

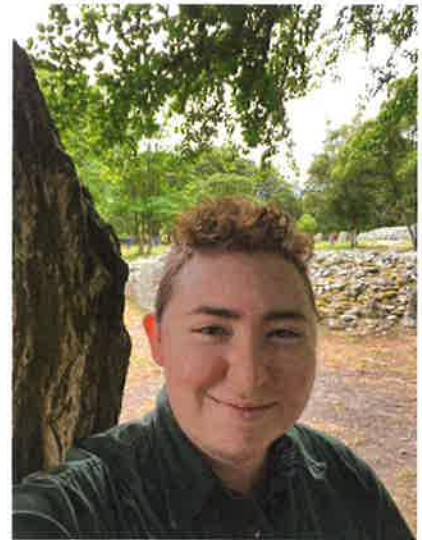


Disability History and Awareness Month 2023

Aleksander Ferguson

Aleksander Ferguson (Aleks) grew up in Lakewood, California. He participated in dance and swimming in high school. Aleks then attended Willamette University and graduated with a Bachelor's in Economics with a minor in Russian studies. In addition to his academics, Aleks was deeply involved in disability activism across campus. He is diagnosed with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, a rarely diagnosed connective tissue disorder, and fibromyalgia.

Aleks was an early member of Willamette Universities Disability Advocacy Club (DAC); he played an instrumental role in expanding DAC's presence on campus through strong grassroots outreach efforts to disabled students. Aleks was Vice-President of DAC during his first year at college before assuming club leadership for the rest of his time at Willamette. In addition, Aleks also spearheaded the formation of the Accessible Education committee, guided staff and student leaders on best practices with accessibility, facilitated multiple round-table talks on college navigation with a disability, and personally mentored disabled first-year students in the Willamette community. The current vibrancy of the disabled community at Willamette can be primarily credited to Aleksander's tireless efforts to ensure that disabled students were given a seat at the table.



After graduating, Aleks worked several jobs and received technical training in UX design. Among his positions, Aleks worked as an office support specialist for the University of Puget Sound's Student Accessibility and Accommodation office.

Profiles by Andrew Caruana, Policy and Research Intern, Office of Senator Sara Gelser Blouin

Andrew is a Junior at Willamette University studying philosophy. He is a lifelong Oregonian and has cerebral palsy.

Sen.SaraGelser@OregonLegislature.Gov 503-986-