

Submitter: Kimberly Machorro  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB604

Dear Legislative Committee,

I am writing to express my support for the summer program for incoming students, known as Destination Western. I would like to share my experience as a participant in the 2023 cohort.

As an incoming freshman, I was filled with excitement, but like many of my peers, I was also anxious and worried about what college life would be like. Some of my biggest concerns included not fitting in, struggling to transition to college-level courses, and not knowing how to achieve and maintain strong academic performance. While these concerns weighed on me, Destination Western not only built my confidence but also alleviated my worries by preparing me both academically and mentally for the transition from high school to college.

During our two-week stay, we were introduced to various campus resources, took classes that simulated actual college courses, and attended sessions on maintaining a healthy and successful academic life. These sessions covered essential topics such as stress management, time management, and budgeting as a college student all of which are crucial for student success. Additionally, Destination Western provided the opportunity to connect with upperclassmen, who shared their experiences and offered valuable college advice.

As a first-generation college student, Destination Western equipped me with skills and knowledge I would not have otherwise encountered, given that neither of my parents attended college. Beyond academic preparation, I also got a glimpse of the supportive community and culture at Western Oregon University, thanks to the welcoming staff and students who prioritized our experience.

By the end of the program, I not only gained new friendships but also left feeling confident and incredibly grateful for this opportunity. Reflecting on my experience, I cannot help but think about the future first-generation students who may come to college feeling unprepared due to their lack of background knowledge. Without Destination Western, we risk hindering their ability to succeed by denying first-generation students the opportunity to bridge the gap between first-generation and non-first-generation students.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Machorro