

WOU Board of Trustees - June 8, 2022 Interim President Kenton's Report

Important Trivia re: did you know that the mid-Willamette Valley is *Oregon's #1 Producer of Agricultural Products – Grass seed, Hazelnuts, specialty crops and hops (Sedcorp)*

Facts & Demographics – Polk County Oregon

(from Polk County's website)



Overview

- Polk County was founded on Dec. 22, 1845
- The County was named for James Knox Polk, the 11th President of the United States
- The County seat is located at [Dallas, Oregon](#)
- Polk County is home to [Western Oregon University](#) and an excellent public school system
- Polk County is governed by a 3-member [Board of Commissioners](#) who serve 4-year terms
- Polk County is a blend of both rural and urban communities, and operates under a detailed [Comprehensive Land Use Plan](#)

Location/Climate

- Polk County is located in the heart of the lush Willamette Valley, approximately 15 miles west of Salem, Oregon
- Residents enjoy a moderate, four season climate with an average of 222 days of sunshine and an average of 52 inches of precipitation each year
- August is the warmest month (Avg. High: 81)
- January is the coolest month (Avg. High: 39)

Geography Quick Facts

- Land Area: 744 square miles
- Persons per Square Mile: 102

- Statistical Area: Salem Metropolitan Area

Demographics

- Population: 79,122 (2010 Census)
- Population Increase 2000 - 2009: 25.2%
- Estimated Housing Units: 27,857
- Median Household Income: \$53,506

My Report:

When I was hired, I told you I was proud of my record of leaving organizations better than I found them and after 11 months on the job I feel assured that this record will remain intact. Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to re-connect with the WOU community. It's an amazing collection of folks in a cohesive community who are hard-working, dedicated, and caring individuals focused on ensuring our students find success in all they do.

We're about to have graduation and there is much to celebrate. Raise your glasses and toast our collective accomplishments detailed below. There is much to be proud of at WOU today.

Gym Floor and Bleachers Project underway in New PE: Due to the funding of the steampipe project, we now can use \$1.6M of the capital repair monies we received in the 2021-22 Legislative session to replace the gym bleachers and floor. This decision had to be made now so the new floor and bleachers can be installed during the summer and be ready for the fall sports seasons for volleyball and basketball. The floor has been sanded and refinished multiple times over its life and now needs to be replaced. The new bleachers will be higher on the wall with different spacing that will permit an ~15% increase in seating capacity. The NPE gym has the largest seating capacity on campus and is used for Athletics, Physical Education courses, New Student Week sessions, the Cesar Chavez conference, and many other yearly events. This project's cost will also count toward the fundraising goal the Foundation is pursuing as it was one of their priorities.

COVID Update: I am hearing of more positive tests from folks at WOU, including my own test and many members of my cabinet. Everyone needs to take added precautions. Guidance is that Individuals have the tools to mitigate their risks if they choose to use them.

The COVID Safety Team has continued to monitor the status of the coronavirus. Here are some updates and reminders:

- Polk County Risk Level / Masking - As you may know, Polk County has moved from low-risk into the medium risk category. Currently, to ensure the health and safety of our campus community we recommend you wear masks when indoors in the presence of others. If Polk County moves to high risk, masks will be required for indoor gatherings of 10 or more people.
- Marcom has created [updated signage](#) for building managers to post and allow for consistent messaging across campus. Building managers, please update building signs to the new “masks recommended” signage.
- **Sanitizing Supplies** - Sanitizing supplies continue to be available to faculty/staff and students. Cleaning caddies are available in classrooms. There are sanitizer stations and masks available in buildings. If you need to request supplies email: facilitieshelp@wou.edu
- You are encouraged to stay home when sick. We have extended the [COVID sick leave policy](#) (80 extra hours of sick leave) to December 31, 2022.

At this time no changes have been made for commencement. We will continue to monitor the county risk level.

Racial Incidents, Anger and Fear – My campuswide e-mail has brought mixed responses with many supporting it, but some have disagreed and felt my e-mail was racist. Some have indicated that they are afraid and want to know what we will do to ensure that Black and Lavender Graduation ceremonies are safe. Most of the Cabinet members plan to attend these events and we have asked Campus Public Safety to increase patrols during these activities. I am also asking you to help where you can; be present, help us monitor the situation, etc. If you see someone harassing another, please intervene if you can and support the person being harassed. Our students have worked hard to get to this point, and they deserve to have a safe place to celebrate their achievements.

We must stand firm in our resolve to speak out against and condemn these racist acts. All people deserve to be treated with the utmost respect. Our attitudes, beliefs, values, and actions need to reflect these core values.

Campus Murals - Western is fortunate to have two outstanding Portland-based artists on our campus this week. One artist, Jahdi Levvy, is currently working on his mural inside the WUC lobby and the other artist, Hector Hernandez, is finishing his art installation outside the Welcome Center. These art installations are celebrations of the various identities represented at WOU. Please give a warm WOU welcome to these artists.

The impetus for the mural in the WUC comes from Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA) De Western Oregon University a student organization that promotes higher education, cultura (culture), and historia (history).

The mural is seen as one step towards achieving WOU's goal of cultivating an inclusive campus climate that supports and celebrates the culture of a wide range of backgrounds, ethnicities, abilities, and identities. Jahdi Levvy, a distinguished Portland artist, is working on this beautiful and thoughtful mural.

The second art installation by Portland Artist Hector Hernandez also honors WOU's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Hector, whose art project is funded through the 1% for Art Program, talks about his artwork at the WOU Welcome Center, building mosaics, and the benefits of higher education. Hector and his crew are hard at work installing the final pieces of the entire artwork. Here's a link to a Hector's video: <https://youtu.be/5k09VJ7liec>

Budget Update – We have a significant structural deficit, more than (\$6M) if we budget a 5% decline in undergraduate enrollment and flat graduate enrollment as recommended by University Budget Advisory Committee (UBAC). I believe that we should budget +5% enrollment in all categories and if we did the deficit would be (~\$3.0M). Getting the enrollment and revenues to grow is critically important for the institution. Today we are just shy of 4,000 students. With our as built capacity we need to operate with a student body of between 5,000-6,000 and doing so would make WOU more vibrant and sustainable.

The budget assumes that all positions currently authorized will be filled for the entire year. But our history tells us that we have had many vacancies that we were having a difficult time filling. Though the job market seems to be improving as many positions are now being filled with high quality talent. Nevertheless, we expect that salary and OPE savings will likely approximate \$1.0M this year and this savings could be applied against the deficit if needed. This would need to be coordinated with the campus as our current practice is to allow departments to use these savings for other departmental needs if not spent on salaries and benefits.

Yet, our costs will likely grow from inflation and significant changes in the labor markets and due to negotiated raises in collective bargaining agreements. Without enhanced state funding or significant tuition increases (which I would not advocate), we must serve more students and grow our enrollments and other associated revenues – indirect cost recoveries, investment income and increased private donations.

We are projecting to end the year this year with a surplus of ~\$12M or ~15-16% of revenues. In addition, we will have \$3.0M in quasi-endowment investments that can be used with Board approval. Our situation is dire, but it is not hopeless. We have more than a fighting chance to overcome these challenges. But we must continue to invest in new programs and people. We must continue to change and adapt, and we must stay focused on building enrollment, other revenues, and fund-raising capacity.

It is also likely that other windfalls will be found. We are currently working with our peer institutions to review some detailed provisions within the various Federal relief acts, with the possibility of millions more in funding becoming available. Now is not the time to panic. Now is the time to focus and work smarter than ever while evolving and adapting to the changing environment.

Speaking of Fund Raising here is the Latest from the WOU Foundation:

- Total Assets: \$29,815,954
- Total Donations ytd: \$2,918,407, which is \$450,000 more than last year!
- We had a great meet and greet event with alumni and friends and the volleyball coaches.
- The Ron DeVolder Celebration of Life and Spring Game were very successful and well attended.
- The Wolves Auction online silent auction is live now, and the in-person event is scheduled for this Saturday, June 4th!

Enrollment Update – as of Monday May 30, 2022, applications were up 12.9% over last year and admits are up 6.6% over last year with 536 pending applications that are either incomplete in terms of documentation or that require additional review and consideration. EAB is working hard to find added graduate and returning adult students and Shorelight is recruiting international students for WOU and have produced 3 international student applications to date. We were hoping for 10 so we're making progress. We are also working on improved orientation and advising processes that should improve both yield and retention/persistence efforts.

Fall 2022 Applications and Admissions Report

As of May 30, 2022

<i>Applications</i>	<u>Fall 2022</u>	<u>Fall 2021</u>	<u>% Chg.</u>
African American	89	110	-19.1%
American Indian	31	30	3.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	207	172	20.3%
Hispanic/Latino	1,019	730	39.6%
Unknown ethnicity	280	312	-10.3%
White	<u>1,458</u>	<u>1,298</u>	12.3%
Total Freshmen	3,084	2,652	16.3%
Undergraduate Transfers			
Freshmen	137	144	-4.9%

Sophomores	255	127	100.8%
Juniors	115	242	-52.5%
Seniors	<u>15</u>	<u>38</u>	-60.5%
Total Transfers	522	551	-5.3%
Post-Bac Non-Grad	<u>19</u>	<u>12</u>	58.3%
Total Undergraduates	3,625	3,215	12.8%
Masters	179	155	15.5%
Post-Bac Grad	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	0.0%
Total Graduates	179	155	15.5%
Total Applicants	3,804	3,370	12.9%
Admitted			
African American	67	86	-22.1%
American Indian	21	23	-8.7%
Asian/Pacific Islander	160	141	13.5%
Hispanic/Latino	766	592	29.4%
Unknown ethnicity	203	275	-26.2%
White	<u>1,113</u>	<u>1,103</u>	0.9%
Total Freshmen	2,330	2,220	5.0%
Undergraduate Transfers			
Freshmen	75	50	50.0%
Sophomores	233	111	109.9%
Juniors	101	209	-51.7%
Seniors	<u>13</u>	<u>29</u>	-55.2%
Total Transfers	422	399	5.8%
Post-Bac Non-Grad	16	9	77.8%
Total Undergraduates	2,768	2,628	5.3%
Masters	82	47	74.5%
Post-Bac Grad	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	0.0%
Total Graduates	82	47	74.5%
Total Admitted	2,850	2,675	6.5%

Pending:

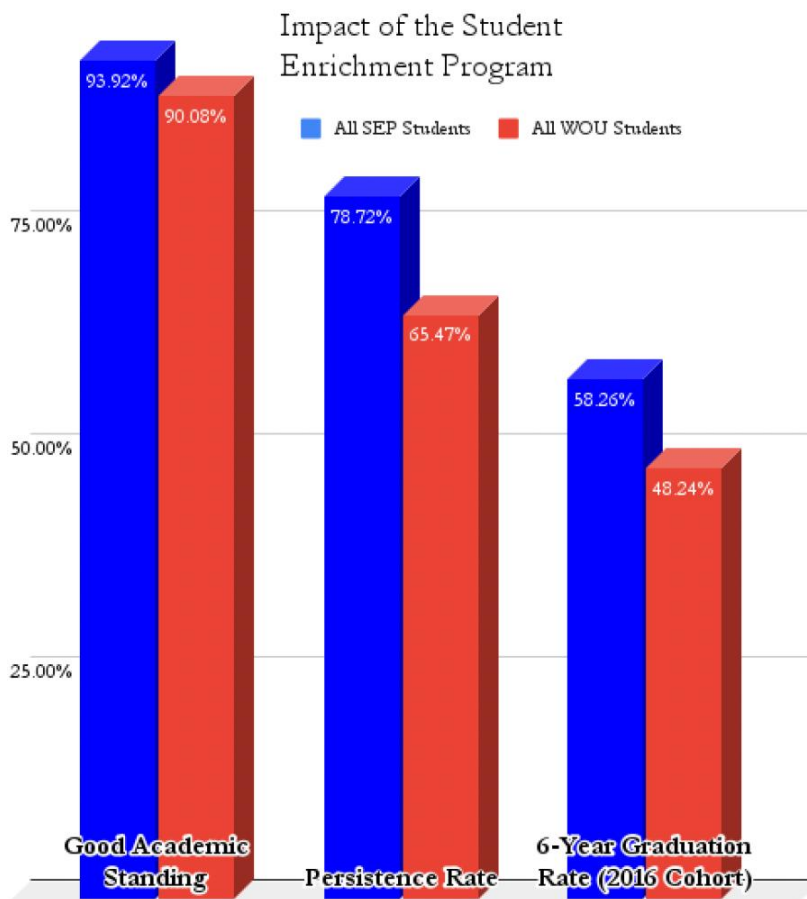
African American	14	18	-22.2%
American Indian	4	3	33.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	22	7	214.3%
Hispanic/Latino	141	65	116.9%
Unknown ethnicity	39	20	95.0%
White	<u>178</u>	<u>80</u>	122.5%
Total Freshmen	398	193	106.2%
Undergraduate Transfers			
Freshmen	56	90	-37.8%
Sophomores	4	7	-42.9%
Juniors	1	25	-96.0%
Seniors	<u>-</u>	<u>6</u>	-100.0%
Total Transfers	61	128	-52.3%
Post-Bac Non-Grad	2	2	0.0%
Total Undergraduates	461	323	42.7%
Masters	75	85	-11.8%
Post-Bac Grad	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	0.0%
Total Graduates	75	85	-11.8%
Total Pending	536	408	31.4%

Housing reservations for Fall 2022 are currently at 768. We had 921 at the start of Fall 2021. We are hoping to get ~900 reservations for Fall 2022, thus have 3.5 months to get another 143 reservations for a 10.9% increase over the prior year. Housing reservations are a good predictor of enrollment. Our auxiliaries could use an infusion of funds to rebuild reserves, address deferred maintenance, and address myriad needs.

- **Athletic roster adjustments** have been made adding 30 slots, plus Men's soccer.
- **GNAC Championship Update-** The women's track & field team won the GNAC Outdoor Championship for the first time since 2008. Baseball earned a share of the regular season title before winning the GNAC tournament and qualifying for the NCAA playoffs. The WOU men's and women's teams finished 4th (out of 10) in the 2021-22 GNAC All Sports Trophy standings.
- **Men's soccer update:**
 - 47 committed student athletes for Fall 2022. These students are registering for classes and completing all action items with great eagerness. The Fall team travel arrangements are in place, equipment and uniforms are ordered and we are ready to begin our first competitive season in a few months.

- Current on-campus or virtually attending student athletes are helping get the word out about WOU and the program through social media and face to face contact. The spring ID camp drew nearly 40 student athletes from Arizona, California and other neighboring states. We are preparing to host joint camps with the women's soccer coaches in satellite locations and hoping to continue the growth of our programs through wider recruitment initiatives.

Improved advising, retention, and persistence – the hiring of Paige Jackson, and the merger of Student Success and Advising (SSA) with the Student Enrichment Program (SEP) led by Chris Solario and Teachers Preparation Student Support Services (TPSSS) led by Jen Koshnick means we can apply best practices in all advising and leverage the efficiencies of having more advisors available for registration/orientation events, etc. We also hired a new professional advisor for the Business program who works with Paige and her team.



Partnership specialist – We are fully approved and authorized to participate in the Amazon Career Choice program whereby Amazon employees can take courses at WOU and be reimbursed by Amazon. We have already begun to receive vouchers from

Amazon employees interested in taking courses at WOU. We are also close to finalizing a partnership with SEIU offering a 20% off tuition discount to their members.

Cross functional enrollment team – now Chaired by Tina Fuchs, Interim VP Student Affairs the members include the President, Provost, VP Finance, VP Student Affairs, Vice Provost, Dean of Graduate Studies, Registrar, Bursar, Director and assistant directors of Admissions and Financial Aid, Director of Student Success and Advising, Housing Director, Director of Graduate Student Success & Recruitment, New Student and Family Programs Director, Director of University Computing Solutions, Registrar, and Partnership Specialist. This group continues to meet every other week for 90 minutes to hear report outs on various initiatives and to discuss policies, and practices, coordinate activities, plan events, etc.

Increased fee remissions – we have increased the number of Bilingual and Diverse Teachers fee remissions from 50 to 100 as this is a priority for the State. We also have been using RNL to assist us in optimizing fee remission awards to obtain more prospective students in the coming years. This year we are on track to spend \$4.5M - \$5.0M in fee remissions though we budgeted \$5.5M for this purpose. We are being too conservative in our awarding of fee remissions and are losing students as a result. While it's hard to predict the actual disbursements relative to the awards, and this gets more difficult as we change the programs and policies each year, we need to do a better job of this as it's hurting our enrollment.

WOU needs stronger ties to Community Colleges and the Tribes in Oregon.

Community college enrollment has fallen from 34,384 FTE in 2012 to 19,244 in 2021 – a 44% reduction in the last 10 years. Nevertheless, WOU needs to strengthen its ties to especially PCC (largest CC – new president) and Clackamas (President Tim Cook is a WOU alum) and possibly Lane (3rd largest CC), Mt. Hood (4th largest) and Umpqua (Michael Reis has a relationship as we provide academic innovation services to Umpqua CC). WOU has good relations with Chemeketa (2nd largest CC in Oregon) and Linn Benton community colleges which are our largest feeders.

We also need to improve our relationships with the Tribes in the coming year. Given his background, this is an area where I believe Dr. Peters will excel. Oregon's nine tribal governments are separate sovereigns with powers to protect the health, safety and welfare of their members and to govern their lands. (Source: Oregon Blue Book 2022)

Burns Paiute Tribe

Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw

Coquille Indian Tribe

Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians

Confederated Tribes of The Grand Ronde

Klamath Tribes

Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Reservation

WOU needs to strengthen its relationship with each of the tribes in Oregon, and especially with the Siletz and Grand Ronde tribes who are closest to WOU. The State just implemented a new financial aid program for Tribal members thereby opening the doors for their members to be better able to afford an education.

Public Employer Job Fair in June we have been working with the All-Hands Leadership group (comprised of mayors and city managers from Monmouth and Independence, the Superintendent and key staff at Central School District, WOU, Polk County Fire District, local elected officials – Sen. Patterson, Rep. Evans, Polk County Commissioner Jeremy Gordon, SEDCOR's Alex Paraskevas, Rural Innovation Catalyst and Business Retention and Expansion Manager for Polk County). Working with this group we plan to participate in a public employer's job fair to be held at the Polk County Fairgrounds in June (date pending at the time of this writing). This will be the first public employer job fair ever held in Polk County and people are excited to see how it goes. WOU will be staffing a table at the event and will have WOU swag and other information available about open positions, benefits, etc. for attendees.

WOU is lucky to be part of the All-Hands leadership group as it addresses many town and gown issues, provides opportunities to provide or receive help from the others, good opportunity to share issues of common concern – racism, safety, major events, and activities coordination, etc. It is nice to know you have other groups in the community who are available to celebrate your successes or assist with a crisis when needed.

Searches for VP Advancement and University Relations and Executive Director of the WOU Foundation, Executive Director of Human Resources and other key leadership vacancies will provide an opportunity to rebuild key functions in a more strategic manner. This facilitates re-assessing the importance of these functions, making investments or reductions, refocusing, and implementing current best practices. These opportunities will surface in the near term in the following areas:

- Fund Raising and Development
- Marketing and communications
- Human Resources – both the Executive Director and the Deputy
- Legislative Relations
- Student Affairs

These six searches represent an annual investment of more than \$1.0M in support of their salaries and associated other payroll expenses. Getting the right people will be key.

- Search: Vice President for Advancement and University Relations and Executive Director of the WOU Foundation
 - Chair: Ryan Hagemann
 - Members: TBD
- Search: Executive Director or Vice President of Human Resources
 - Search co-chairs: Michael Reis and Rebecca Chiles
 - Members: TBD

Both searches will be assisted by a search firm. We are presently evaluating six proposals and awaiting committee scoring before awarding a contract.

We will also need searches for the next Director of Government/Legislative Relations and Director of Marketing/Communications but we're assuming that the VP Advancement and University Relations would want to recruit these people.

We will also need a search for the Deputy Director of Human Resources.

Finally, Student Affairs has an interim VP yet is led by an extremely competent and capable individual.

Ethnic Studies Program Report – multiple folks, faculty, staff, and students have told me how important it is for WOU to have an ethnic studies program, especially given our pursuit of full HSI status. I asked Mary Pettinger to take this on and as per usual she has excelled in leading a passionate group in developing the following program proposal. This program will need to be reviewed and approved by the Faculty Senate, the Board, and the HECC thus will not start until Fall 2023. Here is Mary's latest update:

The Ethnic Studies committee has made significant progress toward creating an Ethnic Studies program at WOU with several important actions:

- First, the new major and minor in Ethnic Studies have been created. The major will require 60 credits of coursework in a core, five concentrations (Chicanx/Latinx and Latin American Studies, African American and African Studies, Global Ethnicities Studies, Indigenous Studies and Intersectionality) and electives. We have received very positive feedback from students and community members expressing their appreciation and support for its design. We have four more of the core courses to design (with the ETH201 Introduction to Ethnic Studies ready). Our timeline is to finish and submit the program and course proposal for curriculum review beginning in September.
- Second, the committee has met with the WOU General Education committee about the possibility of adding a new Ethnic Studies course, a new Justice/ Diversity category, and/or integrating Ethnic Studies into First Year Seminars. We have agreed to meet again in the fall to assist in the creation of the new area.
- Third, committee members are coordinating future activities with the College of Education regarding the new Ethnic Studies requirements for teachers, the Academic Innovation team regarding course delivery, and community members to build contacts for future practicums and a possible advisory board.

- The committee members have expressed their willingness to continue working over next year to expand the program, and its internal and external community connections, and we look forward to students being able to major or minor in Ethnic Studies in Fall 2023.

Morphing the curricula to address current and emerging needs:

As for curricular decisions, here are the new programs and certificates that were approved by Faculty Senate during 2021-2022 (this doesn't include new concentrations in existing majors or program modifications):

New Degrees

- Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Applied Science in Data Analytics
- Occupational Therapy Doctorate
- Master of Science in Human Performance and Wellness (finishing external review process)
- Education Doctorate in Interpreting Studies (beginning external review process)

New Minors

- Criminal Justice Minor
- Cybercrime Investigation and Enforcement Minor
- Exercise Science Minor

New Certificates

- Graduate Certificate in Writing Theory & Practice for In-Service Teachers
- Undergraduate Certificate in Computational Linguistics

Sponsored projects – this is an area of growth and pride for WOU. Most of the projects are public services or contractual services provided by WOU personnel to various governmental, public, and non-profit entities. With the pandemic came lots of funding opportunities. The dollar volume of the aggregate grants and contracts is growing as are the indirect cost recoveries that come with these projects. WOU recently revised its indirect cost recovery revenue sharing agreement with the principal investigators, divisions and other support units benefiting from these monies. The Sponsored Projects Office is overseen by Dean Hillary Fouts and Eric Dickey is our Pre-Award Manager who works closely with our faculty and staff who develop these proposals. All these folks deserve the credit for this growth and evolution.

Proposal activity, comparing FY21 to FY22

	# of Proposals Submitted	Funding Sought	# of Proposals Awarded	Funding Awarded
By May 2021	54	\$10,663,055	33	\$2,741,654
By May 2022	67	\$38,309,221	22	\$12,814,296

- We are continuing to see an upward trend in grant submissions and funding awarded. As of May 2022, 67 proposals have been submitted seeking close to \$38.3 million in external funding. Of these FY22 proposals, 22 have been funded so far for a total of \$12.8 million in external funds. For comparison, by May 2021, 54 proposals seeking close to \$10.7 million in external funding had been submitted and close to \$2.7 million had been awarded by this time last year. In sum, as of May 2022, we have been awarded \$10 million more in external funding compared to FY21, which is a 400% increase in funding awarded.
- In addition to the growth of direct fundings, indirect funding has also grown this year. The \$12,814,296 of funded awards so far this year, includes \$2,078,541 of indirect funds. This time last year, the awarded funding included \$291,160 of indirect funds and by the end of FY21 the awarded indirect cost recoveries was \$1,600,156. Thus, FY22 awards have already exceeded the total direct and indirect funded awards for FY21.
- Indirect cost recoveries are shared with PI, Division/Centers, and Colleges and help fund institutional overhead.
- Noteworthy recent awards:
 - Robyn Lopez-Melton, Director of the Center for Learning and Youth Development (CELYD) in TRI, received an \$8.4 million (including over \$1.4M in indirect funds) award from the Oregon Department of Education Early Learning Division to design, implement, and manage Oregon's first statewide childcare substitute system.
 - In addition, Multnomah County's Preschool for All has approached CELYD for a partnership with the new substitute system. They are planning to award close to \$500K to CELYD that will fund 3 full time positions at WOU to work in Multnomah to increase the availability of culturally responsive substitutes that can work in all types of childcare programs across the county.
 - Under the leadership of Director Shondra Russell, WOU has been selected to continue to receive funding through the federal TRIO Upward Bound grant for another five years. The anticipated funding of \$1,488,005 will allow us to continue building on the success of the past 23 years in serving low-income and potential first-generation high school students.
 - Patrick Aldrich and Beryl Neequaye in TRI's Center on Evaluation, Technology & Research were awarded \$120,000 from the Oregon Department of Education to conduct an evaluation of Oregon's Tribal Attendance Promising Practices (TAPP) project, which is aimed at strengthening attendance and student success, and increasing graduation rates among the nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon.

Technology utilization to enhance service to students/campus, improve productivity, and provide better information for decision-making. The following initiatives have been underway this year:

- Wireless - Ten-year-old wireless access points are being replaced with new WiFi 6 access points, providing faster speeds and will support a greater number of concurrent students, faculty, staff, and visitors; along with compatibility with current technology.
- Banner Financial Aid - For the first time, this October Financial Aid will be an integral part of Banner, our enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. This will provide a tight integration between Financial Aid, Account Receivable, and other Banner modules. This project will provide significant streamlining of processes, while increasing productivity. Also included with this implementation is the ability for students to have real-time access to their financial aid information including:
 - Financial Aid Dashboard
 - Financial Aid Award History
 - Financial Aid Award Offer
 - Financial Aid Notifications
 - Financial Aid Resources
 - Financial Aid Satisfactory Requirements
 - Financial Aid College Financing Plan
- Slate in Admissions and Graduate Studies - Slate has provided the opportunity to provide students with a more efficient and user-friendly front end to applying to WOU Plus it offers bi-direction data sharing with Banner.
- Adobe Sign - Adobe Sign provides secure signing of contracts and other documents requiring signatures, both external and internal to WOU. This software includes serial and parallel workflow capabilities. This product also provides a significant increase in productivity
- Document Management - DocStar, our document management system continues to be rolled out to reduce paper processes. A significant number of paper processes have been eliminated in the Human Resources office, University Computing Solutions, Business Affairs, and others. DocStar has been integrated with Banner, Microsoft Power BI, and other applications. An example of using this integration would be clicking on an invoice number in Banner and pulling up the original documents in DocStar. This is another example of how efficient solutions continue to be rolled out.
- PeopleAdmin - PeopleAdmin will streamline the hiring process. Applicants will have a streamlined user experience providing them the opportunity to apply for several positions without having to re-enter redundant information. Information will flow seamlessly from applicant tracking and workflows, to Banner integration of applicant and position data. PeopleAdmin is currently in the implementation phase, a joint project between HR, UCS, and PeopleAdmin professional services.
- Data-warehouse - The warehouse is built with reporting efficiency in mind. As an example, early on there was a finance report that took six hours to run in Banner. When it was optimized in the warehouse, the run time was less than one minute. There is significant financial reporting that comes from the warehouse.
- Extending the life of Dell computers - There had been reports that 2016 – 2019 computers were taking five to ten minutes from login to full functionality. For

\$50/computer, UCS was able to upgrade each workstation, replacing the spinning hard drive with a solid state NVMe drive. This change significantly decreased the login time, which is now ten – twenty seconds. With a minimal investment, there was a significant increase in productivity.

- Cyber-security - Through our cyber-security efforts, we have block thousands of attempts from bad-actors that attempt to harm our computing infrastructure. Training has been developed and provided to the campus community to educate them on how to be vigilant and protect themselves.

Better communications – with prospective students via social media use, etc. and with public via other venues (Paula, Sarah, Denise, Danielle and the team are awesome)

- Enhanced presence on social media: We continue to post regularly on current events, items of interest, and recognition of significant occurrences, but we are also amplifying other WOU event posts, such as the library's recent week of BIPOC events. We have 4 student workers helping us make reels. We are currently posting (as appropriate) on LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Twitter is our least active and we plan to replace it with Pinterest this summer. We continue to increase our Instagram followers: over 6100, Facebook: over 11,000, Twitter: just over 4,900, and LinkedIn: over 22,000. Instagram and FB are the most popular sites for the students to interact with. Twitter has very little interaction and neither does LinkedIn. We've started a TikTok page to gauge how well that would work for us. With us doing more reels on Instagram, some of those are transferable to TikTok
- Now that we have Olga Walmisley-Santiago on board as Translator we are going to start double posting in English and Spanish wherever possible on social media. English first followed by Spanish. We might consider this format for all our important campus communication: English version followed by the Spanish version. It will add an extra step but I think it would be worth it.
- Admissions successfully tabled at Redmond, OR at the Latin Festival there at the end of April. We got about 15 people who registered for more information about WOU. We selected a grand prize winner who came to WOU (prospective student and parent), stayed the night, had 2 complimentary meals, did a WOU tour, and then went to the ballpark in Keizer to see the Campesinos play. Admissions put together a wonderful gift basket for them as well. We learned that the prize wheel is a huge draw and using it made people come to our table. We unpacked with the Admissions employees who did the tabling of what worked and what didn't. Based on their recommendations, we ordered more swag for our upcoming tabling events. We also created a tabling checklist, and we are planning an orientation for future tablings to let them know what to expect.
- We have several events planned for the summer:
 - 6/11-12: Taste of Woodburn (sponsor and booth)
 - 6/24-26: Salem World Beat Festival (sponsor and booth)
 - 7/2-4: City of Monmouth 4th of July (booth)

- 7/4: City of Independence 4th of July (sponsor and booth)
- July/August Music in the Park series, Monmouth Amphitheater, banner Wednesdays
- July/August Rivers Edge concert series, Independence Amphitheater (sponsor) Thursdays (Movies) and Fridays (live music) (we can table at the events, so I contacted Alyssa Rollins to see if any campus groups want to table)
- 7/9 Western Oregon Night at the Keizer Volcanoes Ball Park (giving 1000 water bottles to the first fans in the gate) (giving away 100 tickets to our WOU faculty and staff)
- 8/20-21 Independence Fiesta (sponsor and booth). Independence was thrilled to have us, expressing that they have wanted WOU out there for a long time. They also indicated that if we were interested in doing some shared advertising that would benefit us both, they would love that. They also have 5 businesses that would like to be a part of the WOU Wednesdays.

Our slides and videos continue to run at Battle Ground, Sandy, Stayton, Dallas, Salem, and Independence Cinemas. Video ads will begin in Hillsboro/Evergreen Theater in July.

- We have 3 banners at 3 ball fields through Kids Inc, 1 banner in the Dallas Aquatic Center, and 1 banner on the Dallas Pickleball fence.
- We are planning on doing a fall event where Wolfie goes to each business for a photo op.
- We are planning community outreach to the Latin communities of Independence, Salem, and Keizer for each term beginning in the fall. We are also planning outreach to the local elementary schools wherein we have Wolfie come to each class, take a pic, give the class a banner, and hand out Wolfie age-appropriate goodies. Pics will be developed and gifted to each class for their classrooms.

New Faculty in Sociology, Business, Computer Science and two in Education: At the beginning of the year, we authorized five faculty searches in high need/return areas. Here is an update from the departments:

- Update from Mary Pettinger: The Sociology search was successful. Rebecca Phillips will be joining us from The Ohio State University where she earned her Master of Social Work and is ABD for a PhD in Social Work (August 2022). She worked for 5+ years in the field and has a Masters of Arts in Child Studies and Human Development from Tufts University. In addition, she is the Lead Investigator for a statewide study of the Children Services Workforce for the State of Ohio, including a \$30,000 grant for research. She will be teaching the new Social Work courses for the Sociology department and helping to expand offerings in future years. The Sociology department is very grateful for the new position and is looking forward to the new opportunities that have been created.
- Update from Bojan Illeveski: Business extended an offer to our top choice yesterday. I should have an update by the end of next week. It has been a reality

check of where salaries for business faculty stand. His 9-month and 12-month (MBA director) salaries are \$170k and \$220k, respectively. I hope the move to Oregon significantly outweighs the pay cut he'll have to take. More to follow. If he accepts he will become our highest paid faculty member.

- Update from Breeann Flesch: The Computer Science Division had a successful search with hiring our top candidate. Alex LeClerc is a WOU alum currently finishing their PhD at Oregon State University and will join us in the fall. Their research spans cybersecurity, intuitive design (front-end and back-end), re-usability, end user experience and accessibility. They are poised to contribute to the Computer Science program, Cybercrime Enforcement and Investigation program, as well as our new Data Analytics program starting this fall.
- Update from Dean Mark Girod: The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education search failed as we were not able to secure any qualified applicants.
- Update from Dean Mark Girod: The Special Education search was successful and we hired our first choice. Dr. Dani Lane will be joining us from Elon University where she coordinates a residency program in partnership with a large school district. We look forward to having her expertise as we open new undergraduate pathways in special education to serve the needs of Oregon school districts.

Special Shout Out: I have to give a special shout out to Anna Hernandez Hunter. I asked Anna to be Director of Admissions when I got here, and she has responded and has given it her all this year. She has recruited a great staff and has learned much this year. I am happy that she signed on for another year as she is perfecting her techniques for the betterment of WOU. She has exceeded every expectation I had and is deserving of special thanks. Thank you, Anna, eres fantastica!

Updated Challenges

- Political – new Governor, President of Senate, etc. Lots of turnover and loss of institutional memory, but the Speaker of the House, Dan Rayfield is a WOU alum.
- Financial – we have a significant structural deficit (\$6.0M+) and must grow enrollments in the absence of the Federal support we've had in the past.
- Declining graduates and increasing competition for students – RNL projections show nationwide decreases in high school graduates starting in 2025. Competition for students is real and must be countered.
- Questions re. Value proposition/benefit of higher education vs. the cost
- Deferred maintenance is a growing concern, especially in auxiliaries such as housing and food services.
- Cost control/growth and funding to lift the burden on students – 85% of our costs are in people; another 5-7% covers utilities, leaving little meaningful opportunities for savings in other areas.

- Data – we have not had a robust institutional research office until this year. We are behind and need the analytical tools and data sets to analyze and make data driven decisions. It's in process and ready to jump.
- Change quotient – WOU is slow to change and adapt – we must remain in alignment with the external environment. We must pick up the pace of change.
- Program portfolio – needs to adapt to current realities. Need more emphasis in building career ready skills in our graduates. The benefit of higher education needs to provide a return on investment in both in real and nominal terms. Internships and other work experience while attending college helps prepare graduates for work after graduation.

Updated Opportunities

- People
- Place - Mid valley, beautiful campus, central location proximate to metro area and population centers, near businesses and government offices
- Partners – school districts, Chemeketa, other regionals, Foundation, All-Hands Group
- Our priorities are aligned with the State's priorities, and this will serve us well in the Legislature:
 - Bilingual and Diverse Teacher preparation
 - Largest producer of new teachers in the State at a time when there is a critical teacher shortage
 - Serving the deaf, hard-of-hearing and blind populations
 - HSI and serving more under-represented, first-generation students
 - Growth in sponsored projects in partnership with the State and Federal governments
 - Public employee workforce development
- Reorganizations – change is positive and hiring these key leaders can be used strategically realign and transform the institution. Folks are ready for change.
 - Advancement and University Relations
 - Marketing and communications WOU's public face
 - Legislative relations – capital projects, legislation, budget, etc. – managing our largest donor
 - Human Resources – need both an Executive Director and Deputy Director – this can transform the institution and rebuild our spirit de corps, build our capacity and provide a better work environment for our people – our most valuable asset.
 - Student Affairs – VP decision – you can't find a better person than Tina.
 - Advising - SSA, SEP, Teacher Prep SSS
 - Athletics - Campus Recreation and Wellness
- New strategic plan to shape curricula going forward; new programs being added
 - Occupational Therapy
 - Interpreting Studies

- Expansion of business program
 - Other?
- HSI – a new beginning; a reason for being.
- Cross functional synergies – we are working together better - TEAM synergies – working Together Everyone Accomplishes More – building the capacity and the practice of horizontal communications to increase effectiveness and synergies.
- New leadership
 - President
 - Board members
 - Administration – Advance and University Relations, Executive Director of HR, Deputy Director of HR, Marketing and Communications, Government/Legislative Relations, and Student Affairs
- Labor relations and campus morale
 - Grievances and arbitrations are settled
 - Contracts are in place for next year
 - Trust, hope and optimism are growing

Conclusion: WOU has many challenges, yet an equal number, if not more opportunities in today's turbulent environment. The institution is well-positioned and is full of caring, intelligent, hard-working and well-intentioned people. The world and institution have undergone tremendous change of late and many uncertainties and concerns remain, thus WOU must remain nimble and responsive in this environment. The sky's the limit – aim high and fasten your seat belts you're about to go on the ride of your life.

Thank you again for providing me with the opportunity to spend my last year working with such a great group of folks. It has been a pleasure and I really appreciate serving at the best, last. Welcome Jesse! Godspeed to WOU!

In your service,

Jay