

KEEPING WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY AFFORDABLE FOR OREGON STUDENTS



Western Oregon University (WOU) is committed to keeping its nationally award winning education as affordable as possible for Oregon students and their families. The university's ability to keep education costs as low as possible is directly impacted by the funding decisions of the Oregon Legislature. Since 2007 WOU has experienced a 30% decline in state funding received despite record enrollments and graduation numbers. The continued reduction in state support has a direct and negative impact on tuition charged to students.

KEY WOU FACTS

- *4,400 undergraduates from Oregon in Fall 2012, an increase of 13% since 2008.*
- *74% of Oregon undergraduates receive financial aid, an increase from 64% in 2008.*
- *57% of Oregon undergraduates receive federal Pell Grant, an increase from 43% in 2008.*
- *41% of Oregon undergraduates receive Oregon Opportunity Grant, an increase from 38% in 2008.*
- *Students with Oregon Opportunity Grant graduated at a higher rate than did students without the Grant.*

The cost to attend college is the combination of four factors:

- Tuition and fees (36.7%)
- Room and board (41.6%)
- Books and supplies (7.7%)
- Transportation and personal (14.0%)

WOU COST CONTAINMENT EFFORTS

- **Tuition.** In 2007 WOU introduced the Tuition Promise which guaranteed undergraduate students from Oregon a set pre credit tuition rate for four years. In 2012 WOU expanded the program to the Tuition Choice (wou.edu/choice) that provided undergraduate students the ability to choose from either the Promise or a traditional plan that started at a lower rate that increased annually. Students who joined WOU in 2007 saved an estimated \$1,000 each because of the Tuition Promise. In 2012 approximately half of new undergraduates selected the Promise.
- **Room and board.** For 2013 WOU is offering Oregon students with a Pell Grant an opportunity to receive a housing grant to reduce the cost of living on campus. Housing and dining also employs a large number of students as either residence assistants or food service employees.
- **Books and supplies.** In 2010 WOU introduced a textbook and course materials rental program. Books, calculators and other materials are rented to students at a price just over 1/3 the cost of purchase. The program has saved WOU students nearly \$1 million dollars since its inception.

- **Transportation and personal expenses.** These costs are under the student's control. Effective fall 2013 WOU will partner with MAPS Credit Union to provide financial literacy training to incoming students during summer orientation, New Student Week and throughout the school year by expanding the Peer Mentor Program.

TIME TO DEGREE

The longer a student is enrolled, the greater the cumulative expense and student debt. While graduation is the most important factor, reducing the time to graduate is a major way to make college more affordable. WOU is aggressively working to reduce the time it takes students to graduate.

WOU efforts to reduce time to graduate:

- Addition of Retention Specialist to work with students and faculty in both graduation and retention efforts
- Mandatory advising of all students every term to reduce the number of "wasted" courses taken and support earlier identification of a major and minor
- Implementation of Wolf Connection online enrollment support system
- Implementation of Degree Works® to allow anytime/anyplace access to student progress to graduation
- Ongoing review and revision of academic policies and practices

STUDENT FINANCIAL LITERACY

Federal aid policy greatly limits the ways that the university can control how students use their financial aid. Part of the growth process that results from a college education is the ability for the student to gain greater critical thinking skills and apply them to real world issues such as financial management.

WOU efforts to improve student financial literacy:

- Expansion of Peer Mentor program through the long-term partnership with MAPS Credit Union that will result in financial literacy programming and support during summer orientation, New Student Week, and the academic year.
- Financial Literacy instruction in the Freshmen Year Experience courses.
- Mandatory loan counseling sessions before student loans can be disbursed.



WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY CONTINUES TO BE RECOGNIZED NATIONALLY FOR EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION.

- *Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award: WOU received this first annual award from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine, which recognized our strong commitment, engagement, and success in creating a university teaching and learning environment (2013).*
- *NACADA awards: Recognized for excellence in academic advising for six consecutive years by The Global Community for Academic Advising (2008–2013).*