

1. Commencement

The Commencement Committee has been hard at work planning this year's festivities, which will include several different aspects of celebration. Like last year, there will be a virtual ceremony for students and families who choose to note the milestone from afar. In addition, the committee is planning a special ceremony that will take place throughout the day on June 12 provide students the opportunity to walk across the platform, get photos taken and have their names read as their supporters cheer them on. I'm please to say that over 600 graduates have signed up to participate in this day-long event which has been carefully designed to include safety measures necessary during this unique time.

2. Update: Tuition increase for 2021-22 among lowest in state

As we continue in our commitment to being the most affordable public university in Oregon, our tuition for resident undergrads next academic year will increase just 2.17%. That figure is lower than any other Oregon public four-year university in the I-5 corridor. Although the Tuition and Fee Advisory Committee (TFAC) recommended a flat tuition rate for next year, concern about the financial impacts of that decision led to the slight increase, which translates to an additional \$180 per year for a student taking 45 credit hours.

3. DEI Task Force

I also want to bring to your attention a task force I have established to devise standards for the expedited review of DEI proposals related to diversity goals of the university for the coming year. The task force is comprised of three people from the University, Diversity, Inclusion Advisory Committee (UDIAC), the University Cultural Competency Advisory Committee (UCCAC) and the University Budget Advisory Committee (UBAC). Members are: UDIAC: Christopher Solario, Gabbi Boyle, Makana Waikiki; UCCAC: Luis Cordova, CM Hall, Arlette Tapis Lopez; and UBAC: Jasmine Miller, Sharyne Ryals, Tad Shannon.

The task force will consider the proposal presented to the Board at its April meeting as well as diversity proposals from earlier UBAC submissions. The vetted proposals will move to UBAC for expedited review for this budget cycle. This process recognizes the need to act on these proposals before we finalize the budget for fiscal year 2021-2022, but at the same time ensure a fair and transparent process for all those interested in making proposals.

4. Reopening: May 10, 2021 Press Release

Western Oregon University aims for pack immunity through immunization requirement for Wolves

MONMOUTH, Ore. – Western Oregon University (WOU) announced today that in preparation for a predominantly in-person fall 2021, COVID-19 vaccinations will be required for students and employees who study or work in person at either the Monmouth or Salem campuses.

The vaccine requirement, among other efforts, was announced earlier today to current students in a virtual information session focused on COVID-19 planning for the 2021-22 academic year.

“We know our students and employees miss the vibrance of in-person campus life, and we want to return to that while also supporting the overall safety of our communities. Vaccination is an important step toward pack immunity so our Wolves can be together again,” said WOU President Rex Fuller. “In the meantime, we’ve been doing everything we can during spring term to make vaccines accessible to members of our campus community.”

In the virtual session, Fuller emphasized that the details of the vaccination requirement plan would be further refined through engagement with many campus stakeholders, including WOU’s Reopening Committee, Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, the Associated Students of Western Oregon University (ASWOU), and the university’s two unions: SEIU and the Western Oregon University Federation of Teachers (WOUFT). Because WOU is one of Oregon’s most ethnically diverse university campuses, Fuller also pledged to engage the campus’s University Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee (UDIAC) for advice and suggestions as the plan is finalized.

“The details of the plan require the input of our faculty, staff, and students, through the lens of science, data and public health expertise. It would be short-sighted to rush the details of a vaccination requirement without hearing from the WOU community,” Fuller said.

In order to incentivize students to get vaccinated sooner rather than later, the university also announced a program in conjunction with the WOU Wolfstore that gives students \$25 to be used on textbooks, supplies, gear or whatever they choose.

“My hope is that this incentive program encourages WOU students to get their vaccination and rewards those who already have. It’s important we do our part to support pack immunity in our Wolf community,” said Associated Students of Western Oregon University President N.J. Johnson. “We encourage students to get their first vaccination as soon as possible so they will have their second dose completed before the conclusion of spring term.”

Free vaccinations are available in the Pacific Room of WOU’s Werner University Center on Monday, Wednesday and Friday each week. Walk-ins are welcome from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Or, appointments can be made with Salem Health. WOU has hosted the Polk County clinic for Salem Health since February 2021.