Board vacancies and the new processes by which all state board and commission vacancies are filled
- Worked with Board Secretaries and the Oregon Council of Presidents on upcoming Association of Governing Boards (AGB) study on best practices for university governing boards; reviewed draft AGB report and prepared for legislative session
- Participated in the Public University Board Secretary group

Office of the General Counsel (including legal services and risk management)

- Provided substantial legal advice on COVID-related matters, including interpretation of state and federal guidance.
- Continued work, after the June 2021 board presentation, on cultural competency programming and requirements, including speaker presentations to both faculty and staff, and focus on assessment efforts
- Reviewed and processed nearly 150 contracts since November 2021, including many expedited contracts for emergency work and no-cost extensions and changes to grant documents
- Reviewed and processed multiple public records requests
- Conducted numerous investigations for complaints and grievances; advised and appeared in grievance hearings
- Settled or resolved all pending matters, including arbitrations and grievances, held with PURMIT and/or university
- Continued work with PURMIT and the Risk Council on insurance renewals, including PURMIT meeting for FY22 renewals

- Provided substantial advice on various legal matters from the Board Chair, the president, and presidential cabinet members
- Continued collective outside counsel work on behalf of all four TRU institutions on new capital construction contract templates
- Continued work on documenting insurance information for DeVolder Building loss
- Successfully achieved a tentative agreement with WOUFT on salary reopener negotiations
- Advised and negotiated on K-12 requirements for placing student-teachers after state's K-12 vaccination mandate
- Assisted the Oregon Council of Presidents (OCOP), as its fiscal agent, with an RFP for a higher education landscape study
- Completed FY2021 HB 2214 on outside counsel
- Continued revision of the university's new procurement code
- Continued revision of multiple contract and agreement templates for use by campus units, including but not limited to internship placement agreements, intergovernmental agreements, and partnership agreements
- Continued weekly HR advice meetings
- Continued monthly Facilities advice meetings
- Continued to process outstanding visas and permanency residency paperwork
- Participated in president's cabinet meetings
- Participated in bi-weekly COVID safety group meetings
- Participated in UDIAC meetings
- Participated in SEIU bargaining advisory group meetings
- Participated in Joint Labor Management Committee meeting for both WOUFT and SEIU
- Participated in the Public University General Counsels group

- Participated in Public University Risk Management and Insurance Trust (PUMRIT meetings)
- Participated in Public University Risk Council meetings
- Participated Public University COVID Legal Group meetings
- Attended quarterly PURMIT meeting
- Convened office in annual planning retreat

Board of Trustees Report – February 16, 2022

Dr. Ana Karaman, Vice President for Finance & Administration/CFO

The Finance & Administration division continues to make efforts in implementing its 2019-23 divisional strategic plan in support of the university strategic plan. Over the last three months, the division made the following significant accomplishments:

Finance & Administration Newsletters:

- [Click here](#) to view the Winter 2022 Finance & Administration Newsletter.

Quasi Endowment Performance:

- [Click here](#) to view the WOU quasi endowment investment values as of 12/31/21.

American Rescue Plan (ARP) Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund

Round 2 of HEERF ARP disbursements was completed on January 18th, 2022.

Student Information / # of Recipients		Amount
Preference: Apply to AR Balance	1,200	\$367,909.70
Preference: Direct Payment	2,322	\$1,233,790.30
Total	3,522	\$1,601,700.00
New Pell Rec. (Enhanced Award)	112	\$67,200.00
All other eligible students	3,410	\$1,534,500.00
Total	3,522	\$1,601,700.00

- New Pell recipients (112) received an enhanced award of \$600.00.
- All other eligible students (3,410) received the base award of \$450.00.

Round 1 of HEERF ARP disbursements was completed on October 18, 2021.

Student Information / # of Recipients		Amount
Preference: Apply to AR Balance	1,306	\$822,382.60
Preference: Direct Payment	2560	\$3,059,017.40
Total	3,866	\$3,881,400.00
Pell Recipients (Enhanced Award)	1,340	\$1,608,000.00
Non-Pell Recipients	2,526	\$2,273,400.00
Total	3,866	\$3,881,400.00

- Pell Recipients (1,340) received an enhanced award of \$1,200.00.
- Non-Pell Recipients (2,528) received the base award of \$900.00.

University Computing Solutions (Bill Kernan):

- University Computing Solutions (UCS) hired Pamela Farr, a Database Warehouse Programmer.
- Kolis Crier continues to co-lead the development of the Finance & Administration Internship program.
- Shea Hawes continues to support the phased successful rollout of Web Time Entry. All unclassified professional employees are scheduled to be on Web Time Entry for February 2022 payroll.
- 95% of campus network connections have been moved to a private network, reducing our attack surface from the outside world.
- Banner Financial Aid has been installed in non-Prod and is currently being validated by Ellucian Professional Services.

Treasury Services (Darin Silbernagel):

- The net cash position as of December 31, 2021 is \$32,100,973.
- For the next 6 months, the total projected inflow is projected at \$64,474,029.
- For the next 6 months, the total projected outflows are \$73,727,858.
- The projected ending cash position is \$22,847,144 across all funds.
- [Click here](#) to view the January Cash Flow Narrative and Cash Flow Forecast.

Budget & Planning Office (Camarie Moreno):

- FY23 budget development is underway.
- The Tuition and Fee Advisory Committee (TFAC) is comprised and working on its recommendation to the President for undergraduate resident tuition rate increase.

Accounting & Business Services (ABS) (Shadron Lehman):

- The ABS office completed the 2021 Financial Statements.
- Eide Bailey has completed the audit of the Financial Statements and the Single Audit.
- The ABS office is in the process of preparing withdrawals, third party billings, and the annual 1099, 1098T, and 1098E forms.
- Paloma Larsen recently joined the ABS team as a Revenue Agent 2.

Capital Planning & Construction (Michael Smith):

- The next Capital Construction Funding requests are due April 4, 2022.
- The Student Success Mission Development Task Force is finalizing its work. The RFQ for design services for the Student Success Center was posted and responses are due February 3, 2022.

Campus Public Safety (Rebecca Chiles):

- Public Safety Officers will participate in a racial justice training in February 2022.
- Parking Services is working on electric vehicle (EV) chargers for the campus.
- The Occupational and Environmental Health and Safety (O&EHS) Officer is working on OSHA required training.
- Campus Public Safety completed a self-defense training for students.

Facilities Services (Rebecca Chiles):

- Facilities Services is working on upgrading the software program.
- Facilities Services is remodeling offices in Administration Building.

Freedom Center (Makana Waikiki & Michaela Loggins)

- Michaela Loggins is currently serving as an Interim Co-Director.
- The Freedom Center has proposed the following activities for winter term:
 - Black History Month Activities
 - Self-Care & Self-Love Events
 - Women's History Month Activities
- The Executive Director of Equity and Inclusion (DEI) will become the Advisor for the Freedom Center once recruited.

Human Resources (HR) & Payroll (Heather Mercer):

- Payroll has made significant process on the implementation of Web-Time Entry, and all unclassified staff will be using Web-Time Entry in February.
- HR has recently collected and processed the annual classified vacation payouts and put everything in place to process unclassified payout for the first time.
- The SEIU CBA was ratified in December; HR is now processing necessary changes including COLA, Pandemic Bonuses, and getting ready for upcoming Salary Selectives. Mediation with WOU-FT is complete, and they will hopefully ratify by February 5, 2022.
- Human Resources has created the new sick leave code to track the use of COVID sick leave.
- HR recently moved all Employment Authorization and Pay Adjust tracking to Google Signature. It has made signatures and processing much more efficient.
- There are currently 33 open positions through recruitment.

Board of Trustees Report – February 16, 2022
Randi Lydum, Executive Director for Intercollegiate Athletics

Intercollegiate Athletics has resumed a full competitive schedule for all sports this year. The fall seasons went well with little disruption but men's and women's basketball has been more challenging due to the COVID variants. After cancelling the entire 2020-21 basketball season, the GNAC has been committed to rescheduling postponed games this season due to COVID, which has affected all of our conference teams. The GNAC has also reconfigured the conference tournament to reflect participation by all 10 teams to optimize the student-athlete experience.

Baseball, Softball and Track & Field are underway and we are optimistic that outdoor sports will have fewer COVID related issues this season. The GNAC and NCAA have set minimum COVID protocols for member institutions but have encouraged athletic departments to work within state and local guidance to determine standards for each campus. Student athletes and athletic staff continue to participate in surveillance testing prior to travel and competition if not fully vaccinated.

Our student athletes continue to perform well academically by achieving a 3.16 department GPA this past term and earning an 81% Academic Success Rate. 38 WOU student athletes earned Academic All-Conference this fall (men's and women's cross country, football, women's soccer and volleyball).

Fall athletic awards: Football-10 GNAC Player of the Week, 16 GNAC All-Conference, and 2 All-American (second team and honorable mention). Women's Soccer- 2 GNAC Player of the Week, 5 GNAC All-Conference. Volleyball- 1 GNAC Player of the Week, 1 GNAC All-Conference. Cross Country- 2 GNAC Runner of the Week, 2 GNAC All-Conference, GNAC Newcomer of the Year and 2 NCAA All-West Region.

Board of Trustees Report—February 16, 2022

David McDonald, Associate Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Public Affairs

Government Relations

State

The Oregon Legislature is in the midst of higher than normal change. The Senate President has announced his retirement at the end of his term in 2022. The Speaker of the House has resigned to focus on her run to be the next Governor. The House minority leader resigned for the same reason. The new Speaker of the House, Dan Rayfield, is an alumni of WOU.

The majority party (Democrats) has announced three policy priorities for the short session: housing, economic recovery for all Oregonians, and workforce development. For the session there were 250 policy bills introduced. This is Governor Brown's final legislative session as Governor. Her major legislative priority is Future Ready Oregon, a workforce development policy package.

WOU priorities for the 2022 Session include:

- Funding for the replacement of the main steam pipe--\$16.4M
- Funding to cover the increased cost of the Student Success Center--\$4.2M *
- Funding to support Year 2 of Destination Western--\$1.2M*
- Funding to support the replacement of the turf, re-surfacing of the track and new lighting for the stadium to support men's and women's soccer and football--\$4.1M
- Funding to support the SEIU hazard pay for workers during COVID-19--\$275K*

*This item is part of the public university shared agenda

Federal

Working with staff from Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden to develop the Fiscal Year '23 requests for funding under the Congressionally Directed Funding. One of WOU's '22 requests is still in the funding queue for possible federal appropriations. That request would provide \$1M to support the start-up costs of new health science programs such as Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy. It is anticipated that WOU will submit at least 4 requests for fiscal year '23.

As a result of the national census results in 2020, Oregon will gain a 6th congressional seat. The Congressional districting process moved WOU from the 5th Congressional District to the new 6th Congressional District. WOU alumna Teresa Alonso Leon, current state Representative, has announced her candidacy for this new congressional seat.

Strategic Initiatives

COVID-19 Safety Team

I continued to chair the COVID-19 Safety Response Team that has coordinated campus policies and practices designed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. As part of this work I have secured 125,000 face coverings at no cost from Oregon's stockpiles. I am also coordinating with OHA and Salem Health the provision of weekly vaccination clinics on the WOU campus.

Strategic Enrollment

The weekly meeting of this group of WOU staff and administrators has identified 16 action areas that are to be pursued in an effort to maximize enrollment. Significant progress has been made by this collaborative and cross-campus team.

Health Sciences

I have collaborated with the faculty team that is developing the Doctorate of Occupational Therapy proposal. In addition, I continue to advocate to the Oregon Legislature for Capital funding to renovate APSC so that it can become the Health Sciences Building that would house the OTD and DPT programs.

Workforce Development

Working with a WOU team and SEIU Oregon SWEETER has been developed. This \$5M proposal would provide state workers the opportunity to receive training and for credit courses to complete their degrees or certificates.

Board of Trustees Report – February 16, 2022

Erin McDonough, Executive Director of Advancement & WOU Foundation

WOU Foundation & Development

Mission: To strengthen, serve and support Western Oregon University.

Gifts:

Through Jan. 31, 2022 – committed: 2,857 gifts totaling \$2,624,286 (increase of \$2,064,292); received: \$2,508,960 (increase of \$1,961,997).

- \$100,000 plus:
 - Dr. Woodcock’s pledge payment and an additional gift
 - An increase in the Joseph E Weston Scholarship for Willamette Promise students
 - James and Shirley Rippey Family Foundation’s annual gift for scholarships
- \$50,000 – 99,999
 - Unitus Community Credit Union 3-year pledge for a cohort of Bilingual Teacher Scholars
 - A stock gift for scholarships from the Rowland family
 - Local fans’, Ron & Rosie Boitz, gift to Softball and Volleyball scholarships
 - Passionate supporter Lance Marr’s gifts to Men’s Basketball
 - Dr. John Pavlicek’s gift to scholarships
- \$20,000 – 49,999
 - Mario & Alma Pastega Family Foundation’s gift to support Linn Benton Community College students who attend WOU
 - WOU Foundation Board member and alum Pat Stineff established a scholarship endowment for students from Sweet Home High School
 - Dr. Lowell Spring’s annual gift to scholarships
 - William Bales created a discretionary fund for the Criminal Justice Department
- \$10,000 – 19,999
 - James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation gift for Rainbow Dance Theater
 - Ray & Dori Brodersen started a scholarship endowment and made their first payment
 - The Joerger Family gift will pay for a student’s housing and dining needs
 - Sylvia Alva made a payment towards her named scholarship endowment
 - Morris & Margaret Johnson started a scholarship endowment and made a payment
 - Edouard Foundation made their annual gift supporting Student Media and Food Pantry
 - Learning Disabilities Foundation of Oregon created a scholarship
- \$5,000 – 9,999 more than fifteen gifts!

Staff team: We hired a new employee, please welcome Louise Sanderson, our new Executive Assistant. We promoted Noah Carrillo to interim Advancement Finance Manager. We have one position (Gift Officer) on hold with a planned hire date of Jan. 1, 2023.

Fundraising & Outreach Events – Mark Your Calendars:

ITC Grand Reopening Open House | May 18

Wolves Athletic Auction | Saturday, June 4 | New PE

Wolves on the Green Golf Scramble supporting Women's Athletics | July 28, 2022 at McNary Golf Club

Annual Giving: Fund for WOU received the most money at year end since 2015. Response to the holiday card was overwhelming, raising \$67,266 including gifts from 186 lapsed donors.

Howl from the Heart (Giving Day):

WOU's annual day of giving, Howl from the Heart, is fast approaching on Tuesday, March 1. On this day students, alumni, staff, faculty, parents, and friends are encouraged to IMPACT WOU's campus community. Howl from the Heart raises necessary funds to provide the resources current and future students need to be successful as they pursue their education!

Our goal for this year is to raise a total of \$250,000 in support of various scholarships, programs, and clubs on WOU's campus. To make your gift and for more information visit wou.edu/givingday!

WOU Foundation Board of Trustees: New members include Chester Anonson '10 of US Bank, Kevin Alejandrez '16 a PhD candidate, and Sonja Fenton of Schnitzer Steel. Tina Fuchs has joined the board as staff senate representative.

Comprehensive Campaign

Our engagement with CCS Fundraising is in the final stages. They will be presenting their plan at the meeting on Feb. 16 and to the WOU Foundation Board on March 12.

Smith Fine Arts Series (SFAS)

Smith Fine Arts Series believes that live performing arts contribute to richer, fuller lives - and everyone deserves that opportunity. SFAS provides access to quality cultural experiences and enrich lives throughout Polk County and beyond.

44th Annual Season is underway, [online ticketing](#) is available.

- Mar. 12 – Seamus Egan Project
- Apr. 2 – Thalea String Quartet

Alumni Engagement

Holiday Tree Lighting: On Dec. 3 this annual event drew a nice crowd to campus and Alumni Engagement was able to greet guests and make their experience extra special by serving hot beverages. This volunteer opportunity for board members and Foundation staff provided a fun way to interact with donors, parents, students and alumni. The beverage tents were set up in a new location and provided opportunities to monitor and control the flow of traffic, greet people as they arrived and manage service.

Alumni Board: At the January 8 Board Meeting, the Alumni Board of Directors voted in three new members, Sheila Lorange, Bobby O'Donnell '88 and Corey Meisch '99. All three of these new members will officially start their terms on July 1 but will attend meetings and participate as volunteers throughout the year.

New Student Assistant: Aliyah Favela '22 was hired as the alumni engagement assistant; she is a senior and a first-generation college student. She will graduate in June and has her eyes on going to law school.

Networking events: In January, the Alumni Board of Directors restarted the monthly "Alumni & Friends After Hours" networking events. January's event was virtual and held via Zoom. We are hoping to begin coming together in person again for these events in February or March.

Alumni Award of Excellence: Nominations for the 2022 Alumni Award of Excellence are due March 18. To nominate someone, fill out the nomination form found [here](#).

Outreach: Monthly enews – PawPrints – continues.

Strategic Communications & Marketing

Media relations

- Worked with Unitus Community Credit Union to promote gift and partnership
- Handled media inquiries

Staff Team

- Welcomed new Senior Graphic Designer, Eric Jones
- Two open positions: Digital Marketing Manager and part-time Bilingual/Bicultural Translator

Website

- Created new giving pages for different departments/groups
- Moved viewbook online: <https://wou.edu/admission/viewbook/>
- Worked with a variety of campus departments to update sites including: Institutional Research, Campus Rec and International Admissions
- Regularly updated wou.edu/coronavirus pages
- Daily maintenance of thousands of wou.edu pages
- Daily tech support and trainings for campus community

Graphic design & marketing

- Updates to 30+ Academic fliers for Admissions
- Completed ad buys: Catholic newsletters, billboards, Portland Trail Blazers
- Started new two-month campaign of Spanish radio ads
- Creation of student communications guide (pending)
- Established communications partnership with Willamette Education Service District (WESD)
- Holiday Tree Lighting promotion, participation and giveaways
- Maintained current ad buy on Spotify; Facebook/Instagram; Google; in Airport
- Support admissions' email campaigns as needed with text and graphics

Campus support

- Consults with 13 academic programs for marketing proposals/grant applications
- Taught "Grammar is not a dirty word" 10-week class for campus community

Special Project – Wolfie makeover

- Coordination of costume design and production to better align with logos
- Roll out including social media and event
- Creation of Wolfie style guide to support consistency

Board of Trustees Report – February 16, 2022
Dr. Rob Winningham, Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs***Marketing RFP***

We just released the request for proposals for the second year of academic program marketing funds. Earlier this year we awarded 13 internal grants, for a total of \$65,000 to academic programs to do targeted marketing and outreach efforts.

We will be prioritizing proposals that:

- have the potential to bring new students to WOU,
- have identified their target audience,
- can be directed and implemented by faculty, and
- have a clear strategy to continue recruitment after initial contact with a prospective student is made.

For more information, the link to the application and tips for creating successful proposals, please visit the [program marketing webpage](#).

College Restructure

At present, our academic programs are organized into two colleges, a structure arising more from history than strategy. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has eight divisions spanning traditional liberal arts and sciences along with professional and pre-professional programs. The College of Education has three divisions that encompass far more than educator preparation programs. This structure served us well once. But over time, and through the evolution of programs and student interests, this structure may have created silos and workload inequities for academic program leaders, faculty and staff. As we consider developing new programs at new degree levels (e.g., professional doctorates), now is the time to re-examine, re-align and re-balance WOU's academic programs so that our structures serve our current needs and position us to thrive in the future.

This restructuring has the potential to:

- Create a home unit for new health-related programs
- Transform and make transparent how academic program leaders are equitably compensated in terms of release time and stipends
- Improve workload equity in advising and committee service by creating academic units that are more comparable in size and complexity
- Organize academic programs in a way that supports innovation and interdisciplinary collaboration, and program sustainability

Participants in the College Restructure Taskforce will engage in this process with a workload equity lens, and will seek to align similar programs or programs that may be better able to collaborate.

Expected Outcomes.

- Research and report on how other universities structure their academic programs, and articulate common models for universities of a similar size and budget to WOU, including at least some of [WOU's peer institutions](#).
- Propose a new academic unit structure and formula for program leadership structure and compensation that uses existing resources (e.g., department head releases, program coordinator releases, division chair releases, division chair stipends, and all staff in the colleges).
- Propose a new academic unit structure that is more balanced, with the goal of making leadership, advising loads and service loads more equitable.
- Propose a new academic unit structure that could incorporate a possible home for health-related programs.
- Propose a new academic unit structure that considers aligning programs in a way that maximizes collaboration and synergy.
- Produce a report by September 15, 2022.
- Present the above at two campus town halls in the Fall of 2022 and share the taskforce's information with students.

Membership. The Taskforce will include:

4 deans

12 divisional representatives - names collected by Faculty Senate

2 division APAs (one from LAS and one from COE) - names collected by Staff Senate

1 additional staff member from Academic Affairs - names collected by Staff Senate

Human Resources Designee – ex officio

Keats Chaves, Provost Office – ex officio

Additional people could be invited to provide supporting information (e.g., budget, facilities, IR, legal, career services)

NWCCU Accreditation Update

WOU will submit its Year Six Policies, Regulations and Financial Resources Review to NWCCU by March 1, 2022. Dozens of staff and faculty have contributed to this report which provides evidence of WOU's infrastructure, policies and practices to support student success in transparent, sustainable and accountable ways.

Library and Academic Innovation

- The Library has received a \$14,889.49 [Communities for Immunity Grant Award](#) to work with internal and external partners to boost COVID-19 vaccine confidence in the local community. Congratulations to Stewart Baker for his successful application, and thank you to our WOU faculty partners and the Sponsored Projects Office for their help and support!
- The Library continues to be open [regular hours](#) to provide WOU students with a safe indoor space to spread out and study.
- As part of the campus COVID-19 Safety Team response, the Library distributed thousands of KN95 masks to WOU employees and students; this work is still underway.
- Academic Innovation continues to offer a mixture of [new and ongoing programs](#) to support teaching and learning at WOU.
- This February, Academic Innovation will be hosting a book club each Thursday at 4 pm for bell hooks' Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope. All are welcome to join! [RSVP for Teaching Community Book Club!](#)

Detailed Update: Collection Development Changes. The Library is implementing our new [Collection Development Plan](#).

More than a decade ago, the library moved from primarily subscribing to academic journals to a model in which we focused more on purchasing individual articles as students, faculty, and staff need them. At that time, the average cost of an academic journal across disciplines was approximately \$1000 per year, per title (this is often significantly higher in STEM fields). Within the first year of that change, we saved more than \$25,000 and within 3 years, we were saving more than \$50,000 annually, while giving our community access to very wide selection of resources.

WOU's Participation in the Statewide OER Program. Since 2015, the statewide OER Program has provided community colleges and public universities with funding for various OER programs. As you can see from the table below, WOU faculty are actively engaged with these valuable programs. While everyone loves to see students saving money, the OER community (including Oregon) is also increasingly bringing diversity, equity and inclusion efforts into the conversation.

Statewide OER Program	# of WOU Instructors	Total Funding to WOU	Student Savings
OER Review	43	\$9,846.00	\$124,600.00
Course Redesign	25	\$25,146.00	\$186,613.77

EOE Faculty Cohort	17	\$8,679.99	\$0.00. (Funds are used to improve courses with a DEI lens.)
Grant Funding*	NA	\$52,459.00	\$406,439.52
TOTALS		\$96,120.99	\$717,653.29

*Grant funding numbers reflect 2015-2021 academic years.

WOU's OER Stipend Program. WOU's OER Stipend Program launched in January 2020, shortly before WOU faculty transitioned to remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All stipend recipients, therefore, redesigned their courses at the same time they were dealing with the effects of the pandemic on their students, themselves, and their families. Kudos to all of them!

The chart below provides information collected at the end of the 2020-2021 academic year. At the end of the 2021-2022 academic year, Cohort 2 savings will also be collected and included. Cohort 3 savings will then be added the following year, Cohort 4 the next year, etc. Grayed out numbers reflect estimates only.

Year	Cohort 1* Savings	Cohort 2 Savings	Cohort 3 Savings	Yearly Savings	Total Savings
2020-2021	\$122,900	NA	NA	\$122,900.00	\$122,900.00
2021-2022	\$122,900	\$64,200	NA	\$187,100	\$310,000.00
2022-2023	\$122,900	\$64,200	NA	\$187,100	\$497,100.00

*Cohort 1 Funding = \$30,000. Subsequent Cohorts' Funding = \$15,000/cohort.

Student Success and Advising

Student Success and Advising (SSA) continues to push new student success initiatives, in addition to serving key student populations through direct advising services. In Fall 2021, SSA hosted just shy of 800 student appointments. Key student populations served by SSA include students on academic probation, exploring/undeclared students, and pre-nursing.

In addition to their usual work (below), our Degree Completion advisors are currently collaborating with Financial Aid on timely outreach to students who withdraw from courses after the census date (~75 students in Fall term) to make them aware of their options and create a plan for re-enrollment, whether in the current or future term.

Degree Completion Numbers as of Winter 2022		
Category	# DC students	Comments
Outreach		
Total students on outreach list	278	~ 20 new adds each term
Graduation		
Total DC graduates (as of Fall 2019)	221	
Graduates of Fall 2021	72	HEERF played a major role in this #
Anticipated Winter 2022	14	
Re-Enrollment or Continued Enrollment After DC Outreach		
Fall 2021	92	
Winter 2022	77	
In contact for Spring 2022 or Fall 2022 re-enrollment	8	
Grants and Financial Assistance		
DC Students who received HEERF Grants	42	Total HEERF recipients: 57
Students with A/R holds, don't qualify for HEERF	42	
DC students that could graduate in 1 term with a HECC grant	~46	

With the hiring and onboarding of a new Student Success and Advising Director, Paige Jackson was underway, SSA has refocused efforts on retention and other student success metrics through advising and related student support services. Currently, goals and priorities for SSA include:

- Working with New Student and Family Programs and other key stakeholders to develop a robust advising and onboarding experience for new incoming first year and transfer students, with the goal of increasing retention and persistence to a second term and year. This work includes orientation programming, Destination Western, as well as New Student Week activities.
- Working with Institutional Research and Academic Innovation, as well as other key stakeholders, to identify and implement academic interventions for key courses with high enrollments and high DFW rates. Specifically, SSA is making plans to build on its current tutoring offerings to implement a Supplemental Instruction program as well as implement early interventions based on Canvas course data.
- Implementing predictive analytics and early advising interventions for students who are most at-risk of attrition, based on first term academic performance as well as pre-enrollment characteristics.

- Targeted interventions for first year exploring students, who are less likely to be retained than declared students, to encourage early career and major exploration and declaration.
- Enhancing the quality and consistency of advising through the development of an advisor training program and resources, available to all faculty and professional advisors.

Academic Effectiveness

Assessment Reporting. 93% of academic programs completed their 2020-21 Annual Program Assessment Reports by December 31, 2021. Since Dec. 31, two additional programs have submitted reports, leaving only 2 reports outstanding. In comparison, only 77% of programs submitted 2019-20 Annual Program Assessment Reports. Mike Baltzley, Associate Provost for Academic Effectiveness, is in the process of reviewing the submitted reports and will provide feedback to each of the programs during the Winter term.

Mike Baltzley also met with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee to discuss changes to the Assessment Reporting process in response to a survey that the Faculty Senate performed last spring. Those conversations are on-going.

Program Review. All Program Reviews that began in the 2019-20 academic year have been completed after being delayed by COVID in the Winter and Spring 2020 terms. Executive Summaries for Economics, Criminal Justice, Gerontology, and Theatre Arts have been posted to the Academic Effectiveness web site: <https://wou.edu/academic-effectiveness/review-summary/>. Of the 10 programs that began their review process in 2020-21, one is complete (Chemistry), four are complete except for the Executive Summaries, and five are still in progress. Nine programs began their program review process in the Fall 2021 term.

Syllabus Update. Faculty are expected to include a number of elements on their course syllabuses and to submit their syllabuses to their Division APA for archiving. A review of 24 randomly selected syllabuses (2 from each division and 2 from courses that do not belong to a specific division) showed that only 79% of syllabuses are archived. Additionally, on average, the reviewed syllabuses had only 87% of the required elements. The most common missing elements were the course CRN (missing from 58% of syllabuses) and Course Goals (42%).

Academic Innovation is working with Academic Effectiveness to create a syllabus creation system in Canvas that should help improve the consistency of syllabuses across campus and improve our archiving of syllabuses.

Institutional Research

The Institutional Research (IR) Office continues to complete 20-30 *ad hoc* requests for data each month. The IR Office is preparing to distribute 10-15 reports for Division Chairs during week 5 of the Winter 2022 term. Some of the reports will continue to be distributed quarterly, others will be distributed annually. The Division Chairs reports will include:

- Community college feeders by program and division
- DFW rates by course
- Student Credit Hours (SCH) taught by program
- Enrollment per section
- Number of students per program

Graduate Studies and Research

Graduate Programs. Overall, graduate student enrollment has remained fairly steady from Fall 2021 to Winter 2022.

Program	Fall 2021	Winter 2022
MS Education	62	65
MA Teaching	72	75
MS Special Education	64	63
MS Educational Technology	24	22
MS Management & Information Systems	1	
MS Rehabilitation Counseling	44	42
MA Criminal Justice	18	21
MA Interpreting Studies	36	29
MS Deaf & Hard of Hearing Education	1	1
MM Contemporary Music	6	5
MA Organizational Leadership	38	37
End/Auth/CTL (only)	6	7
Specializations (only)	5	4
Certificate (only)	10	8
Total	387	379

**Enrollment as of January 14, 2022.*

This Fall, the Graduate Student Advisory Council to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research was formed. During the first meeting students suggested providing term events that would be made available to both in-person and online students. We will be holding our first event at the WOU: Salem campus on February 25, 2022.

The new Advanced Juvenile Justice Studies Certificate launched this Fall, 2021 and we already have 5 graduate students who have completed the program and 3 graduate students who have re-enrolled to pursue the program.

Sponsored Projects Office

In FY 2021, the Sponsored Projects Office (SPO) helped submit 68 external funding proposals. The proposals were led by 39 different faculty and staff members from across campus and totaled just under \$23 million in requested funding. This is up from FY 2020, in which 55 proposals were submitted with close to \$20 million in requested funding. FY 2021 WOU proposals are faring well; as of January 14, 2022, 41 of the 68 proposals have been funded totaling close to \$11.7 million in new awards so far.

For FY 2022, we're continuing to see an upward trend in grant submissions. As of January 14, 2022, 33 proposals have been submitted, seeking over \$22 million in external funding. For comparison, by January 2021, 35 proposals seeking close to \$8 million in external funding had been submitted. For FY2022 proposals, 10 have been funded so far for a total of \$3.9 million in external funds.

Noteworthy FY 2022 awards include:

- The Oregon DeafBlind project at WOU has been funded by the US Dept of Education for \$2.1 million over 5 years, to help train educators in protactile communication.
- The Western Community Policing Institute (WCPI) in partnership with the newly established Western Restorative Justice and Reentry Center (WRJRC) has been funded by the US Dept. of Justice for \$400,000 over 2 years to help agencies develop strategies for pursuing justice for murdered and missing indigenous people.
- The WOU Bilingual Teacher Pathways program continues to bring in funds, including two new grants in FY 2022 from the Oregon Dept. of Education totaling \$372,047.
- The Ford Family Foundation invited WOU's Center on Early Learning and Youth Development (CEYLD) to submit a proposal that was subsequently funded for \$257,439 to help Douglas, Klamath, Lake, Coos, and Curry Counties improve their childcare resources.
- The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) awarded WOU \$491,732 to help engage and retain students.

Partnerships

- **Professional Development Workshops:** We are eager to launch our professional development workshops initiative, with five workshops centered around justice, equity, diversion, and inclusion. Our first workshop, Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (JEDI) 101 in the Workplace is scheduled to run February 17 - April 21! More information

- about these workshops can be found at wou.edu/prodev. We are also in the process of developing additional workshop opportunities.
- **Salem Chamber of Commerce:** Our WOU:Salem membership has been updated with the Salem Chamber of Commerce to give us greater visibility and access to their services, including a ribbon cutting, business spotlight, business directory listing, and the opportunity to host a “Greeters” event, which will be organized and scheduled as soon as possible.
 - **Organizational Partnerships:** We are in talks with both SEIU and Oregon Department of Administrative Services about the possibility of partnering with them for workforce development, workforce degree completion, and other professional development opportunities. These talks are in their early stages, so more to come on these initiatives at a later date.

Transfer Pathways

Chemeketa/WOU Summit: On January 6th, several operational areas (Academic Affairs, Admissions, Financial Aid, Registrar, and Student Success and Advising, and Transfer Pathways) met with our colleagues at Chemeketa to discuss how to strengthen our relationship through the development of multiple programmatic pipelines while supporting student through their transfer transition. The group what discussed what is working well and what barriers exist then brainstormed areas we could focus on for continuous improvement. Participants were then broken into affinity groups to discuss current processes through a reflective lens and identify 2-3 things we can do to enhance transfer student success.

Transfer plans: In partnership with Chemeketa, Linn-Benton, and Portland community colleges faculty, WOU continues to develop seamless transfer pathways using data to prioritize development and implementation. This process begins with aligning curriculum and creating a transfer four-year plan. Transfer plans are published on the [Transfer Pathways website](#). The table below indicates the pathways identified for development this academic year and their status.

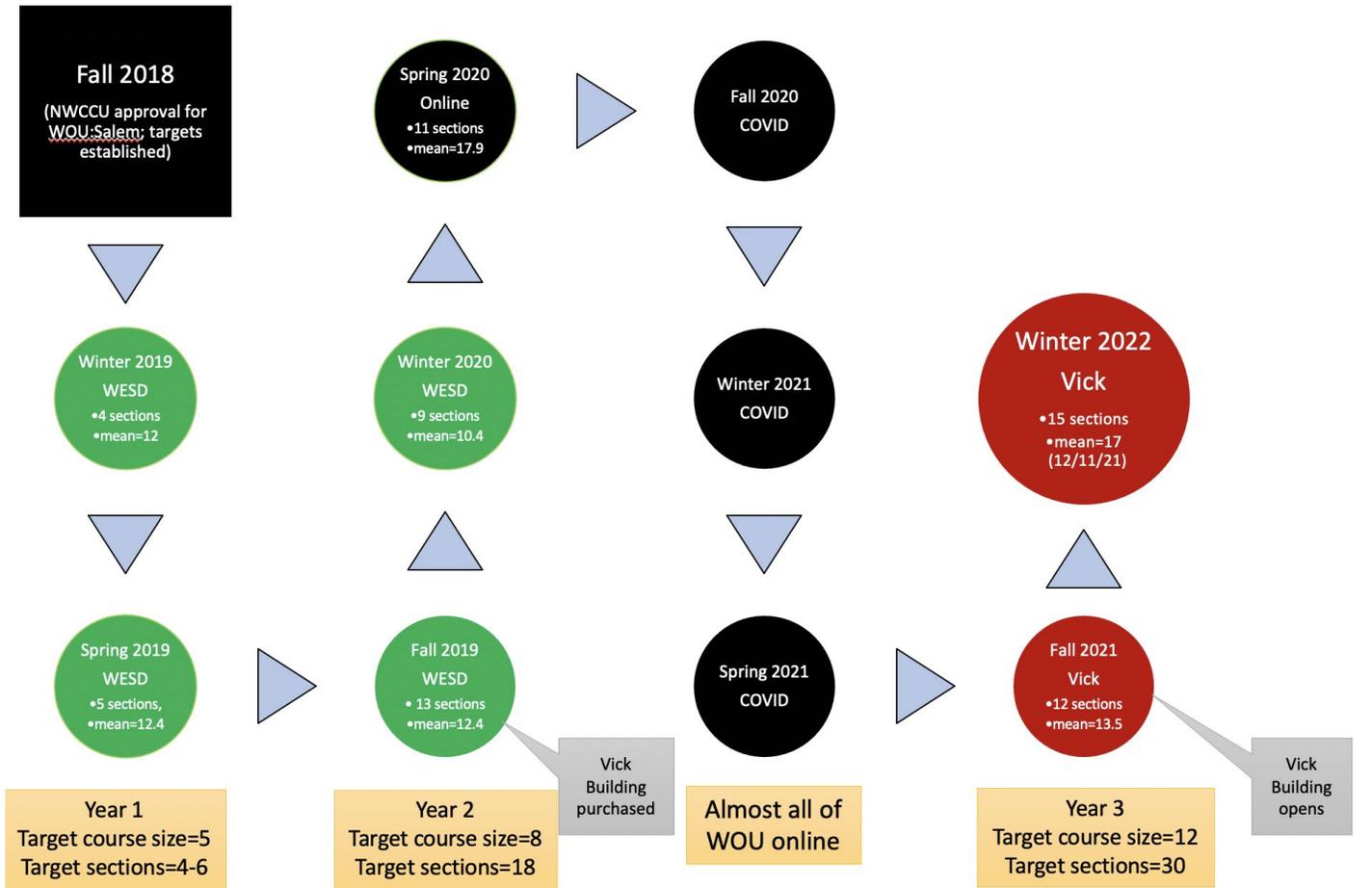
Community College	Transfer Pathway	Status
Chemeketa	Early Childhood Studies	Curriculum Aligned Fall 21
Chemeketa	Political Science	Finalizing the transfer plan
Chemeketa	Music Education	Aligning Curriculum
Clackamas	Early Childhood Studies	Curriculum Aligned Fall 21
Clackamas	Political Science	Finalizing the transfer plan

Columbus State Community College	Interpreting Studies	Aligning Curriculum
Lane	Dance	In Development
Linn-Benton	Earth Science	3 Pathways Launched Fall 2021
Linn-Benton	Criminal Justice	Aligning Equivalencies
Linn-Benton	Art	In Development
Linn-Benton	Early Childhood Studies	In Development
Linn-Benton	Human Services to Gerontology	Development begins – Winter Term 2022
Linn-Benton	Music and Music Education	Development begins – Spring Term 2022
Portland	Earth Sciences	In Development

Interdisciplinary Studies

In 2020-21, the Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS) program graduated 59 students; the average number of credits for IDS students was 192.2 and the median was 183.5, very close to the 180 credits that comprise a four-year WOU degree. In this program, students combine areas of study to meet their needs and interests. After a Fall 2021 call for IDS Advisory Board members, the IDS Advisory Board grew to eleven faculty representing Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Social Science, Humanities, Criminal Justice, Health and Exercise Science, and Libraries. This group will identify a new faculty coordinator by Spring 2022.

WOU:Salem



College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Music continues its celebration of “150 years of Music at WOU” with forthcoming events later this school year and for Giving Day. On March 12, our Music Faculty will present a faculty concert. Also in March, the WOU Chamber Singers will represent Oregon (we hope) at the Northwest Regional Conference of the American Choral Directors Association in Spokane. Over Memorial Day weekend, the combined WOU choirs will be performing Mozart's Sparrow Mass with five additional choirs from across the country, at none other than Carnegie Hall. The choral activities director, Dr. James Reddan, also has a forthcoming book to be published in May, the *Routledge Companion to Jazz and Gender*, which includes contributions from WOU faculty member Dr. Keith Karns. WOU's music student, junior Zack Vinyard, placed second in the Musical Theatre category of the Northern Oregon chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing last fall, moving him forward to the regional competition. The Chamber Singers continue their community outreach with the City of Monmouth, having performed for the George Floyd commemoration this past May and World AIDS Day at WOU last December. Finally, K&K Sound featured Dr. Dirk Freymuth, Associate Professor of Music, as Artist of the Month in December 2021. Dirk will spend part of his Winter 2022 sabbatical teaching as a guest professor in a 5-week Studio Recording workshop at The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music.

In Winter 2022, the WOU Theatre Department will present its biennial musical, *The Theory of Relativity*, under the direction of Theatre Professor Michael Phillips, with musical direction from Dr. James Reddan, and choreography from Darryl Thomas, WOU Professor of Dance. This production explores how young adults deal with their personal feelings and situations and how they develop communities based on their shared experiences. In Spring 2022, guest director Raissa Fleming will join us to direct Christopher Durang's uproarious comedy, *Baby With The Bathwater*. Fleming is an experienced professional actress and stage director from the Pacific Northwest and a long-term manager with the Oregon Cultural Trust. Her performance resume includes national theater, television and movies (a list of her credits is available on request). Valley Shakespeare Company at WOU also has a pending grant for a collaborative project with Portland's Milagro Theatre. Valley Shakespeare has also begun casting and hiring a group of exciting guest professionals and designers for the upcoming Summer 2022 production of *A Winter's Tale*.

Jen Bracy, Professor of Art, has partnered with Hamersly Library, in collaboration with other community libraries and WOU's Public Health program, in a grant-funded project to address COVID-19 vaccine confidence amongst hesitant populations in our region. "Communities for Immunity" is designed to boost COVID-19 vaccine confidence across the U.S., leveraging the unique position of museums and libraries to employ localized approaches to reach vulnerable

audiences. Jen's Graphic Design students during Winter 2022 will be producing new informational resources to help with this work.

The Computer Science Division is continuing an impactful collaboration with its [Industry Advisory Board](#) (IAB). In the last year the IAB has provided feedback on WOU's new Data Analytics major, given insight on workflow tools gaining popularity in the pandemic, and helped WOU to develop an upcoming Information Technology certificate. The thoughtful engagement from the members of the IAB has been invaluable to the Computer Science Division. Assuming that the pandemic cooperates, we also hope to resume hosting the Oregon Gaming Project finals at WOU next May. We are all collectively crossing our fingers for this to happen. Also in May, the Math Department hopes to resume hosting Sonia Kovalesky Day and its Math Recognition Night.

We'd like to congratulate our two faculty members in Gerontology. Dr. Melissa Cannon, Associate Professor of Gerontology, on being elected President of the Oregon Gerontological Association (OGA) for 2022. The OGA is a statewide network of professionals in the field of aging. Dr. Margaret Manoogian, Professor of Gerontology, was recently appointed by Mayor Chuck Bennett to the City of Salem Center 50+ Advisory Board.

In our Humanities Division, the English Studies program is proud to announce that its alumna Chelsea Hunt was recently featured in a WOUTV video about the excellence of WOU (and its English Studies program). That video can be located here: <https://www2.wou.edu/nora/woutv.video.viewer?pvideoid=1686> Dr. Rob Troyer, Professor of Linguistics, has begun working with his eighth Linguistics Research Assistant funded by the Community Internship Program. This term, they will begin setting up practicums at local English as a Second Language programs for this year's cohort of Teaching English as a Foreign Language Certificate students. Dr. Dana Schowalter, Associate Professor of Communication Studies, has won the Top Paper award from the Central States Communication Association Convention. She will present this work in Madison, Wisconsin, later this year.

In our Social Science Division, Dr. Kimberly Jensen, Professor of History, received the 2019-2020 [Charles DeBenedetti Prize in Peace History](#) from the Peace History Society. Her article, "[A 'Disloyal' and 'Immoral' Woman 'In Such a Responsible Place': M. Louise Hunt's Refusal to Purchase a Liberty Bond, Civil Liberties, and Female Citizenship in the First World War.](#)" originally appeared in *Peace & Change* 44, no. 2 (April 2019): 139-68. Dr. Mark Henkels, Professor of Political Science, has been invited to be on the keynote panel on the Rural-Urban Divide in Oregon Politics on April 5, 2022 at Linfield University. This is part of an annual spring summit organized by Linfield University's Learning Across Borders ([LAB](#)) program. WOU's Model United Nations, under the direction of Dr. Mary Pettenger, will attend the Northwest Model U.N. Conference in Portland from February 18th-20th (having pivoted from its original plans to attend an

international conference in Nuremberg, Germany that had to be moved to a virtual format).

Criminal Justice is preparing to launch its new program in Cybercrime Investigation and Enforcement next fall, along with its new Master of Justice Studies. The annual CJ Day will take place virtually on Wednesday, March 2. Our Business & Economics division is currently searching for a Professional Advisor to assist with the large number of majors. Several of the programs in our Natural Sciences & Mathematics Division are currently undergoing program review and, consequently, are exploring new pathways for integrating student research into the academic experience.

Dean Kathy Cassity, along with Service Learning & Career Development Director Dr. Adry Clark, continue to co-chair the American Council of Education's Learner Success Lab. At the time of this writing, we are preparing for a virtual site visit on February 10 by our ACE facilitator, Dr. Mary Churchill of Boston University, along with two peer reviewers—Dr. Virginia Fraire, Associate Provost at University of Texas-El Paso, and Dr. Jonathan Millen, Dean of Arts & Sciences at New England University. The visit will include a campus symposium on learner success, and we will receive guidance and recommendations from our reviewers as to possible steps WOU can take to advance learner success at our institution. A report is due to ACE in late winter term.

Dean Cassity has also formed the first Student Advisory Council to the LAS Dean, which met for the first time on January 18th. This group currently has 16 student members and plans to meet quarterly—and eventually, we hope, in person. We're also pleased to report that each division in LAS is currently planning division-level training and action steps on cultural competency, in compliance with House Bill 2864 and WOU's own Diversity Plan.

We're also happy to announce that *PURE Insights* #10 is now live at the following link: <https://digitalcommons.wou.edu/pure/> *PURE Insights*, WOU's Undergraduate Research Journal, publishes research and creative works of WOU students every year. This year, the issue features featuring works by students Neal R. Cranston, Kit Evans, Molly Gale, Trinity Herr, Gabrielle M. Miller, Erin Ross, and Josh B. Salsbury.

College of Education

Dr. Lin Wu from the Division of Education and Leadership, has been selected as the recipient of the 2022 Outstanding Dissertation Award by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education for his work titled, *Borderland Teaching of Chinese American Teachers with Mexican American Students: Toward the Development of a Theory*. Dr. Wu will travel in March to the annual meeting in New Orleans to receive the honor.

Dr. Emily Vala-Haynes and Dr. Megan Patton-Lopez continue to organize pandemic support for our region in partnership with Polk County Health and other community-based organizations. The team includes western faculty, staff and 35 current and former public health students. Since July 2020 they have provided contact tracing, health communication and direct service for area residents, Western faculty, staff, and their families. On December 10th, the team hosted their second community vaccination clinic. Over 500 vaccinations were provided and more than 200 family food boxes were distributed.

Oregon Public Broadcasting's Think Out Loud recently filmed an episode focused on the DeafBlind Interpreting program in the Research and Resource Center with Deaf* communities in the College of Education. Grant co-principal investigators CM Hall and Heather Holmes partner with lead educator, Jelica Nuccio, who is DeafBlind and a leader in the Protactile Movement. Together, they are creating a new language that is transforming communication and access for DeafBlind individuals across the country. The story has been "liked" almost 60,000 times on the OPB website. The quote below illustrates the power of this work.

"In twenty years of interviewing people, I've never experienced anything like my conversation with Jelica Nuccio, who's DeafBlind. She's one of the creators of Protactile, which is a purely physical language. Throughout the interview, Jelica and I were close enough to each other that our knees were essentially interlaced. One of my hands was on one of her knees most of the time. That's how she knew I was paying attention to her. Jelica used my other hand -- my whole upper body, really -- to communicate physically. She would sign into, or onto, my hand. She would make a shape out of my fingers and then manipulate them with hers. At other times she would draw my hand towards her chest or mine in big movements or small ones. She was using Protactile to communicate about Protactile. And because I couldn't understand that language, her interpreter Halene was watching all the physical communication in real time, and putting it into spoken English. The sheer volume and pace and complexity of the physical information she was giving me was overwhelming. So overwhelming... It was a profound experience." - Dave Miller, Think Out Loud host.