WOU President’s Message to all Faculty and Staff

Rice Auditorium

September 17, 2014

Good morning friends and colleagues and thank you for being here today - a hearty welcome back to all. One year ago I reported to you that we were at a significant crossroad on a number of issues that were pivotal to us all, but most importantly, to the students we serve. You have accomplished much for Western Oregon University in the past twelve months.

- First, two union agreements were reached and ratified in a fair and equitable manner that included participation from the state to minimize the impact on student affordability. We should all be proud of the positive atmosphere maintained on campus during this process.

- Last year I lamented that accessibility of higher education in Oregon was significantly limited by affordability for Oregonians. While Western’s students continue to earn their undergraduate degrees, graduating with the lowest tuition rates in the state, our incoming freshman are charged among the highest rates in the state due to the dynamics of our Western Oregon University Tuition Promise. A promise that the state has not been able to maintain in partnership with us. Nevertheless, we are grateful that this biennium, state appropriations backfilled tuition increases to assist Oregonians in helping afford their college degree. All seven state universities had their proposed tuition increases backfilled and frozen. Except, Western’s students already in the promise were not part of the
formula. This is an issue that will continue to be worked as we move forward if we are to continue to offer the highly regarded and popular “Promise.”

- Last year I expressed concern over what appeared to be the smallest entering freshman class after a number of years of significant growth. I indicated that likely affordability was a key issue and, in fact, we wrote off $3 million in unplanned student accounts. With our students graduating with an average debt load of over $26 K, and a less than robust economy creating jobs new for our graduates, we will need to continue to remain focused on fiscal sustainability, or else follow the unenviable lead of program retrenchment by two of our sister schools. The good news is that we see a very slight uptick in the number of freshmen entering this year. Exponential growth is not sustainable but steady planned growth is essential to meeting the state’s goal of an educated citizenry. A goal that we fall far short of today – with more than three out of 10 Oregon youth not obtaining a high school degree – this leaves a gaping hole at the beginning of the 40/40/20 pipeline.

  - On a very bright note, Western Oregon University appeared highest in the Pacific Northwest and 85th in the nation on an index measuring economic value and employability of its graduates, by Educate to Career, Incorporated. This unique and relative ETC Index examines 1,222 colleges and universities from across the country for the quality of students when entering college, total costs related to attending college, and the outcomes of the students when they enter the labor market. The rankings are determined by which schools did the best job of improving the earnings and attainment of quality employment for their students. Interestingly, other Oregon institutions included in the index were listed @154th for Oregon Tech, U of O @ 431st, PSU @ 627th, Southern @ 686th, Willamette @ 929th.

    - Thank you all for all you do well to improve the opportunities for our students. This recognition is a testament to who we are.

- You will remember the Chancellor of OUS and the State Board of Higher Education approved rescinding my plans for retirement last academic year. My
rationale was due to the uncertainties a year ago of which of three options WOU would pursue and the recruitment of an institutional governing board if that were the direction we would head. Overwhelmingly, campus faculty, staff, and students and outside constituencies supported an independent Western Oregon University. The next steps were to run the gauntlet of countless meetings on institutional fiscal sustainability, shared services configuration, and collaboration with our educational partners at all levels around the state. I am proud to say, as you all know, we were unconditionally approved for independent public university status.

- The second half of the year was filled with identifying candidates for potential gubernatorial nomination for the WOU inaugural governing board of trustees. Once again, I am proud and delighted at the highly qualified individuals that will bring diverse perspectives, perspectives which are Western’s, to the boardroom. This board will provide expertise and vision in their governance of WOU that is focused on the success of Western as an institution and the success of our students.

The following individuals, a number of whom are with us today, will be approved by the Oregon state senate this afternoon for our Board of Trustees. Since many of these individuals will join us for today’s lunch, you will have an opportunity to exchange information and discuss the future. I will now introduce each member and then ask that person to stand and be recognized.

1. Jaime Arredondo’s first exposure to higher education was through his participation in Western Oregon University’s Latino Mentor Program; graduating among the inaugural class at McKay High School. Arredondo serves as secretary-treasurer for Oregon’s Farmworker Union and largest Latino organization, (PCUN). In addition, he serves on the State of Oregon Youth Development Council, the Marion County Commission for Children and Families, Partners for Hunger-Free Oregon, and the Oregon Community Foundation Latino Partnership Project. Mr. Arredondo said, “Getting appointed to WOU’s Board of Trustees is an absolute privilege and opportunity. I’ve seen first-hand what an education at WOU can do for an individual, a family, and a community.”
2. James M. Baumgartner, alumnus of Western Oregon University, has been a trustee on the WOU Foundation Board since 2012, and is currently its chair. He served on the Executive Committee of the Oregon Consular Corps for five years, serving as dean in 2008, and was appointed as the Honorary Consul of Canada in Oregon in 2005. Mr. Baumgartner continues a 28-year partnership with the law firm of Black Helterline LLP in Portland, having served as its managing partner for four years.

3. Major General Daniel R. Hokanson is The Adjutant General, Oregon. His responsibilities include the Oregon National Guard and Office of Emergency Management as well as the Governor's Homeland Security Advisor. General Hokanson received an engineering degree from West Point, and has earned multiple masters degrees in international security and strategic studies. The general's combat deployments include Operations JUST CAUSE, ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM, commanding the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team in Iraq and serving as chief of staff for Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix in Afghanistan. Expressing his desire to serve at WOU, Hokanson said, “In addition to my wife being a graduate of Western, the National Guard has a strong and enduring relationship with the university; and the university is a great supporter of the Oregon National Guard and all Veterans.”

4. Ivan Hurtado, a 2006 alumnus of Western Oregon University, earned a bachelor’s degree with a double major in economics and international studies. He is a recipient of WOU’s Student Enrichment Program Student of the Year award. Mr. Hurtado is an underwriter with Farmers Insurance and serves Oregon youth through a volunteer directorship of Hillsboro Young Life, which supports the students of Hillsboro and Century High Schools who are often from low-income or underrepresented families. He is also a board member of Grace Extended Ministries International.

5. Gloria Ingle was raised on the reservation of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. Ms. Ingle completed a successful 30-year career in education, serving as both an elementary teacher and a K-12 principal and receiving her special education and superintendent endorsements from the University of Alaska. She continues to serve the Confederated Tribes of Siletz as a council member and
elder. With her expertise in education, she also contributes on curriculum review and accreditation committees. Ms. Ingle attended Western Oregon University before completing her degrees in Alaska.

6. Cecelia 'Cec' Koontz has served WOU’s Monmouth community as a city councilor since 2010, treasurer for the Monmouth-Independence Community Foundation, member of the Finance Committee of the Monmouth-Independence Chamber of Commerce, and is a panelist for the Oregon Arts Commission/Oregon Cultural Trust Grants programs. Ms. Koontz served on the Monmouth Economic Development Commission and as president for organizations such as the Pentacle Theatre and the Children’s Education Theatre in Salem. In 2012, she was named the Monmouth-Independence Chamber of Commerce’s First Citizen for her outstanding service to community. Ms. Koontz is the business manager for the Central School District.

7. Theodore R. “Ted” Kulongoski is the only governor in Oregon history to have served in all three branches of state government. While in private law practice, Kulongoski was elected to the Oregon House of Representatives and then the State Senate. In 1987, he was appointed Oregon insurance commissioner. Elected Oregon attorney general in 1992, he reformed the state juvenile justice system and created the Oregon Youth Authority. In 1997, he was elected to the Oregon Supreme Court, where he served until mid-2001. He was inaugurated as governor of Oregon in 2003 and was reelected in 2006. Governor Kulongoski understands what it is like for students who face adversity. He spent his childhood in a Catholic boys’ home from a very young age. Following high school, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. Governor Kulongoski said, “My interest in WOU is a reflection of my interest in higher education generally, especially public institutions of higher education. The Quality Education Model and the 40-40-20 goal are important to Oregon’s future. We need to keep both our large universities and our small ones affordable for working-class students if Oregon is going to meet its aspirations for future economic development. I’m a big believer in small colleges and universities. They can be centers of excellence. They can be welcoming places especially for students who are the first in their
families to attend college. They can foster a ‘thinking life.’ WOU can do all of that and I am delighted to be part of it.”

8. John Minahan is the highly respected former president of Western Oregon University. Prior to his arrival at WOU, he served as academic vice president at Xavier University. Dr. Minahan joined Western in 1986, serving as the dean of liberal arts and sciences until 1998 when he was appointed to the position of provost. In 2005, he was appointed president and retired from WOU in 2011 after completing 25 years of service. During his tenure at Western Oregon University, Minahan had the privilege of assisting WOU in its progression from a college of education to a comprehensive university offering degrees in the arts, business, sciences, social sciences, humanities and education. Minahan said that “having been educated at private colleges and universities and, having reported to governing boards at both private and public schools, I am familiar with the responsibilities of those who serve as university trustees. It will be my distinct privilege to serve as a trustee at WOU as the university enters its newest stage of development.”

9. Jeanette Mladenovic has 27 years of experience in academic administration. Dr. Mladenovic serves as executive vice-president and provost at Oregon Health & Science University. Nationally, she has served as a member of the Board of Directors for the American Board of Internal Medicine, the American Board of Medical Specialties, the Association of Professors of Medicine and its Board, the American Society of Hematology, and the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. Dr. Mladenovic said, “Western Oregon University is one of OHSU’s nursing campuses, and as such, has provided me the opportunity to learn about the university’s unique mission and programs. Its history of commitment to diverse communities of students makes it essential in the Oregon landscape of higher education. I eagerly embrace the opportunity to participate in Western’s future.” Dr. Mladenovic has earned both a medical degree and a master’s degree in business administration.

10. Lane Shetterly, alumnus of Western Oregon University, is a partner in the law firm Shetterly Irick and Ozias in Dallas, Oregon. From 2004 through 2007, Mr. Shetterly was the director of the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and
Development (DLCD). Prior to his appointment, Mr. Shetterly served seven years in the Oregon Legislature, serving as speaker pro tem of the House from 2001 until he resigned to become director of DLCD. He is chair of the Oregon Law Commission, a position he has held since 1998, and was appointed by the governor in 2005 to serve as a representative from Oregon on the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws. During his first session in the legislature, he was privileged to be the chief sponsor of HB 2364, which established WOU as a university. In 2010, he received the Henry and Helen Graven Award for his contributions to community, church and society from Wartburg College, Iowa, past recipients of which include Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and Greg Mortensen. He was awarded the Western Oregon University Alumni Award of Excellence in 2004. Mr. Shetterly said, “It is my honor and my pleasure to receive appointment to the new Western Oregon University Board of Trustees.”

11. Louis C. Taylor graduated with a degree in international business from WOU and served his alma mater as a trustee on the WOU Foundation Board from 2000-2010, acting as treasurer from 2007-2009. As an active member of the WOU Football Alumni Association, he established the Louis Taylor Football Scholarship in 2004. Mr. Taylor was selected as an All American Athlete during his time at WOU. Beginning his career in finance with a private Wall Street based firm in Beaverton, Oregon, in 2010, he formed Taylor Wealth Management where he currently serves as a senior financial advisor. He is also co-founder and chief operations officer for Zon Compounding, LLC. Mr. Taylor said, “WOU has played an instrumental part of my success in life. It was and is a university that gives individuals hope at furthering their education. The fact that WOU has been granted independent status made me want to be an instrumental part of the new board, shaping the future of an institution that has shaped mine.”

12. Cornelia Paraskevas, professor of English, has been teaching at WOU for 25 years. During her tenure, she has served as department chair, faculty senator, member of the Western Oregon University Faculty Union (WOUFT) bargaining team, writing coordinator, and editor of accreditation reports in 1996 and 2013. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Dr. Paraskevas actively serves Salem-
Keizer schools conducting writing and language workshops for K-12 grades. She co-wrote Western’s dual-credit partnership document with the Hillsboro School District, in support of the state’s 40-40-20 initiative. Paraskevas said, “I am honored to serve on the board of trustees for Western Oregon University. I believe that as an independent institution, we need to position ourselves as the Liberal Arts alternative to high-price private institutions. To ensure our success, we will need to balance the focus and interests of our students, our institution, our faculty, and our continued service to Oregonians.”

13. Marshall Guthrie has served in higher education since 2003, joining WOU in 2010 and now serves as the director of WOU’s Student Enrichment Program. Mr. Guthrie participated on the WOU Staff Senate for two years, serving as president in 2011-12. Mr. Guthrie is involved in his community, serving as a Monmouth city councilor, chair of the City of Monmouth Budget Committee, the Monmouth representative of the WIMPEG (Public, Education, Government) Broadcast Committee, and co-chair of the Ford Family Pathways Project – a community group focused on collaboration between the three local communities: WOU, Monmouth, and Independence. His passion to serve students who are first-generation, low income, or disabled, and achieve the dream of a college education is evident in the passion he demonstrates in his work at WOU.

14. Sofia Llamas is an education major at WOU and plans to also complete the Bilingual ESOL Endorsement; her anticipated graduation date is June 2017. Ms. Llamas embraces her Mexican heritage and actively participates in the MEChA club, Western’s student organization that encourages the Chicano/Chicana students as they pursue their education. She is a recipient of the MEChA Outstanding Dedication to Education, Travel and Member Development award and will serve in the upcoming year as co-chair of the club and will participate in WOU’s Ambassador’s Program.

I wish to personally thank each of our trustees for enthusiastically stepping up to the plate at this critical juncture in Western’s history, a history I will remind all that is the longest of any state institution in Oregon and dates to before Oregon became the 33rd state of our union.
At my invitation today, the Western student body president is in attendance. He is in the process of completing his sophomore year majoring in exercise science. Will ASWOU president Mr. Corbin Garner please stand and be recognized.

Next I would like to recognize our new staff that have joined the WOU team this past year, and importantly, serve our students and faculty alike.

Please stand and be recognized as I announce your name and department. And, please be seated as I move to the next department.

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<th>From the Admissions Office:</th>
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<th>With the Physical Plant:</th>
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At the risk of not allowing some time for your important questions, I would like to spend a few minutes about what I believe to be important for this upcoming year, my final year as your president. I have been so fortunate to have been entrusted with the responsibilities you have bestowed upon me.
A. We have already introduced our new trustees. Their success in hitting the ground running come July 1, 2015, when we are officially an independent public state university, is my goal number one. The Association of Governing Boards of University and Colleges has been engaged to facilitate governance training for senior WOU staff and trustees alike. They are experts in this field and have recently authored such documents as - Shared Governance in Times of Change: A Practical Guide for Universities and Colleges and Improving Board Oversight of Student Learning.

B. Second, the presidential search. It is in my personal best interest that we have a comprehensive and successful presidential search during the next eight months for two reasons – first, to identify that one person who can provide the leadership necessary for Western to educate Oregonians for success in this global economy, and so my plans to retire, this time, may be realized.

A university executive search firm has been hired by the Oregon University System and their interactions with campus will begin very soon. By state statute, a current state board member chairs the search committee and Jim Francesconi will serve that role. Mr. Francesconi has a special and positive interest in Western’s mission and success and has served on the state board for several terms. I’d like to introduce Dr. Roy Koch – please stand and be recognized. Dr. Koch is former VP and provost at Portland State University and has returned to OUS to provide the administrative initiative to keep our search on its timeline and is in accordance with the needs of the Western Oregon University community while at the same time, meeting state requirements for public university searches. Together, they will assure that the search committee will operate in an open and transparent manner with significant university involvement. I may defer any questions you may have today to him but please know he will return to campus this Friday to interact with a broad cross-section of university academic and administrative leadership. From my perspective, among the key components to this search is involvement of a number of our trustees in addition to faculty, staff, student and others. Presidential search committee members are brought forward by me and selected by the state board and OUS. A prime responsibility
of a board of trustees is the hiring, firing, and evaluation of the president; therefore, it is imperative that the board and the new president understand expectations come July 1, 2015. I have had extensive conversations with many parties to assure that this process takes place. Two parting comments on this objective: - a university search website will go live in the upcoming month, and, - once the search committee is in place, my job will be to keep my eye on the ball by attending to university affairs. My role in the presidential search process will then be over.

In addition to the tenure track faculty introduced earlier this morning, we have approved another eight tenure track appointments for placement in the 2015-2106 academic year, including:

1. Special Education/Rehabilitation Counseling
2. Teacher Education
3. Interpreting Studies
4. Gerontology
5. Music/Choir Director
6. Communication Studies
7. English/Digital Writing
8. Art/Visual Communication Design

This makes a total of over 30 tenure track faculty additions in three years. Let’s make sure our enrollment justifies this growth.

We all know that I always provide some commentary on financial sustainability. We finished the year ended June 30, 2014 with a fund balance exceeding 17%, for three years, I believe, this has been the strongest general fund balance sheet of all seven public universities in the state. Our three-year-old Window of Opportunity continuous improvement initiative is becoming part of our culture. I am pleased to announce a very special “trial” initiative this year. During our retreat a week or two ago whereby over 30 staff and faculty participated over the day, I reaffirmed the need for continuous improvement by increasing efficiencies, increasing enrollment and thereby revenue and making headway to 40/40/20, developing those collaborative initiatives and new programming modes that will, again, serve Oregonians well to compete in a global
economy. The new trial initiative, broadly defined, is to provide availability of $40 K which Eric Yahnke, VP for Finance and Administration, has now budgeted for skunkworks projects that can be used with a minimum of bureaucracy with the goal of developing window of opportunity initiatives. (Ever hear the term skunkworks? It’s often used in private business research settings and refers to promoting innovation and change with a minimum of bureaucracy). Like a venture capital fund, some projects may fail, but some will succeed and yield great results for our students and Oregonians. That’s what we are counting on. Provost Scheck and Deans Monahan and Girod will quickly establish the expectations and process for this and I wish you the very best in developing your ideas; particularly ideas promoting academic change benefiting Oregonians.

Although this year’s budget contains a small deficit, we expect to end the year above our benchmark goal of a 15% general fund balance.

Worthy of mention and along the lines of continuous improvement - this summer, WOU faculty worked closely with K-12 educators and higher education partners in the Willamette Valley to jumpstart the Willamette Promise, an innovative, proficiency-based dual credit program. This project is supported by a $500K state grant whose development was coordinated by Dr. Ella Taylor of the Teaching/Research Institute. WOU faculty participated, and often led, the development of dual credit courses in Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Writing, Communications, Spanish, and Computer Science.

Through the Willamette Promise, talented high school students will have additional opportunities to earn some early college credits and be encouraged to imagine themselves as college students, even WOU students. And college faculty and high school teachers had the opportunity to sit down with each other, compare notes about what and how they teach, and begin to build collaborative relationships that will help us close gaps between high school and college. I congratulate all those who have carried this important work forward. It greatly benefits students in our region and strengthens our relationship with K-12 educators.

We continue to be proud of the positive achievement gap between WOU Latino students’ graduation rates, exceeding the rest of our student body by some 8-9%. In
fact, we are unique in that regard among public state universities, with the exception of Oregon Tech. The success of under-served and underrepresented populations in Oregon will remain an important part of the core mission for Western. Nevertheless, the success rate of all students who come to Western needs improvement. We owe it to our clients. During our recent retreat, a faculty member mentioned that the terminology - business and customer - are not necessarily appreciated by some in academia. And, contrary to what you may think, I sympathize with that thought. We are not a business which delivers dividends to our investors for their retirement funds, and our students are not customers – they are not always right; and they are certainly not products. They are investing in their futures by attending here. So, it was suggested, and I like it very much, our students are our clients. There is an implicit relationship between a professional educator and a student – the fine point is that there are expectations that the student has about the college experience and obligations, and there are professional obligations a faculty member has in that relationship, as well as expectations of our students. We have high expectations consistent with motivating our students. We mentor and counsel and provide understanding and support when needed. Generally, I believe, it works pretty well because of you, our dedicated faculty and staff.

Why did I mention our obligations to our students and their expectations? Because, in the very near future the Higher Education Coordinating Commission will move to outcomes based funding formulae; no longer funding just because of the numbers of seats filled in classroom chairs.

Some of you have commented that last year’s commencement day was among the best ever. Indeed, we graduated a record 1,260 students making our three-year total number of graduates nearly 4,000. The groundbreaking for our new signature wood products College of Education building and the words of Dr. Richard Woodcock, our generous benefactor, kicked off a new scholarship campaign that I am hopeful will have broad participation, not only among former College of Education alumni, but all graduates, faculty, staff, and students that wish to be recognized at any contribution level in our “Dare to” campaign – as written over the doors of the ITC building “those who dare to teach must never cease to learn.” Please join me and encourage others to be part of this important scholarship initiative for Oregon’s future teachers.
Total contributions to our foundation for student success; annually continues to surpass the year before and we are at record levels.

The past year was highlighted by two ribbon cuttings in the fall for the DeVolder Family Science Center and the Edward B. Wright Center for Computer Sciences, thanks to Frank Morse, in addition to the ceremonial groundbreaking for the Dr. Richard Woodcock Education Center. These three events are strong indicators of our growth in academics and the supporters who believe in our mission. Additionally, we started this year with commitments totaling $850,000 in assistance for our students in the months ahead. This level of support is not possible without the personal achievements of our faculty and staff and certainly not without the loyal and generous contributions of our donors.

My last comments address a difficult topic for many – embrace change enthusiastically and with urgency.

Like our leadership role in the Willamette Promise.

Like our leadership role in developing new applied baccalaureate degrees for non-traditional students.

Like our development of on-line programming.

Let’s make change our institution’s strategic advantage and be well ahead of risking the consequences of failing to do so.

There is so much more to talk about, recognitions and thank you’s to be made, but now it’s time to pause and before we take some questions and comments, I’d like to invite all to the Pacific room for lunch at the conclusion of our morning. I encourage you to introduce and invite our guests to your table so they may receive a more personalized perspective of WOU. I thank you and wish you all a great academic year.

Respectfully,

Mark Weiss