



# Diversifying the Educator Workforce

*Biennial Report in  
accordance with  
HB 3375*

**Western Oregon University**  
College of Education  
April 2020



Western Oregon  
UNIVERSITY

## **Introduction and Background**

HB 3375 (2015) Section 6 amends ORS 342.447 to read:

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall require each public teacher education program in this state to prepare a plan with specific goals, strategies, deadlines for the recruitment, admission, retention and graduation of diverse educators to accomplish the goal described in ORS 342.437.

“The goal of the state is that the percentage of diverse educators employed by a school district or an education service district should reflect the percentage of diverse students in the public schools of this state or the percentage of diverse students in the district” (ORS 342.437 as amended by HB 3375, Section 3, 2015).

In support of the state goal for school districts and education service districts, teacher preparation programs at public universities will plan to increase the diversity of the teacher candidate pool through recruitment, retention, and graduation efforts. The goal for the educator equity plans is that the teacher candidate pool will be as diverse as the high school graduating class from which they are recruited.

In accordance with these goals, Western Oregon University submits the following biennial report on progress to date.

## **University-Wide Context**

The educator programs at Western Oregon University reside in the College of Education and include many different pathways to preliminary teacher licensure. For this report, data will be sorted by undergraduate pathways (UG) and graduate pathways (GR) as the mechanisms, supports, opportunities, and constraints vary in important ways between these.

Western Oregon University has a longstanding commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion and the University Diversity Inclusion Advisory Council (UDIAC) is the major driver for progress, planning, and delivery of innovation in this area. UDIAC bears the responsibility of updating and organizing progress toward the University Diversity Strategic Plan.

Recently, Western was identified as an Emerging Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) – the only four-year public university in Oregon – by the Hispanic Association of College and Universities (HACU). This means that Western is well on the way toward serving a Latinx student enrollment of at least 25%. UDIAC is coordinating efforts to meet the challenges and opportunities associated with a commitment to becoming an HSI and campus-wide efforts are unfolding to achieve this goal.

Additionally, Western Oregon University has a longstanding “reverse achievement gap” meaning that the graduation rates for our non-white students exceeds that of our white students. For example, the most recent available data for 6-year graduation rates (industry standard) for white students was 41.2% and for Latinx students was 46.8% (Office of Institutional Research). This is a decade-long trend on our campus and speaks to our history of success in serving a diverse student population.

Western Oregon University has a strong portfolio of academic success programs including Multicultural Student Services and Programs (MSSP), the Student Enrichment Program (SEP), and Upward Bound. Each of these programs provide one-on-one support for students, mentoring, and systematic advising for their academic majors.

Other institutional supports include the Writing Center, Math Center, English Tutoring Center, Computer Science Tutoring, Psychology Peer Tutoring, as well as free drop-in tutoring for students in all academic programs. In addition, the Academic Advising and Learning Center provides systematic and structured advising and requires that each student meets with an academic advisor each term prior to registration.

During the 2018-2019 year, several other strategies were implemented that have led to a 5-percentage point increase in freshmen to sophomore retention. These steps included:

- Nudges – WOU has had tremendous success with registration nudges organized by Student Success and Advising. If current students are not registered after registration week ends then nudges begin. They are spaced out and come from different people and include information about registration holds. For example, during the Fall 2019 registration for Winter 2020 courses, 19% of students were not registered after registration week, but after all of the nudges were employed remaining unregistered students dropped to less than 8%.
- Removed advising holds after finals week when it can be difficult to meet with an advisor. This was done with a high level of support from Student Success and Advising so students were still able to receive high quality advising.
- Students with registration holds were emailed information about how to remove holds impeding registration.
- Removed holds for students with larger past due amounts, incurring some financial risk in doing so, but expediting student enrollment.
- The Business Office has been more involved in advising students with financial matters beyond their WOU bill.
- First Year Seminars associated with our new General Education Program have been designed to help students be more successful and become more integrated into the campus community.

Western Oregon University has many qualities and practices that contribute to success for a diverse student population. It is into this rich and supportive environment that educator programs are rooted leading to success toward the goals of HB 3375.

Table 1 below shows additional key indicators relative to enrollment and retention for all students and for undergraduate education students.

Table 1. Key indicators for HB 3375 on increasing culturally and linguistically diverse teachers.\*

Indicators	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
White students at WOU (%)	61.0	61.5	62.8	65.4	67.3	69.4
Non-white students at WOU** (%)	28.5	26.6	26.6	25.1	22.0	19.0
White student freshmen to sophomore retention (%)	***	70.9	68.0	71.0	75.5	71.0
Non-white freshmen to sophomore retention (%)	***	75.5	65.8	73.4	71.4	66.8
Total Education Majors (n)	1101	1167	1142	1156	1060	953
White Education majors (n)	736	805	824	854	789	747
Non-white Education majors** (n)	279	262	239	224	180	140
White Education majors (%)	66.8	69.0	72.2	73.9	74.4	78.4
Non-white Education majors** (%)	25.3	22.5	20.9	19.4	17.0	14.7
White Education majors freshmen to sophomore retention (%)	***	75.5	77.7	76.7	80.6	78.3
Non-white Ed majors freshmen to sophomore retention (%)	***	84.0	68.4	87.8	78.4	75.0
White Education transfer students (n)	230	256	232	216	193	178
Non-white Education transfer students (n)	88	85	79	71	48	33
Total Education Major transfer students (n)	343	368	332	313	261	230

\* Data provided by WOU Institutional Research, on February 18, 2020. Based on the entire WOU student body for Fall Term and on IPEDS Freshman Cohort from Fall Term.

\*\* In addition to White and Non-White, there are those that do not report and those with multiple ethnicities that do not fit into either category.

\*\*\* Number not yet available for this year.

Table 1 indicates that WOU has a significant population of non-white students in general representing 28.5% of total students in 2019-2020. It should be noted that non-white students, in this analysis, include non-resident alien students (foreign nationals) as well as many students who identify as multiple ethnicities as per the asterisked information at the bottom of the chart.

Institutionally, the percentage of non-white students at Western has grown by ten percentage points over the last five years from 19.0% in 2014-2015 to 28.5% in 2019-2020. During this same period of time, the percentage of non-white Education majors has also grown ten percentage points from 14.7% in 2014-2015 to 25.3% in 2019-2020.

Despite a rapidly increasing percentage of non-white students majoring in Education we have seen a rapid decrease in the raw number of white education majors. At this time, we do not have an understanding of what may be causing that effect. Due to concerted efforts to partner with major feeder community colleges, a dramatic rise in the number of education transfer students has been realized. However, transfer

students do not appear to be more diverse than on-campus students as 88 of the 343 total education transfer students are non-white equal to 25.7%.

A pattern of retention rates between white and non-white education majors is not discernable except that retention rates for education majors (for both white and non-white students) exceeds retention for the general population in like years. Holistically, retention does not appear to represent a significant barrier to educator diversification at Western Oregon University.

## Applied, Admitted/Enrolled, and Completion Rates

Following explorations conducted in previous WOU biennial reports on progress toward the goals of HB 3375, explorations of rates for students applying, admitted/enrolled, and completion for both undergraduate (UG) and graduate (GR) preliminary licensure pathways are explored in Table 2.

Table 2. Showing key indicators for applied, admitted/enrolled, and completed over time.\*

Teacher Education Programs	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
White students applied, initial UG programs (n)	88	63	83	72	76	67
Non-white students applied, initial UG programs (n)	37	21	14	20	14	8
Unknown/Undeclared students applied, initial UG programs (n)	75	36	5	2	1	3
White students admitted, initial UG programs (%)	62.5	98.4	98.8	91.6	92.1	94.0
Non-white students admitted, initial UG programs (%)	75.7	85.7	100	85.0	64.3	87.5
Unknown/Undeclared students admitted, initial UG programs (%)	60.0	100	100	100	100	100
White student completers, initial UG programs (%)	--	87.1	81.7	100	81.4	73.0
Non-white student completers, initial UG programs (%)	--	72.2	78.6	82.4	66.7	57.1
Unknown/Undeclared student completers, initial UG programs (%)	--	100	100	100	100	66.7
White students applied, initial GR programs (n)	47	77	81	96	120	70
Non-white students applied, initial GR programs (n)	9	8	13	13	11	8
Unknown/Undeclared students applied, initial GR programs (n)	5	16	39	32	4	3
White students admitted/enrolled, initial GR programs (%)	87.2	83.1	72.8	89.6	89.2	75.7
Non-white students admitted/enrolled, initial GR programs (%)	77.8	100	84.6	69.2	81.8	100

<b>Teacher Education Programs</b>	<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2014-2015</b>
Unknown/Undeclared e students admitted, initial GR programs (%)	40.0	50.0	69.2	71.8	100	66.7
White student completers, initial GR programs (%)	--	84.4	100	98.8	89.2	75.7
Non-white student completers, initial GR programs (%)	--	100	63.6	100	66.7	25.0
Unknown/Undeclared student completers, initial GR programs (%)	--	100	66.7	26.0	100	50.0

\* Data provided by the College of Education Office of Clinical Practices and Licensure on March 3, 2020.

Table 2 shows numbers of students who applied, were admitted and enrolled, and then who completed initial educator preparation programs at both the undergraduate (UG) and graduate (GR) levels. The intent of this information is to determine if (a) we have a problem at admission or if we have (b) a problem with completion in either UG or GR pathways.

The first nine rows (above the divider line) are focused on UG pathways and, frankly, it is difficult to infer reliably given the large increases in students reporting as Unknown/Undeclared for their ethnicity. Below the divider line, the last nine rows explore the same issues of admission/enrollment and completion for GR pathways and, again, large numbers of Unknown/Undeclared students make the data difficult to interpret.

Graphical representations of each data set were examined, and patterns remained difficult to discern. At this point, it is not clear whether non-white students are less able to earn admission or complete educator programs at Western. The experiences of faculty and program coordinators suggest that we have rapidly increasing numbers of diverse candidates and that diverse candidates are not differentially being eliminated during application or matriculation.

Years ago, required educator tests represented a more significant hurdle for diverse educators but these too have seemed to dissipate in their salience as barriers. Though we do not have data readily available to determine it, experience suggests that math-readiness continues to play a strong factor in determining the rate and success of matriculation for education majors. Education majors are not differentially affected as math-readiness represents a challenge for all college students.

## **Linguistic Diversity**

Table 3 below provides information relative to linguistically diverse educators. As the discussion below the table indicates, we do not currently have reliable ways of tracking linguistic diversity at Western Oregon University or within the education preparation pathways.

Table 3. Linguistically diverse educators at Western over time.\*

Indicators	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
ESOL endorsements awarded (n)	45	37	51	62	89
World Languages endorsements awarded (n)	3	4	6	7	3
Deaf and Hard of Hearing endorsements awarded (n)	10	6	1	2	0
Bilingual Teacher Scholars enrolled (n)	96	90	75	64	40
Year-to-year Bilingual Teacher Scholars retention (%)	92	90	83	89	83

\* Data provided by the Clinical Practices and Licensure Office in the College of Education on March 3, 2020.

Table 3 attempts to capture information about the degree to which Western is producing increasing numbers of linguistically diverse educators. A trustworthy indicator of the degree to which an educator is linguistically diverse is not easily retrieved from current systems and the measures in table 3 are not exactly on target in various ways. For example, ESOL endorsements do not require linguistic competence but do require that educators have specialized skills and knowledge for how to work with language learners.

The educator programs had significant grant support in 2015-2016 that led to record numbers of students completing an ESOL endorsement in that year and the year that followed. Finding synergy between grants and our academic programs must continue to be a priority if we hope to continue to prepare educators in this area. World languages endorsements do all require demonstration of competence in another language and also require pedagogical expertise. All Deaf and Hard of Hearing endorsement completers are bilingual in American Sign Language and English.

The best measure of linguistic diversity is the number of students enrolled in our Bilingual Teacher Scholars program as all of these students applied for acceptance into this program by submitting materials in a 2<sup>nd</sup> language. Very strong retention within the Bilingual Teacher Scholars program has also been realized.

Finally, a steering group has recently been convened to help monitor progress toward the goals of HB 3375 and this group developed a question that will be added to all initial licensure program applications asking candidates whether or not they are linguistically diverse. A definition of linguistic diversity will also be provided, and we believe this data will become the most targeted data available to us going forward.

## Goals Moving Forward

Table 4 below provides a summary of current data relative to key indicators for the ongoing diversification of the educator programs at Western Oregon University and adds measurable goals for both actual numbers and percentages two, four, six, and eight years into the future.

Table 4. Goals for recruitment, retention, admission / enrollment, and completion going forward.

Indicators	2019-2020	2021-2022	2023-2024	2025-2026	2027-2028
Non-white education majors UG (n)	279	309	343	376	410
Non-white education majors UG (%)	25	28	31	34	37
Non-white education transfer students UG (n)	88	94	102	110	120
Non-white education majors, freshmen to sophomore retention (%)*	84	86	88	90	90
Non-white UG completers (n)	26**	32	44	56	68
Non-white UG completers (%)	72	76	80	84	88
Non-white GR completers (n)	7	10	12	15	18
Non-white GR completers (%)	100	100	100	100	100
Bilingual Teacher Scholars completers (n)	19	30	40	50	60
Bilingual Teacher Scholars retention (%)	92	92	94	94	94

\* Retention data lags in collection and so retention percentages shows are actually for the preceding year.

\*\* Anticipated.

Table 4 indicates that we expect to see ongoing, significant growth in the diversification of our UG educator pathways. Since Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC) eliminated the compulsory master’s degree requirement for Oregon educators, we have seen a rapid decline in enrollment in graduate educator programs and a dramatic increase in our four-year routes including transfer pathways and flexible, degree completion and licensure options for working adults.

For these reasons, we expect to see smaller increases in GR pathways diversification. We do, however, anticipate seeing ongoing, large increases in our Bilingual Teacher Scholars program as the major tool for recruiting, retaining, admitting, and graduating culturally and linguistically diverse educators.

## Strategies to Move Toward Goals

**Educator programs partnership stance.** For the last six years, and continuing into the future, the College of Education has made concerted effort to become the best higher education partner possible to school districts, Education Service Districts, regions, and state agencies relative to educator workforce development.

Our faculty were the strongest four-year voices in conversations around Major Transfer Maps and our transfer pathway in elementary education is the only public university transfer map that does not require an extensive addendum to explain a myriad of caveats and exceptions.

Additionally, educator faculty have worked hard to open program pathways to working adults and to those living outside the Willamette valley. As investments dollars flow from the Student Success Act and the Educator Advancement Council, educator programs at Western are well-positioned to provide programs, partnerships, and pathways that will continue to rapidly increase the numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse educators in Oregon.

**Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) workgroup efforts in educator programs.** The College of Education is guided by the principles of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. We seek to co-



construct a learning environment that affirms intersectionality, deconstructs barriers, and fosters a safe environment for collective learning and healing. Key responsibilities of the JEDI workgroup include:

- Advising administrative efforts toward the recruitment and retention of culturally and linguistically diverse students.
- Increasing equitable, just, and inclusive practices across programs and advocacy to support integration of JEDI principles.
- Taking an active role in reforming curriculum to prepare culturally responsive and equity-literate teachers for diverse preK-12 classrooms.
- Identifying measurable objectives and outcomes aligned with JEDI principles and conducting research projects that document the attainment of these outcomes across educator programs.

The JEDI workgroup carries out these responsibilities by engaging in the following activities.

- JEDI literacy Workshops. These monthly workshops for faculty and staff include activities, case studies, equity analyses, and book discussions. Participants gain tools and strategies for talking about race and social justice, and for responding to inequitable practices in our roles and in our classrooms.
- Student Un-Conference on Diversity. This annual event is a space for students to set the agenda to discuss topics about social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. It includes new learning opportunities and uses films on diversity in education to guide reflection and new learning.
- Student JEDI Leaders (coming soon): Students will be invited to advise the JEDI faculty workgroup by sharing student perspectives and will be given a space where they can informally meet for collective storytelling and support.

**Continuation and extension of the Bilingual Teacher Scholars program.** Initiated in 2015, the Bilingual Teacher Scholars (BTS) program is a Grow Your Own program in collaboration with more than a dozen district partners and several key Oregon community colleges.

Together, district and community college partners and Western faculty and staff identify, recruit, and admit to educator programs linguistically diverse high school and transfer students. Western assigns four-year, renewable remission scholarships to each BTS student and district partners each make available, through various strategies, \$3,000 per student per year with the goal of assisting in degree completion and licensure before candidates return to their home school districts as licensed educators.

The Bilingual Teacher Scholars program provides academic advising, mentoring, advocacy and personal/social support for all scholars and organizes professional development events and a yearly conference that promotes professional identity and affiliation. Increasing numbers of university courses are being delivered bilingually and new sections of educator courses are being developed that embrace the unique opportunities afforded by entire sections of bilingual students all focused on careers in education. Annual opportunities for district partners to connect with their future educators also occur.

Emphasis in the Student Success Act and by the Educator Advancement Council on diversification of the educator workforce centers the efforts of the Bilingual Teacher Scholars program and we field regular inquiries from new district partners wanting to join our work. The strong professional community and

supports within the program have dramatically increased retention and expeditious matriculation through the educator preparation pathways.

## Threats and Opportunities

A series of threats do exist that each have the potential to disrupt the momentum Western Oregon University has built toward realizing the goals of HB 3375. These threats and potential solutions are identified below.

**Limited college-level fiscal resources.** The College of Education currently spends \$83,436 per year through services and supplies and 50% re-assignment of tenure-track faculty member Dr. Maria Dantas-Whitney to coordinate the Bilingual Teacher Scholars program. As the College of Education faces serious fiscal pressure, it may become necessary to invest these dollars elsewhere which will have a negative effect on the continuation of this very successful program. This program is not only helping to meet the needs of HB 3375 but is also helping Western reach status as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI).

**Limitations on remission dollars.** The remission scholarship that accompanies the Bilingual Teacher Scholars program represents an essential tool in recruiting, supporting, and sustaining culturally and linguistically diverse future teachers. Data suggests that, with increases in remission support dedicated to the Bilingual Teacher Scholars, this program could continue to expand. The needs in the state are significant and additional partner districts contact Western each week to join. Limitations on the remission budget, however, are real and this will limit growth opportunities.

**Inherent racism and language privilege.** The College of Education believes strongly that language is a social construction and there are multiple correct ways to speak, think, and learn. However, faculty working with our culturally and linguistically diverse teacher candidates continue to report that students share feelings of being marginalized, penalized, and unsupported because their linguistic practices are often seen as deficient.

This phenomenon reflects raciolinguistic ideologies, which stigmatize the linguistic practices of minoritized groups, and uphold the linguistic practices of dominant groups as normative. Until language diversity is embraced on our campus, our students will face needless hardships. Bold and honest conversations about this issue must occur on our campus to address this tension.

**Profit sharing to fund rapid innovation.** As negative pressures increase on budgets here at Western, fewer dollars exist to invest in innovations to support partnerships and opportunities. Oregon school districts and Education Service Districts are flush with investment dollars driven by the Student Success Act and the Educator Advancement Council but none of these dollars are able to be used for institutional capacity to support educator workforce development. If profit sharing and rapid innovation funding was available to the College of Education, many additional partnerships could be launched and significant new enrollment could be realized.

## Summary

Western Oregon University has made significant progress relative to the goals of HB 3375 in a relatively short period of time. Progress on recruiting increasing numbers of culturally diverse candidates has occurred and these students appear to be retained at rates at least equivalent to white students.

The Bilingual Teacher Scholars program represents the most potent tool in supporting diverse candidates and the institutional context, in which the Bilingual Teacher Scholars program is situated, is also successful in contributing to the goals of HB 3375.

Respectfully submitted on March 20, 2020

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Western Oregon University