



**President's State of the University Address  
Rice Auditorium  
September 16, 2019**

*Below is the script for President Rex Fuller's State of the University Address. It is not a direct transcript of his remarks. For a video of the speech highlights, visit [WOUTV](http://WOUTV).*

Thank you Chair Komp.

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

As I call your name, I would like all of our trustees to stand---

- Gavin Keulks
- Betty Komp
- Cecelia Koontz, who also serves as Mayor of Monmouth
- Malissa Larson; and,
- Lane Shetterly

I am so appreciative of the support we receive from our trustees – it is clear to me that they have high expectations for our continued success. Please join me in thanking them for their dedicated service.

At Western we know that shared governance is of paramount importance to our long-term health and future – I would like to recognize the president of Faculty Senate, Kristin Latham-Scott, the president of Staff Senate, Laura Lyon, and ASWOU president, Erik Morgan – please stand.

Also, I would like to recognize our elected officials and their representatives who are here:

- Joining Mayor Cecilia Koontz, is Scott McClure, Monmouth City Manager
- Evan Source, Chief of Staff for Representative Paul Evans
- Representative Paul Evans
- Both Evan and Representative Evans are former student body presidents!
- I also pleased to welcome Oregon Senator Denyc Boles

As many of you know, Senator Boles was appointed to represent district 10 for the duration of Senator Winters term—welcome to Western.

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. A list of all new employees is included in your program.

Would all of the new faculty please stand? And, would all of the new staff also stand?

Thank you—we are so excited to have you join the Western community. I know your contributions will help the university continue its commitment to student success, academic excellence, and community engagement.

Our academic mission is central to the success of our university and faculty have the primary responsibility for nurturing and developing academic programs that attract students and lead our students to timely graduation. In addition, faculty are engaged in original scholarly and creative activities that keep them engaged in their professional disciplines. Staff have responsibility to apply best practices to their areas of service and many staff participate in professional organizations and write successful grants to support these efforts.

I would like to invite all of the faculty and staff who have, in the past year, published an article, book, book chapter, presented your work at a conference, exhibited your work at a juried conference or written a grant to stand and be recognized. Your intellectual and creative pursuits enable Western to excel—thank you.

Finally, I would also ask all of the recently tenured faculty to stand, as well as those faculty members who earned a promotion. Your promotion and tenure is a tribute to your accomplishments in teaching, scholarly and creative activities, and service. Thank you.

Before we look to 2019-20 let's take a moment to reflect on 2018-19.

### **Year in review—graduation**

- The graduating class of 2019 totaled 1,828 individuals who earned a total of 1,840 degrees.
- Over 1,000 of these students attended commencement.
- 87% earned a bachelor's degree and 13% earned a master's degree.
- The youngest student receiving a bachelor's degree was 19 years old.
- The youngest student receiving a master's degree was 22.
- The most experienced graduate receiving a bachelor's degree was 62, while the most experienced graduates receiving their master's degrees were 57.
- WOU's 2019 graduates represented:
  - 33 of 36 counties in Oregon;
  - The states of: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Michigan, Montana, Northern Mariana Islands, Nevada, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Washington.

- And 17 countries: Brazil, Canada, China, Democratic Republic of the Congo, India, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, Peru, Rwanda, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan.
- 34 students receiving a bachelor's degree had a 4.00 cumulative GPA.
- 51 students receiving a master's degree had a 4.00 cumulative GPA.
- Eight students from the first cohort of Bilingual Teachers Scholars graduated from Western Oregon University.
- Forty-seven student veterans graduated from Western Oregon University.

These figures underscore Western's role as a regional comprehensive university that serves Oregon, the nation, and the world.

### **2018-19 in Review**

I want to start this review by referencing our work related to Northwest accreditation. As many of you know, in April 2016 Western had its seven-year review. The results of that review included seven recommendations and a private sanction. These results were sobering.

As a result, we were required to submit an ad hoc report in fall 2017, following our year one report in March of the same year. These reports chronicled our work:

- a new mission,
- a new Strategic Plan,
- progress on assessment and student achievement, and,
- improvement in overall governance including fundamental changes in the budget process.

In February 2018, NWCCU concluded that Western had demonstrated significant improvement. Specifically, NWCCU removed the sanction and concluded that Western satisfied the expectations of three of the seven recommendations. All of this work put the university in a good position to submit its mid-cycle report in March 2019.

As most of you know, the March 2019 mid-cycle report was accompanied by a site visit by leaders from peer institutions in April 2019. The peer review process is at the core of accreditation as it helps universities improve.

In our case, the team's report stated:

- "As WOU moves toward their comprehensive review in 2023, continued execution and improvement of this process, along with extension of the process to a broader suite of courses should put the institution in a strong position regarding outcomes assessment."

- The team cited “the truly remarkable transformation that WOU has achieved since the 2016 visit. In less than three years they have completely rebuilt their general education curriculum.”
- “The University has begun developing the organization and processes to better articulate its vision for technology and associated infrastructure and to make this vision more apparent. It also has begun to require that technology and infrastructure development better align with University Learning Outcomes.”
- “The Mid-cycle Self Evaluation Report describes an ongoing planning and budgeting process that, if implemented as indicated, satisfies this recommendation. During the site visit it was made abundantly clear that this process is remarkably democratic and transparent.”

The report went on to say: WOU is commended for the following:

- Creating new organizations and processes for the campus that should put it in a position for assessing mission fulfillment once they are fully implemented and data are generated
- Developing a high level of energy and excitement among participating faculty members. It should be easy to leverage this energy and excitement going forward.
- Developing a very good assessment mechanism ... that has been successful in its first- phase implementation.
- Achieving an outstanding rebuilding of general education with strong faculty buy-in.

At this point, Western is on-track for its next scheduled 7-year review in 2023.

I want to thank Sue Monahan for her leadership on this issue.

Additionally, if you have served on the *Strategic Planning task force, the University Budget Advisory Committee, the University Technology Advisory Committee, the University Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee, one of our teaching-related Professional Learning Communities, the general education task force, the general education committee,* or if you have developed a course proposal for the new general education program, please stand.

I think you will agree that that this work has been shared by many.

### **Strategic Planning Implementation**

Much of our work in 2018-19 was guided by our strategic plan, ***Forward Together*** and a set of goals that were approved by the Board of Trustees.

**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. This work has been supported by many faculty and staff, but I want to recognize the work of Hilary Holman-Kidd and Sue Monahan.
- Vick building: on September 11, 2019, 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.
  - The purchase price of \$2.735 million includes a \$100,000 endowment to the WOU Foundation to support scholarships for WOU:Salem students. Financing for the building will come from the university reserve, and we will establish a line of credit to ease any fiscal uncertainties. With this expenditure, the reserve will remain within its desired target range as established by the Board of Trustees.
- A new registration **nudge** program was developed by Niki Weight, which brought the percentage of unregistered students down to 7.9% for winter term and 6.0% for spring term. These efforts have helped WOU increase the percentage of continuing UGs compared to last year.
- 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.

- Disability Services was able to create an improved and dedicated testing center in APSC for students utilizing their services. Prior to this, students had limited access to space in the Disability Services Office and often had to take exams at locations all across campus during busy times. This past academic year over 1,000 exams were proctored in this space.
- I want to welcome Chelle Batchelor, our new Dean of Library and Academic Innovation. This position was developed following the recommendations of a Steering Committee that reviewed the role of the library and Center for Academic innovation.
- Through efforts of the Department of Justice Campus Against Sexual Assault grant, the Student Health and Counseling Center will have Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners available to students in Fall, 2019. Previously, if a WOU student was sexually assaulted on or near campus, that student would have had to travel to Salem or Corvallis in order to have an examination performed with a rape kit. Our Student Health and Counseling Center is now able to perform this procedure. This initiative is just one example of the budget process that aligned our investments with our Strategic Plan.
- WOU Club Sports programs increase in national recognition.
  - Lacrosse was ranked 24<sup>th</sup> in the nation having one player selected All-American and two other Lacrosse players were selected as Academic All-Americans.
  - Men's Rugby ended the year ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation. Three men's rugby players were selected to play on the Pacific Coast All-Star team, which won the National All-Star Championship.

### NCAA Division II –Life in the Balance

- I want to highlight and underscore the academic achievement of our over 300 NCAA student athletes.

<b>NCAA Division II – Life in the Balance: 2018-19 Team GPA's</b>			
<b>Men</b>	<b>GPA</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>GPA</b>
Baseball	3.17	Basketball	3.15
Basketball	2.24	Cross Country	3.55
Cross Country	3.36	Soccer	3.42
Football	2.69	Softball	3.35
Track & Field	3.17	Track & Field	3.47
<b>Men Average</b>	<b>2.93</b>	Volleyball	3.33
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>Women Average</b>	3.38

- We have a new partnership with Corvallis Clinic to provide medical services for our stunt athletes.
- Six teams represented WOU at NCAA DII Nationals: Men's Cross Country, Men's Indoor Track, Women's Indoor Track, Men's Basketball, Women's Outdoor Track, and Softball
- Academic All-GNAC – 78
- I want to ask our two faculty athletic representatives, Dean Braa and Amy Hammermeister Jordan to stand and be recognized for their work on behalf of our

student athletes. Additionally, will all the athletics staff ease stand and be recognized. Thank you.

**ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE:** promote academic excellence in an engaged student-focused learning environment.

- New and revised General Education courses were proposed by 156 faculty who proposed 862 curricula changes as of April 2019.
- Under the leadership of Shaun Huston, faculty developed a cutting edge First Year Seminar Program.
- At the graduate level, we have new graduate certificates in interpreting studies—thank you Elisa Maroney and Amanda Smith.
- New Master of Organizational Leadership program—thank you to Dave Foster and Paul Disney.
- Western established new certificates in Professional Writing, that will be offered at WOU:Salem.
- Twenty Western Oregon University students will be participating in the National Student Exchange Program for 2019-2020. This is the largest number of participants we have ever had in this program. Emmanuel Macias did a phenomenal job this year recruiting students for this program.
- Last year, program reviews were completed for Music, Philosophy and Sociology and we have four more programs scheduled for review this year.

**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 29<sup>th</sup> annual César E. Chávez Leadership Conference. This is the 12<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday get-togethers all around the state and region.
- Redesigned and produced two well-received Western Edge magazines.
- Western Oregon University branded gear at the Wolf Store hit an all-time sales high of over \$550,000 for FY19.

**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.
- The Foundation successfully completed conversion to a new customer relationship management software and new accounting program that is the industry standard for universities and non-profits.
- Reinvented policy development process to introduce smaller, executive group that meets with more frequency.
- Successfully transitioned to new board meeting calendar—our fall meeting will be November 20<sup>th</sup>, 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. This position was added to the IR office as part of the budget review process in 2019.
- 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.
- As part of the TRU alliance, the TRU's 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.
- With the addition of Carson Campbell, we now have more capacity to manage legal services, including such things as investigations, grievances, employee discipline, and contracts.
- The Emergency Planning Team prepared an Emergency Operations Plan and campus preparedness process—I want to thank the members of the team and Rebecca Chiles for her leadership. The planning team simulates Western's response to such things as active threats and natural disasters.

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



- A new 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 as 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.

- Academic Affairs created the Sponsored Projects Office to promote, support, and help administer our sponsored projects activities. Linda Stonecipher will be the interim Dean of Graduate Studies and Research to support this new office and structure, which combined director level positions in Graduate Studies and TRI. A search for the permanent dean will be conducted this year.
- 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.
- The Foundation 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.

- Overall, the WOU Foundation received more than 4,000 cash and in-kind gifts from nearly 2,000 donors, including over 600 first time gifts, for a total of more than \$2 million.
- 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.
- The plan is designed to enhance learning & the development of the whole person by:
  - Improving the connections between university programs and activities and surrounding communities.
  - Expanding activities & partnerships with local & regional organizations.
  - Supporting sustainable environmental systems for campus grounds, infrastructure & physical facilities.
  - Ensuring the availability & effective utilization of accessible & comfortable classrooms, offices & meeting spaces.
- **Organizing Principles:** *“Keep the Core Compact”*; *“Create Active Areas on Campus”*; and maintain *“A Walkable, Sustainable Campus”*

### Update on capital projects:

- Relocated and expanded our Child Development Center. The center provides toddler care (18 months to 3 years old), pre-School program (ages 3-5) and an afterschool program (kinder to 5<sup>th</sup> grade). As part of this effort, Todd Hall now hosts a computer classroom, offices for the Oregon Council of Presidents and our marketing and communications team.
- 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 scheduled 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.

### **Update on 2019 Legislative session**

- The 2018-19 legislative session ended in June and the final operating budget for all public Universities was increased by \$100 million. This represented a significant improvement over the Governor's recommended budget, which held funding at the 2017-19 levels. The \$100million was \$20 million short of the amount needed to cover the current service level activities of the public universities including Western.
- The Legislature also approved an increase in Sports Lottery funding for the four technical and regional universities. This funding can be used for new athletic programs, Title 9 compliance and/or to backfill general fund. In our case, it is likely to be used for a blend of these three options.
- Funding for Valsetz: Planning will begin this Fall for a remodel of the Valsetz Dining Hall to take place in phases beginning Summer 2020. Initial design changes include a conversion to restaurant concepts such as Asian and Hispanic faire, extensive deli and salad bar options, a breakfast and burger bar, a full bakery, and an expanded convenience store. The remodeled dining room will feature updated and open seating with more natural lighting, private rooms for group study and meetings, and casual seating. The project, with a current budget of 3.5 million dollars, is anticipated to be completed by Summer 2022.

### **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.

- We will launch the new General Education beginning Fall 2019.
- 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.
- HB 2864 requires each college and university to “establish a process for recommending, and providing oversight for the implementation of, cultural competency standards for the public institution of higher education and the institution’s employees.” The deadline for this process is December 31, 2019. I have asked Ryan Hagemann to lead this effort, which began in spring.
- The newly redesigned University Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Committee will be critical to our efforts to improve campus climate and efforts related to diversity training. A principal activity for the committee will be the development of a Diversity Plan for campus. This effort will be led by the co-chairs, Gabbi Boyle, Octavius Gillespie-Bennett and Jaclyn Hernandez. Gary Dukes serves as the Cabinet liaison.
- As you know, WOU conducted two surveys related to campus climate and the results of these surveys will guide our work on a number of fronts. Most notably, it is the clear need for expanded diversity training in our hiring processes and in our daily work. Human Resources, in consultation with University Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Committee, will be leading an effort to provide and expand this training this year.
- Additionally, we need to review, revise, and implement improvements in key HR processes, such as more timely resolution of complaints and investigations, review of search committee process to promote diverse well-qualified candidate pools and enhanced opportunities for professional development of all employees.

## 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. Many faculty and staff have been involved with these discussions and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee was briefed before their July meeting.

- 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 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, 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.
- Some of the possible benefits to our students include:
  - Reducing the divide between students who have access to needed technology and those who do not. As an access institution, we are ever mindful of barriers to student success.
  - Facilitating the use of more open educational resources so that all students will have access to textbooks and course materials. Too many of our students delay buying textbooks, try to read class material on their phones or don't ever get access to required readings.
- During the pilot with Apple, we will receive the education discount and have access to Apple specific resources (e.g., Apple Care and Apple Education Resources). We also hope to reduce other out of pocket expenses for our students. For example, we can reduce the cost of specialized calculators by having them preinstalled on iPads.
- Students will have increased opportunities to learn new technologies and skills. We are exploring whether coding camps and additional iOS coding courses might be possible. Increasingly, app development is a valuable and marketable skill for our graduates.
- We hope to improve our ability to reach students with prudent and well-timed nudges and information that will help them succeed (e.g., registration holds, registration appointments, and important appointments) through a WOU-specific app.

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 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.

- With freshmen cohorts of about 800 students, 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.
- **Let's hear from some our students:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IExWcyER5oc>

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***.

As you reflect on the past few years, I hope you appreciate the strides we have made to build on our legacy of student success—we have more to do, but we have accomplished a great deal. By working together toward mission fulfillment, I am certain that Western will thrive.

After some time for questions and comments, I invite you to the Pacific Room for lunch. Thank you and I wish all of you a great academic year. Go Wolves.