



**President's State of the University Address
Rice Auditorium
September 19, 2016**

Thank you Chair Baumgartner.

I am so appreciative of our trustees – it is clear to me that they hold Western in high esteem and have high expectations for our continued success.

Good morning friends and colleagues and thank you for being here today – welcome to the start of a new academic year!

Shared governance is of paramount importance to a university's health and future – I would like to recognize the president of the Faculty Senate, Dr. Adele Schepige, the president of the Staff Senate, Chris Solario, and the ASWOU president Alma Pacheco.

Next I would like to recognize our new tenure-track faculty, new non-tenure-track faculty, and staff that have joined the WOU team this past year, and importantly, serve our students and faculty alike. A list of all new employees was distributed and I would like to have all our new colleagues stand and be recognized.

Thank you—we are so excited to have you join the Western community. I know your contributions will help the university continue its path of excellence.

Last year was filled with anticipation and tremendous work to establish our new governance system, to reach agreement with our two unions, to engage in the Northwest accreditation process, and to launch a new strategic planning process. All of this was in addition to the normal ebb and flow of work that encompasses the university on a daily basis.

So much has been accomplished:

- On Friday at 4 pm, we will hold the grand opening of the Richard Woodcock Education Center. This will be the first time all of the COE faculty and staff will be housed in one location. It is a wonderful addition to campus and uses cross-laminated timber – a new Oregon technology.
- We have so many to thank, but a special note of appreciation to the

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entire physical plant team, Tom Neal, Paul Finke, Donna Litchfield, University Computing Services, Bill Kernan, Michael Ellis, Megan Eichler; and the entire College of Education staff... all of whom have done amazing work giving generously of their time and energy on behalf of students, faculty, and the whole WOU community.

- We broke ground on a new Student Health and Counseling Center which will be located north of the Math/Nursing building. It is scheduled to open in June 2017 and construction will begin soon. Students increased their fees to pay for this investment.
- We celebrated one of our largest graduating classes with over 1100 undergraduate degrees and over 220 graduate degrees and Oregon residents represented over 75% of all graduates
- Enrollment projections for fall 2016 show that 20% of admitted and registered Freshmen are self-identified as Latino (last year 13.5%); 29% of students earned college credits while in high school; WOU will have 46 students enrolled who participated in the Willamette Promise; 74% of new freshmen and 83% of new transfer students are Oregon residents; California, Hawaii and Washington provided the greatest number of out-of-state students; and females account for 65% of the freshman class and 58% of the transfer class.
- Growing Hispanic enrollment is vital to our future and I am pleased that Western will be the permanent host for the César Chávez Leadership Conference, which will afford Western a leading role in shaping the college plans for nearly 2,000 high school students.
- Dave McDonald has led an effort that will result in a new Dual Enrollment agreement between Western and Clackamas Community College – this will prove to be a model for agreements with additional community colleges in Oregon. This year transfers are trending ahead of last year by about 8%.
- We enhanced our sense of inclusiveness by hosting outstanding speakers such as Tim Wise, author of *White Like Me*, and we provided new signage for over 20 gender inclusive bathrooms campus-wide; additionally faculty, staff, and students can identify their preferred name.
- Western joined the national “It’s on Us” campaign that is designed to end sexual assault and we have also increased staffing in Abby’s House to be eligible for a new CASA grant. Regardless of the outcome of the grant, Western needs to continue its efforts to provide a safe community for all of our students.

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- WOU was recognized as a “Tree Campus” by Tree Campus USA. Western is one of five Oregon campuses recognized. Special thanks to Dr. Bryan Dutton and Paul Finke. To earn this distinction, Western Oregon University met five core standards for a sustainable campus including evidence of a campus tree-care plan, dedicated annual expenditures for its campus tree program, an Arbor Day observance and the sponsorship of student service-learning projects.
- Academic partnerships were developed between Salem-Keizer school district and our College of Education such as the bi-lingual education program.
- The honors program has the largest incoming class in its history (47), largest overall participation in the program (166 in fall 2016) and just had a record number of graduates (29).
- Last year we added capacity for pre-award to The Research Institute and I am pleased to announce that we had more faculty submitting a larger number of grants, and our total funding increased to over \$11 million with four new funding sources.
- This year we will initiate a \$25,000 fund to support writing and submission of external grants. Steve Scheck and Ella Taylor will be developing details of the program, but it is intended to promote additional external funding in support of teaching, scholarly activities and community service.
- With this in mind, I would like to recognize the faculty who published a scholarly or creative work, authored a grant, or presented a paper at a conference in 2015-16. Your work enhances Western’s academic reputation – please stand.
- We also added staffing capacity to our Student Enrichment Program, which includes TriO, and I am pleased that our early estimates for retention show an increase from under 70% to nearly 75%.
- Western faculty and staff have been recipients of national recognition again for service to students (NACADA) and others have taken on professional leadership roles at the state and national levels.
- High academic success rates for student athletes – the NCAA Division II motto of “life in the balance” continues to serve our student athletes well. The GPA for all athletes competing in winter was over 3.0.
- We continue to provide support and a sense of community through the Veterans Resource Center and our recent program that waives the

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application fee for veterans.

- Access to college was improved through our Willamette Promise program whereby high school seniors earn college credit in dual credit courses in Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Psychology, Writing, Communications, Spanish, and Computer Science. There were approximately 520 high school seniors of which 46 enrolled for classes this upcoming fall term. We will continue to work to provide access to Willamette Promise and work to convert these students into fully enrolled Western students.
- We finished last fiscal year with a fund balance that meets Board policy—slightly better than budget due to prudent management of our resources. These one-time savings enabled Western to meet required university match-funding to pursue critical construction/renovation projects such as renovation of the natural science building and the Oregon Military Academy.
- Tuition increase for undergraduate residents was held to less than 3% and we froze tuition for families with an EFC of zero. These steps demonstrate WOU's continued commitment to access and affordability.
- On the alumni front—we expanded our reach through events in Salem, Portland, Hermiston, Bend and most recently Sacramento. These efforts have grown our Alumni network – and we connect on a regular basis though social media, monthly e-news and regional volunteers.
- The Foundation received a gift of \$100,000 supporting the Annual Fund, enhancement of the TRiO Program, and also funds to help retention efforts.
- A gift to name the multi-purpose space of the new Richard Woodcock Education Center in honor of one of the university's long-time supporters. This prominent space, with state-of-the-art technology, will be called the Mario and Alma Pastega Conference Center.
- The Foundation also realized an increase in the number of gifts received over the previous year. The number of gifts below \$100 grew, highlighting our efforts to engage more individuals in the life of the university and also emphasizing that every gift truly matters. The Foundation also realized an increase in the number of gifts received over the previous year.
- Overall, the Foundation received over \$1.8 million from generous supporters benefiting all areas of campus academic programs, facilities, and most importantly scholarships.



- The Foundation created a new Socially Responsible Investment fund. The fund will not hold any investment from companies engaged in fossil fuels and tobacco based products. This process included thoughtful input from our students and faculty, especially Dr. Mark VanSteeter. Going forward, I hope this fund can support scholarships for students majoring in fields that support sustainability.

Budget

The financing of public higher education in Oregon will continue to remain in flux for this year and likely several years to come. Revenue, budgets and entire statewide tax structures are uncertain and are likely to change significantly based on upcoming elections.

Additionally, the budget for each public university is subject to adjustment and approval by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. Allocations from HECC are increasingly determined by outcomes such as number of degrees granted. This makes budgeting extremely difficult. Nonetheless, I will do my best in the next few minutes to highlight some specifics that we think will materially impact Western's budget. While the budget is uncertain, this much is not – Western will continue to lead the state in affordable access to education, to serving the underrepresented students, and in affording students a high quality education that derives from the passion of, and the direct contact Western students have with this faculty.

Following the November ballot, we will work with the other public universities to ensure that adequate funding is secured to enable Oregon's public universities to make progress on the state's higher education goals. In this regard, Western plays a leading role in closing the educational gap for individuals who have historically been denied access to higher education. The educational gap is plaguing the state and nation, and Western will continue to seek the resources it needs to close this educational attainment gap. Our collective future depends on real access and opportunity for all Oregon residents.

Going forward, Western will continue to expand our resources to serve our students, faculty and the entire Western community. Often the most obvious of these expansions relate to the university's physical resources and this will be no exception for Western.

This year, we will begin planning for the Natural Science building renovation and once remodeling begins, we will use the former College of Education as surge space.

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Additionally, Western will occupy the Oregon Military Academy in August 2017 and funding for remodeling has been requested in the 2017-19 biennium. This space affords the campus a unique opportunity to develop space that will assist our efforts to provide conferences focused on such things as first-generation enrollments and graduate certificate programs. A combination of living and learning space is one of the uses that is being explored as we move ahead with planning.

The projects will be designed to continue our commitment to student success, academic excellence, sustainability, and engaged learning.

Earlier this spring, the seven public universities submitted a joint funding request for the operating budget to the HECC. This funding request explored six separate funding scenarios ranging from a 10% cut to a 39.4% increase in State funding for Oregon universities.

Cut scenarios included an increase in base funding of 3% from \$665M to \$685M but failed to cover known increases in current service level cost drivers such as health care benefits, minimum wage, and the PERS unfunded liability.

Current service level increases (CSL) are projected to be approximately 7.9% averaged across all public universities. Western's CSL increase is projected to be closer to 10%. In both cases a 3% increase in State funding would be insufficient to fill the gap and thereby create a shortfall of funding to maintain our current service level to students. To avoid any programmatic impact in this scenario, universities would need to raise tuition by as much as 15%. The final cut scenario included base cuts to a level of \$616M – a decrease of about \$50M. This scenario would lead to a combination of effects such as program cuts, tuition increases of as much as 25%, and/or staff reductions. In this scenario, known increase in personnel costs amounts to over \$13 million dollars for Western over the biennium. Without additional state funding, universities would need to raise tuition by as much as 20%.

The “increase” scenarios are aimed at maintaining our current service levels and mitigating the need for tuition increases. Increases in state funding are critical to protect investments made in 2015 and to address looming expenditure increases related to the PERS unfunded liability.



If \$100 million is added to the 2015 base for a state wide total of \$765M, tuition increases at Western would be limited to the 5% - 10% range – still unacceptably high for an access institution. The largest increase scenario was \$943M which included coverage of CSL cost drivers such as PERS, held tuition increases to less than 3%, and improved outcomes related to affordability, access, student success and quality.

In the final analysis, HECC proposed an increase scenario of \$943M to the Governor. Clearly, as we enter the 2017-19 biennium, much of the budget conversation will be focused on whether state funding is sufficient to entertain base increases for higher education.

WOU's budget, and the budgets for all public universities, will be increasingly determined by student learning outcomes. The metrics include degrees granted, and retention and graduation rates. Outcomes also focus on providing access and opportunity for first-generation, rural, and diverse students.

Enrollment

One of the biggest threats to WOU's future funding prospects is the impact that years of declining enrollment will have on some performance metrics. Degrees granted cannot increase if enrollment is falling. Unless we see improvement in such things as retention and graduation rates, increased numbers of transfers, and improved time-to-degree, degree production is likely to decrease. Quite simply, enrollment drives our degree production and is key to our financial health. For perspective, every increase of 100 FTES for Oregon undergraduates increases net tuition revenue by over \$750,000. Additionally, this level of increase also leads to increased degrees granted, which also generates additional state funding.

In the long run, access and affordability are key factors that will affect Oregon's ability to reach its goal of 40/40/20. This is one reason why Western's resident tuition increase for 2016-17 was less than 3% and we froze tuition for families that were least able to afford college – those families with an estimated family contribution of zero had tuition frozen at 2015-16 levels. Going forward, we will continue to carefully monitor our tuition and discount rates and provide alternatives such as the Western Promise for those students and families that prefer to lock-in tuition for a four-year period. Access ***without affordability is not opportunity.***

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Strategic Planning

Looking ahead to 2016-17, I am pleased to report on the progress we are making with the Strategic Planning process. In April, I appointed a 25 person Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) that is co-chaired by Dr. Burton and myself. Since April, the SPC has reviewed data from WOU, conducted a SWOT analysis, and read supporting materials on strategic planning such as the strategic plan of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission.

Western's plan should:

- Be readable
- Empower and inspire individuals to take creative control and work toward common good
- Identify and articulate consensus about priorities
 - Measure how we define success in those priorities
 - Not just a wish list, but a map
- Have a structure of communication information flow up, down, and across
- Tell our story in an engaging and informative way
- Have active and equitable participation in idea generation on campus, eliminating institutional and individual roadblocks
- Be a living document that honors the populations we serve and has commitment from faculty and staff
- Be something everyone is aware of and believes in
- Give a sense of identity and unity among divisions
- Align our resources to strategic priorities
- Hold us accountable
- Provide unity between the university and the community

The SPC held town hall meetings last spring and provided a progress report to the campus and Board of Trustees. The SPC surveyed faculty and graduating students in June. Graduates stated that the personalized experience was paramount and 88% stated that they were satisfied or extremely satisfied with their total experience at WOU. I think this is a tribute to what WOU has committed itself to for years on end – that it is a place where every student matters. This characteristic was reaffirmed by faculty who are committed to seeing our students excel academically and graduate.

The SPC has reviewed the university mission, vision, and values and is now building a plan that will guide Western's decision-making. For example, the strategic plan will need to be linked to the budgeting process, IT support, facilities master plan and the like.

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Additionally, the university will need to develop an enrollment management plan that is aligned with the Strategic Plan.

This fall, the SPC will engage in additional town halls as it receives feedback and further develops the strategic plan. Ultimately the plan will be presented to the Board of Trustees for review and approval. I expect the plan to be completed in its final form by year's end with review and approval by the BOT in early 2017.

While the planning process is not completed, it has and will continue to reveal critical issues that we must address and we will embrace those challenges. The initiatives that are developed through this process will make us a stronger institution and will help Western continue to be a school of choice – a destination campus.

Western needs to provide clear pathways for degree completion. For example, requirements for the bachelor's degree should require no more than 180 credits for college-ready freshman and we should have well-defined four-year maps for degree completion.

Additionally, Western should have a goal of working with our community college partners to ensure that all credits transfer and count toward the degree so they can attain a bachelor's degree within 180 credits. Transfer pathways will be increasingly important in light of the Oregon Promise and the expected increase in enrollment at community colleges in Oregon. Western needs to be seen as a campus that welcomes transfer students and guides them through the pathways that lead to degree attainment.

Western needs to continue to build partnerships with community groups that reach and support first-generation college students and their families. The high school graduating class in Oregon is increasingly non-white, of modest economic means, and from families without college degree holders. These first-generation, underrepresented students will be sought by all public universities and Western must continue to excel in its efforts to recruit, enroll and graduate this student population.

Finally, Western also has an opportunity to partner with community colleges, to provide a pathway for degree completion for persons who have some college but no degree. These individuals may have started college years ago and “stopped-out” to pursue other activities. By providing a pathway for degree completion, these individuals will improve

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their position in the job market and provide greater economic security for their families. By gaining a bachelor's degree these individuals are better positioned to pursue their dreams.

When I arrived, I was told that Western is Oregon's best kept secret. To advance and excel, we must become Oregon's best known opportunity. To achieve this, we must raise our visibility and name recognition – recognition that will be built on the sustained excellence of so many programs. To achieve this goal, we need to think of coherent unified marketing efforts around all aspects of our work. From the fine arts to athletics, I believe Western can leverage its success to promote interest and reputation, which I believe will secure our future place in the state of Oregon as a premier destination campus.

For me, the planning process has reaffirmed Western's values and it has demonstrated that WOU is an engaged and vibrant university. We have many strengths upon which to build our reputation and visibility.

Northwest Accreditation

However, Western has a challenge ahead in terms of meeting all of the expectations and requirements that relate to our accreditation.

Most importantly, following the 7th year review by NWCCU, I can state that Western **is accredited**, and we are now in year one of the new seven-year cycle. The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities found:

“that the accreditation of Western Oregon University has been reaffirmed on the basis of the Spring 2016 Year Seven Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Evaluation which was to address Recommendation 1 of the Spring 2013 Year Three Peer-Evaluation Report.”

In general this reflects a positive outcome; however, the decision also includes direction concerning a special report and on-site visit in September 2017. At the macro level, the Commission found that expectations had not been met related to mission fulfillment – a recommendation that was made in 2013.

Specifically, Western is expected to:

- Clarify its mission and provide better direction for mission fulfillment

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- Identify outcomes that reflect achievement of the mission
- Identify objectives for each core theme and identify “meaningful, assessable, and verifiable direct and indirect measures of achievement”
- Identify student learning outcomes (SLOs) for all courses and programs, wherever offered and however delivered
- Identify SLOs that are “meaningful, assessable, and verifiable” and consistent with the mission
- Design and implement a planning process and a budgeting process that are broad-based, data-driven, and linked to mission fulfillment
- Engage in on-going systematic assessment of academic programs and core themes that leads to mission fulfillment

These expectations are directly related to the seven recommendations made by the site evaluation team in April.

The report also identified a number of concerns that have been addressed by the university. For example, the team stated that the mission and core themes appear to be out of alignment with the institution’s passion. As noted earlier, this work is well under way with the mission, vision, and values review that is part of the strategic planning process.

Additionally, the University hired an internal auditor by accessing staff from Shared Services. This will enable WOU to conduct appropriate oversight of risk management. We have also posted the minutes of all Board meetings, and provide live-streaming of the meetings. These two actions have improved the level of access and accountability for the Board of Trustees.

As part of the Strategic Planning process, the university is revamping its budget planning process and IT planning process. WOU will form a university budget committee that will include representation from all governance groups. I plan to work with the governance groups to identify faculty, staff and students for consideration on the committee. The committee will be formed in the fall, and it will begin its work in 2017 as the biennial budget process begins. Following review and consideration of proposals, and consistent with the overall state of the university budget, the committee will provide recommendations. These recommendations on budget priorities will inform final decisions. Additionally, I will be directing University Computing Services to form a



campus-wide advisory council that will inform its planning to ensure closer alignment with mission fulfillment.

How did WOU get to this point?

A review of past communications from Northwest shows a clear pattern. In 2007, Northwest recommended “full-implementation of a broad-based, university-wide, integrated process of planning and evaluation.” Additionally, the 2007 report recommended “regular and continuous assessment” and activities that lead to “improvement of teaching and learning” for all academic programs. These same concerns were cited in 2009 and 2011. In 2009, a key conclusion was, “There is insufficient documentation that strategic planning, assessment, and using evaluation results to inform broad-based university decision-making are occurring.” In 2011, the university was encouraged to revise its indicators – key performance indicators – to ensure that they are “meaningful, assessable and verifiable.” Finally, in 2013, the Northwest report indicated that further refinement was needed in its system of measuring mission fulfillment.

Throughout this timeframe, efforts were made to make progress. As evidence, in November 2014, the faculty senate approved the LEAP essential learning outcomes for our university with some minor modifications to better fit our mission. However, we have not fully implemented or assessed these learning outcomes across campus. We have some academic programs, most notably in the College of Education, where the programs have developed assessment programs that include documentation of improvements in teaching and learning. I also know of other programs in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, where significant efforts have been made to collect data on student learning.

At WOU, we believe that education transforms the lives of individuals and society at large. Our students’ continued success in a rapidly changing world depends upon our willingness to set ambitious learning goals for them and then ask and answer questions about our students’ learning. This inquiry is a core responsibility of faculty that is fed by our inherent curiosity about how our programs might better contribute to all students’ learning. As faculty we have a responsibility and natural curiosity to better understand how our programs are working for our students as a whole. This means asking questions about program outcomes that are designed to measure whether our intended outcomes are achieved.

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Program assessment is a natural part of our pursuit of the intellectual endeavor that is paramount to the life of the university. It is for this reason that we must undertake assessment of student learning outcomes. It is integral to our mission and core value that education plays a transformative role in the life of individuals and society at large.

So what remains?

Our greatest challenge for 2016-17 rests with accreditation and fulfilling the expectations related to mission fulfillment and program assessment. Western must demonstrate a campus-wide commitment to assurance of learning and assessment. The April report, stated:

Evidence of meaningful assessment is anecdotal and decentralized. The decentralized nature of reporting structures, limited access to institutional data, generic mission statement, and campus culture thwart assessment efforts. The WOU faculty, administration and staff could benefit from challenging their own perspectives, more clearly articulating their strengths, and demonstrating their successes. The institution needs to critically analyze system functions, ways of knowing and beliefs, and devise plans and actions for self-improvement.

What's Next?

Spring 2017

- Address Recommendations 1, 2, and 3 in Spring 2017 Year One *Mission and Core Themes* Report

The report is due March 1, 2017 and needs to include evidence that the university has:

- Clarified its mission statement to provide better direction for mission fulfillment
- Defined mission fulfillment including outcomes that demonstrate achievement of mission
- Defined objectives for each core theme using meaningful, assessable, and verifiable direct and indirect measures (indicators) of achievement

This means that we need to develop a systematic approach to assessment that will document that the information will be used for continuous improvement and mission fulfillment.

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Realistically, this work needs to be accomplished in fall term, which is a major reason for the reassignment of Dr. Sue Monahan. As you know, she resigned as dean and has been appointed as Associate Provost for Academic Effectiveness for 2016-17. This approach is necessary because we have a very short window of opportunity to act.

We also need to align and/or revise the core themes with our mission. Once the core themes have been established, we need to identify meaningful, assessable, and verifiable direct and indirect measures of achievement and we need to define mission fulfillment in terms of these outcomes.

To help get us started, a special workshop is scheduled for this Wednesday from 1-4:30 pm in ITC 211. This will be an opportunity for faculty members to learn about the work that needs to be accomplished to meet the expectations of the Northwest Commission.

Following the March 2017 report, WOU will submit another report on September 1, 2017 with a fall 2017 site visit that must address the following:

- Ad hoc Report, with a visit, to address Recommendations 4, 6, and 7 Spring 2017 Year One *Mission and Core Themes* Report

The September 2017 report will need to address:

- Student learning outcomes for all courses, programs, and degrees, including general education, wherever offered and however delivered, that are meaningful, assessable, and verifiable and are consistent with the mission
- An ongoing planning and budgeting process that is broad-based, inclusive of all appropriate constituencies, data-driven, includes Core Theme planning, and leads to mission fulfillment
- A comprehensive, on-going, systematic assessment program that leads to mission fulfillment through the evaluation of Core Theme objectives and supports continuous improvement

The Northwest Commission has asked us to develop systems that are evident in the work of 21st century public universities. This work is the natural outgrowth of crucial inquiry, whereby we discover what works well and commit ourselves to improvement. How will we know that our programs are meaningful and successful if we do not include appropriate program and course assessment? We must be persistent; engagement matters and the educational process is developmental and long-term. Finally, to excel in

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our journey we must be willing to examine ourselves with a critical eye toward continuous improvement.

What's Possible?

Western has a long tradition of engaging our students in deep learning activities. The work of the Gallup-Purdue Index, *Great Lives Great Jobs*, highlights transformative practices that are positively correlated with a sense of college worth. The factors that positively affect a sense of college worth are:

- 1) A sense that a professor cared about me as a person and generated a sense of excitement about learning
- 2) A mentor who encouraged me to pursue my dreams
- 3) An opportunity to be active in extracurricular activities
- 4) Completed an internship or worked on a long-term project
- 5) Held a leadership position in campus or national organizations

Western's size and student-to-faculty ratio make it conducive to engaging in such high-impact practices. These core values are also aligned with our effort to better appreciate and understand what our students learn, inside and outside the classroom.

This year, our work will require us to come together as a community of learners who are dedicated to the mission of Western and public universities. The role of public universities in our society is vital to our future as a nation. The work that we do, and are committed to each day, will close the educational attainment gap for all Oregon residents. By providing opportunity to those individuals who have been excluded from educational access, Western will be a driving force in improving the state and nation.

Be it economic prosperity or cultural understanding and civility in the discourse of public policy, state colleges and universities are the drivers of an informed democratic society. Graduates of these programs - Western's programs - are prepared to make a positive contribution to their communities and society at large. In this sense, the experience for our students at Western is ***transformational***.

Each year when I meet with new students and families, I ask our students to imagine what it will feel like to graduate from Western. I ask them to visualize and expect success and to commit to plans that will achieve the goal of graduation.

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In a similar way, a week from today, we will welcome our new students to the first day of the fall term. For a significant number of freshmen, **they will be the first in their families to attend college, and you will be their first professor. Others will be their first advisor, residence hall director, financial aid advisor, librarian, business office professional, college coach, or campus safety officer.** Each of us is engaged in the **transformational process** that will make a life-long impact on our new students and each of us makes a difference in that process. This type of impact is critical to our nation's future and Western is at the forefront of this exciting, transformational process – for that reason I am confident that Western will continue to be successful and it will be the school of choice for many students.

As we enter our second year of independence, I ask each of you to set high expectations for all aspects of our work as a comprehensive university. We must be committed to meeting the expectation of the Northwest Commission. After all, these expectations are also the expectations of the citizens and leaders of the state of Oregon. With your active engagement, we will meet the expectation of the Northwest Commission and we will build momentum to continue our tradition of **access, affordability, excellence and opportunity.** I ask for your active participation and support as Western we engage in this important work.

After some time for questions and comments, I invite you to the Pacific Room for lunch. I encourage you to introduce and invite our guests to your table so they may receive a more personalized perspective of WOU.

Thank you and I wish all of you a great academic year. Go Wolves.

Respectfully,

Rex Fuller, President