

Strong Start Pathways for University-Bound Student Success

Sustain critical legislative investments to address learning disruptions

COVID-19 caused disruptions in high school and community college instruction that negatively impacted the academic and developmental growth of incoming university students. In 2021, the Oregon Legislature funded the creation of Strong Start to support university efforts to reduce this preparation gap. In 2022, the legislature continued that funding in recognition that the academic impacts will persist for the foreseeable future. While each university tailored its Strong Start program to meet the unique needs of its students and their current capacity to offer a new program, there were several important shared parameters. These included:

- Focus on serving BIPOC and students from underserved communities
- Summer bridge kick-off and continuing wrap-around services throughout the school year
- Strong academic skill building focus
- Provision of other student success skills
- Creation of a community of support for the students

Strong Start Demonstrates Significant Return on Investment

Over 2,500 students have participated in and completed Strong Start. The results of the programs are a testament their success. Students participating in Strong Start programs demonstrated consistently higher retention, stronger GPAs, and completed more credit hours. The table below is for the 2021-22 academic year.

	Fall to Winter Retention		Fall GPA		Fall Credits Completed	
	Strong Start	Not Strong Start	Strong Start	Not Strong Start	Strong Start	Not Strong Start
EOU	88%	91%	3.30	3.00	14.1	12.3
OIT	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
OSU	98.9%	96.7%	3.21	3.08	12.82	12.4
PSU	84%	77%	2.57	2.11	17.0	11.0
SOU	82%	63%	3.01	2.99	14.8	11.1
UO	98%	96%	3.21	3.22	13.6	14.0
WOU	96%	89%	2.76	2.83	14.3	13.0

Requested funding: \$10 million for 2023-25

Based on the outstanding results from the first year of Strong Start and the ongoing need created by the pandemic's continuing impact on pre-university student learning, the public universities are requesting \$10 million in funding for Strong Start be continued through the 2024-25 academic year.

For More Information

Please contact the Dana Richardson, Oregon Council of Presidents, at richardsond@mail.wou.edu, or the government relations staff member from any of the seven public universities. Thank you for helping Oregon's students.