



**Western Oregon University Board of Trustees:
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility Committee (DEIAC)
Meeting No. 20– January 21, 2026
1:00 pm – 2:30 pm**

Meeting Minutes

I. CALL-TO-MEETING AND ROLL CALL

Chair Ambris welcomed everyone, called the meeting to order on Wednesday, January 21, 2026, at 1:03 pm, and asked Secretary Sorce to call the roll.

Committee Members Present: Chair Jerry Ambris, Board Vice Chair Kari Nelsestuen, Trustee Paige Jackson, Trustee Susanna Winkler

Others Present: President Jesse Peters, Evan Sorce, Cameron Mortensen, Dominique Vargas, Craig Ashford

II. WELCOME

Chair Ambris called the meeting to order and welcomed trustees, staff, and guests. Vice Board Chair Nelsestuen noted she was attending a conference and might have to leave early.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

1) Approval of the October 15, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Trustee Paige Jackson moved to approve the October 15, 2025, Meeting Minutes as presented in the docket. Trustee Winkler seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion.

Roll Call:

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|--------------------|-----|
| Chair Ambris | Aye |
| Trustee Jackson | Aye |
| Trustee Nelsestuen | Aye |
| Trustee Winkler | Aye |

Motion passes unanimously 4-0-0

IV. REPORT & DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1) **Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Update | Dominique Vargas**

Executive Director Vargas presented her board update, available on page 6 of the docket. Executive Director Vargas provided updates on several initiatives at Western, including Celebrate Your True Self Visit Day for Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) students from regional high schools. Approximately 150 students attended last year and organizers aim to expand participation.

Executive Director Vargas also reported on planning for the Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Summit scheduled for April 1. The event typically draws 200-300 participants in person and virtually. Marla Franco from the University of Arizona will serve as a featured speaker and will participate in campus meetings and student engagement activities.

Planning is underway for the Cesar Chavez Leadership Conference (CECLC) scheduled for May 8. Approximately 954 participants attended last year. Partnership with Chemeketa Community College and other regional organizations have expanded. Beginning next year, the conference will transition to a fall schedule, with an additional conference planned for October 2026 to support the transition.

Executive Director Vargas led a review of the progress on the Equity Assessment Action Plan. Some initiatives may be removed from routine reporting as they become operationalized across campus. Oversight for certain projects may shift to other administrative units, including the development of the MyWOU mobile application. Leadership is also exploring expanded bilingual engagement and Spanish-language accessibility initiatives. Vice Chair Nelsestuen asked how widely the Equity Action Plan is used across campus. Executive Director Vargas noted that while the full document is primarily reviewed by leadership and trustees, many initiatives affect the broader campus community. The University is exploring improved communication strategies to share progress in more accessible formats.

V. **PRESENTATION: Legal, Safety, and Community Current Events Update | Dominique Vargas – Executive Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Craig Ashford – General Counsel, Mike Hanson – Director of Campus Public Safety**

Support for Immigrant-Origin Students:

Executive Director Vargas mentioned updates to the university's immigrant origin resources webpage, including expanded Know Your Rights information and connections to external support services. The university is pursuing external partnerships to assist students with immigration legal resources and has provided professional development for faculty and staff on supporting immigrant-origin and undocumented students.

Legal and Legislative Update:

General Counsel Craig Ashford provided an overview of current immigration policy considerations and confirmed that Oregon's sanctuary law remains in effect. While some student groups have advocated for a sanctuary campus declaration, leadership has expressed caution due to potential risks associated with that stance.

General Counsel Ashford also discussed proposals being considered in the upcoming 2026 Oregon Legislative Short Session (February 2-March 8).

Lastly, General Counsel Ashford discussed the details of a December campus incident involving outside agitators who came onto campus to try to incite conflict by making remarks that targeted marginalized groups. Following student feedback sessions, the university initiated a review of its time, place, and manner speech policy, improvements to internal communication protocols, and efforts to ensure consistent enforcement of campus policies governing expressive activity.

VI. DEIAC CHARTER REVIEW:

Secretary Sorce walked the committee through the DEIAC Charter Review process and encouraged the committee members to provide feedback before the next meeting.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

None:

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Ambris adjourns the meeting at 1:32 pm.