

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY ADDRESS, SEPTEMBER 16, 2019

STUDENT SUCCESS: promote student success, learning and graduation through personalized support in a student-centered education community.

- WOU:Salem—started offering classes in winter term and this year we will have a full slate of classes including a new graduate program—the Masters in Organizational Leadership.
- Vick building: earlier this month, the Board of Trustees approved the purchase of the Vick Building in downtown Salem. After remodeling, this will be the home of WOU:Salem. It is ideally located at 525 Trade St. (the eastbound Highway 22 corridor). It lies at the intersection of Trade and High St. – just a block east of the Grand Hotel. The building includes three floors and about 36,000 square feet. Once remodeled, it will have space for up to eight classrooms, office spaces and meeting spaces to support our work. The property has access to 40 parking spaces and ample street parking is available in the evenings with a City of Salem parking structure within easy walking distance. Salem has over **170,000 residents** and about **60,000 adults** have a *high school diploma, some college credits but no college degree, or a two-year college degree*—capturing just 1% of this market will translate into **more than 500 new students**. And, the vast majority of these will be Oregon residents, which will enhance our effort to maximize the state funding model.
- We launched an initiative to become a federally recognized **Hispanic Serving Institution**, which requires 25% of our student FTE to identify as Hispanic. We are currently at 22% and rising. Moreover, we have continued our efforts to hire extremely well-qualified **diverse faculty and staff** who reflect the changing campus demographic.
- In support of our effort, Admissions and MarCom created a bi-lingual Family Pack for admitted students’ families—these materials were sent to more than 2,500 households.
- The Office of Admissions continues to work on increasing the number of publications available in Spanish based on appropriateness. WOU also placed ads on Spanish radio in the greater Portland market.
- On the transfer front—we signed a Degree Partnership Program Agreement with Linn Benton Community College. We hope to add several more agreements this year. This was a group effort, but involved staff from Admissions and Financial Aid for this to come to fruition. **Kristin Mauro** led this effort and Western now has agreements with Linn Benton, Mt. Hood, Clackamas, Portland CC and Chemeketa. Most recently, we have begun discussions with Lane Community College and expect this agreement soon.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: create meaningful opportunities for lasting partnerships with local communities and regional and global organizations.

- Division of Student Affairs fully implemented WOU Grow. WOU Grow—Guided Reflection on Work—is a learning outcomes-based program which utilizes supervisors of student employees to meet twice a term with student employees to discuss skills students are learning in their positions and how these skills will help them as they graduate from WOU and apply for employment.
- Western Oregon University hosted the 29th annual César E. Chávez Leadership Conference. This is the 12th year this event has been hosted by WOU. I want to thank **Anna Hernandez Hunter and her staff** for their work on this important event.
- Continued the Alumni Mentor Program and formed a college-wide Alumni Mentoring working group in LAS; and formed advisory boards in Criminal Justice, Computer Science, Professional Writing, Gerontology & Business.
- Launched new After Hours events for Alumni and friends – volunteers host 2nd Tuesday get-togethers all around the state and region.

ACCOUNTABILITY: promote teamwork and transparency in budgeting, decision-making and the stewardship of resources.

- The business office, in consultation with the General Counsel's office, streamlined procedures such as travel, use and distribution of procurement cards including but not limited to training, templates, and process updates to ensure compliance.
- Simplified Western's tuition structure to be more student-centered, fully participated with SOAR, and installed new credit card terminals.
- Successfully transitioned to new board meeting calendar—our fall meeting will be November 20th, with additional meetings in February, April and June.
- Completion of one cycle of full Institutional Research reporting, dashboards, and analysis with an IR Office and we will be adding an IR analyst to our team this year.
- Successfully resolved several payroll process deficiencies, including but not limited to BANNER coding, under/overpayment processing, summer session pay, and student payroll.
- This past year, **Dave McDonald** led many of our government/public affairs efforts such as a monthly legislative newsletter, met regularly with key legislators, HECC personnel, and outreach efforts that impacted our ability to achieve success in the legislative and educational policy realm.
- I want to thank all of the faculty, staff, students, and Board members who participated in a very successful **Lobby Day for the Technical and Regional Universities in May**.
- We commissioned an economic impact study of the TRU's. **The TRU's account for over 2500 campus jobs, and we support a total of 7500 jobs in Oregon through our**

combined activities—the combined value of all goods and services associated with **TRU’s spending from operations, construction and visitor spending exceeds \$1 billion.**

SUSTAINABILITY & STEWARDSHIP: promote effective university stewardship of educational, environmental, financial, human and technological resources.

- **Enrollment management plan** was developed to assist the university in securing sustainable enrollment in the coming years. The plan highlights our various market segments such freshmen, transfers, graduate students and international students.
- University Housing did not increase room and board rates for 2019-2020—and, our tuition increase of 2.3% was **the lowest increase among the public four-year campuses in Oregon—applause**
- Efforts such at these are vital as we continue to make progress on becoming the **most affordable public university in Oregon.**
- WOU will be moving to a single tuition plan for Oregon residents as we eliminated the Western Promise in fall 2019. This change will improve our ability to predict revenue and we believe it will enable WOU to have a more coherent tuition message around affordability for Oregon families.
- I was pleased to see faculty's active engagement in various textbook affordability initiatives in order to alleviate the financial burden of skyrocketing textbook prices for our students. For example, eleven faculty members took part in a week-long “textbook sprint” to redesign courses and replace commercially published textbooks with no cost textbooks or other educational materials. Switching from a traditional textbook to no cost materials, for these eleven courses, will save WOU students between \$115,000 and \$125,000 this school year. Due to this -- and other Open Educational Resources initiatives faculty engage in -- we are dedicating funds to increase participation throughout the University. In addition, a textbook affordability team will survey the campus to determine current levels of knowledge and experience with open educational materials. I urge you to take a few minutes and complete the questionnaire, so they can coordinate our efforts across campus. I want to thank **Sue Kunda** for her leadership in this effort.
- University Computing Solutions continues to make cyber-security improvements; digital modernizing of computer systems; and support the University Technology Advisory Committee.
- UCS installed and upgraded 28 smart classrooms – in addition, 87 smart classrooms received an upgrade this summer—my thanks to the entire UCS team.
- Launch of inaugural “*Why I love WOU*” video contest. Awarded \$13,000 in scholarships, generated wonderful content and created a high-level social media buzz.
- Conducted a nine-month long **campaign readiness research project**, resulting in a road map for the next seven years and involving more than 70 university and foundation champions.
- Biggest and most successful **Giving Day yet.** The day included multiple matches with many partners that produced a record setting year of **nearly \$70,000.**

- Year two of the 100 opportunities campaign generated **over \$100,000** to support student scholarships. As part of this effort, WOU secured increased support from the Joseph Weston Foundation to support **enrollment of Willamette Promise students**. Twelve students will receive a \$2,500 scholarship.
- Record Breaking Athletic Auction in money raised—**over \$90,000** compared to an average of about \$50,000 in years past
- Campus Dining established successful partnerships with the Child Development Center and the Food Pantry. Campus Dining now provides the food to students at the Child Development Center as part of a US Department of Agriculture grant. Campus Dining has also been working with the **Food Pantry** to provide meal cards to students in need, as well as providing access to food not consumed at various events.
- Campus Master plan was finalized and approved by the Board of Trustees and the City of Monmouth. The plan was guided by our strategic plan and its five initiatives: student success, academic excellence, community engagement, accountability and stewardship & sustainability.

Update on capital projects:

- **Natural Science:** this \$9.4 Million-dollar construction project will be completed by the start of fall classes. This project under the watchful eye of **Steve Taylor** and our **facilities staff**, will **finish on time and within budget**. This project included *renovated classrooms, lab spaces, bathrooms, HVAC, internet access, and improved office spaces*. This renovation has created modern spaces in support of teaching and learning environments. Currently UCS is working diligently to make the changes and upgrades to classroom and labs. **I want to thank Steve Taylor and all members of the project management teams from Facilities services and University Computing Solutions—please stand.** Look for details on an open house and celebration later this fall.
- **Oregon Military Academy:** an \$8.2 Million-dollar project. This project went out to construction bid at the end of August and construction is schedule for fall 2019. OMA will become the Welcome Center and include Admissions, Financial aid, Conference Services, and Alumni Relations. We will be relocating the Mail and Print rooms permanently in the Welcome Center in January 2020. This facility is also home to the Food Pantry. The second floor will remain as housing options for conferences and short campus visits. The project is expected to be completed by fall of 2020.
- **Instructional Technology Center:** a \$10.2 million-dollar project. This project will go out to bid in October and construction is scheduled to begin in December 2019. Major improvements to seismic needs, HVAC, and adding additional gallery space to support our academic programs. The entire project is expected to be completed by winter 2021. ITC will continue to be home to our programs in computer science and visual communication design.

- **Pacific Room Audio Visual Upgrade:** a \$120,000 project. This project will replace and upgrade the Pacific Room sound system with new speakers, mixing console, and wireless mics; add two laser projection units with retractable side screens; and replace the current lighting system with a new LED touchscreen controlled stage lighting system. The project is expected to be completed by the beginning of New Student Week—the week of September 23rd.

So, What Lies Ahead for 2019-20?

- Last year, I challenged Western to focus on: **1) developing new pathways and programs, 2) improving retention and graduation rates, 3) improving affordability, and 4) accelerating our efforts to become a Hispanic Serving Institution.** And, I am pleased that we have made significant strides in all of these areas—but we have more to do. These goals remain our top priorities for this year too.
- WOU:Salem will begin its first full year of offering classes for undergraduate programs and the newly approved Masters' in Organizational leadership.
- WOU will continue its efforts to change legislation to enable the campus to offer **applied doctorates** including a Doctor of Physical Therapy program. We have had productive sessions with key legislators since the session ended in June and we are planning to meet with committee chairs well in advance of the upcoming session to achieve this goal.
- Western will continue its efforts to **improve retention and graduation rates**, by connecting with continuing students in each registration cycle to reduce any barriers to student success. **With the help of our division chairs and our outstanding staff on our advising teams, Western has seen the share of continuing students increase over past years.** Such efforts to nudge and encourage our students is paramount to our future and a visible reminder that Western provides personalized support for our students as they seek a college degree.

Apple Partnership

In addition to a focus on professional development for our employees, Western has a goal of modernizing our technology—to that end WOU has been in conversations with Apple and their Higher Education Division over the past four months.

At this time, we are planning to pilot the use of iPads in limited areas, including a math cohort and a Student Enrichment Program cohort this fall. In addition, on August 28th and 29th, twenty faculty and staff took part in a training designed to show how we could increase student success and academic achievement using new technologies (e.g., note taking apps, real time in class surveys, screen capture for creating online lectures and more). It is important to point out that if we move forward with providing students or cohorts of students with tablets, faculty involvement will be optional.

However, we will continue to provide useful professional development for faculty who want to incorporate this technology into aspects of their work.

The **next legislative session** is just weeks away and we have **two primary goals: 1) introduce (and pass) legislation that enables Western, and all regional comprehensive universities, to offer applied doctorates, and 2) secure funding for our top capital projects.** As you may know the legislature, following the Governor's recommendation, deferred action on capital in the past session but it has reserved more than \$300 million for all capital construction projects in the upcoming session. For Western, this effort will focus on two capital projects.

- **Student Success Center:** This concept will occupy the old College of Education building site. The center is envisioned as a place where all students would gather to improve their academic performance. We have much planning to do and, of course, we need to secure funding. Possible uses of the space include academic advising, the Student Enrichment Program, TRiO, the Math Center, the Science Center, the Writing Center, the Honors Program, Service Learning and Career Development and the Veterans Center. It should be designed as a place for integrated services for continuing students. Finally, I hope the Center would include open space for collaboration and learning.
- **New PE:** Constructed in 1971. New PE houses WOU's indoor varsity athletic courts and team/training/locker rooms, two multipurpose classrooms, as well as athletic department offices. Its gymnasium and multipurpose courts are scheduled each term to support the demand for Health and Physical Education division classes. As the largest venue on campus with seating for 3,000, NPE is used for various campus and community activities including the César Chávez Leadership Conference, convocation and other new student week activities, as well as many other community events. Classes, activities, and sports events are heavily scheduled year-round in New PE making it difficult to schedule routine maintenance. As a result of heavy use and tight scheduling, It has numerous maintenance issues that can no longer be deferred, the need for additional space for team rooms, locker rooms, weight room, smart G & E classrooms, offices, and ADA issues that must be addressed. For example, New PE does not have an elevator making spaces located on the second floor inaccessible for some students, faculty, staff and the public.
- This year, like last year, we need to accelerate our progress in becoming the first public 4-year university in Oregon that is designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution. By using our bi-lingual materials and with the support of bi-lingual admission and financial aid counselors, we hope to see continued growth in the market segment.
- By committing to this goal, Western will continue its leadership role in Oregon. As you may know, our campus has a higher retention and graduation rate for Hispanic students

than our peers and this population of students is among our most successful. For example, our six-year graduation rate for Hispanics is 53% compared to 49% for peers and 53% for Hispanics compared to an overall rate of 44% in our latest IPEDS report.

- Closing the educational attainment gap for Latinx students remains a top priority for Oregon and our nation and advancing Hispanic enrollment is essential to WOU's future.
- We also need to continue our efforts to be the most affordable public university in Oregon. Our tuition increase this year was the lowest among all public universities and our housing cost did not increase. This year we need to complete efforts to evaluate course fees and other cost drivers to ensure that these are aligned with our goals of affordability and sustainability.
- Finally, we need to see our retention rates continue to improve. In fall 2018, Western's retention rate was 72% compared to our peers' rate of 73%--we can do better. As reported earlier today, we have developed new efforts to help our students succeed.
- A one-percentage point increase means that we retain **eight more students**. With our student-to-faculty ratio and our campus community characteristics—I know we can positively impact student success by actively supporting our students in their journey toward graduation.

So, as we begin a new academic year, I want to take this opportunity to remind us all of our purpose—**our shared value and goals**.

I ask each of you to re-commit yourselves to our core values and our mission.

Western Oregon University creates **lasting opportunities** for **student success** through **transformative education** and **personalized support**.

Each of us has the **opportunity and responsibility** to be a positive force in a **transformational process** that is designed to help each student **graduate**.