



## **“The 2014 Oregon Students of Color Conference”**

**Proposed Motions:** *Approve a total of \$919.11 from the Operating Enhancement Budget [FXXENH] to fund 2 students-at-large and Cristina Rodriguez to attend the 2014 Oregon Students of Color Conference.*

**Sponsor:** *Cristina Rodriguez, AS VP for Diversity*

**Persons of Contact:** *Cristina Rodriguez, AS VP for Diversity*

**Date:** October 24, 2014

### **Attached Documents**

1. Budget spreadsheet
2. AS Vehicle reservation confirmation
3. Hotel confirmation invoice
4. Conference Registration invoice
5. Program of the 2013 Oregon Students of Color Conference

### **Background & Context**

Last year was the first year in which the VP for Diversity took a group of students to attend the 2013 Oregon Students of Color Conference at the University of Oregon in Eugene, OR. All the feedback from the individual participants and from Mayra’s legacy document indicate that this trip was very beneficial and well-appreciated. This particular conference provides valuable opportunities for gaining tools and knowledge that can ultimately be used for personal growth, systematic consciousness, leadership development, and more.

This year the Conference will be take place from Friday, November 14<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, November 16<sup>th</sup>. It will be hosted at Lane Community College in Eugene, OR. The theme of this year’s conference is *Reclaiming Our Humanity and Redefining Our Narratives: Telling Our Own Stories*. The theme speaks to the ways in which communities of color are negatively portrayed in our society, how people of color are often so narrowly depicted, and the ways in which mainstream media dehumanizes people of color. The conference seeks to educate participants about the social and political inequalities facing students of color, as well as focus on the need for people of color to reclaim themselves as full human beings. The conference will empower students to embrace all their identities and push back on spaces of dichotomy – when it comes to race as well as gender, sexuality, ability, class and many other identities that pertain to “diversity”. The Oregon Students of Color Conference provides a safe space where students of color can come together to develop the skills and critical analysis needed for the advancement of students of color socially, economically, politically, and emotionally.

Based off of last year’s program, issues surrounding cultural competency, leadership development, power, privilege, and oppression, social justice, racial inequality, immigrant rights, and much more (this is a non-exhaustive list) will be the topics of the sessions taking place at this conference. The organizers of the conference are still in the process of finalizing the information about the workshops, so the information is not yet put up on the conference website. This is why I have attached the scans of the program from last year’s conference. I will make sure to forward a copy to everyone once this year’s official program with information about workshops, keynote speakers, and performers is provided on the website.

- Reference documents:
  - Doc 5: Program of the 2013 Oregon Students of Color Conference

### **Summary of Proposal**

Last year my predecessor, Mayra, took a total of 6 students (including herself) to the 2013 Oregon Students of Color Conference. After giving extensive thought about it, I thought it would be a great idea to increase the number of participants this year to 8 individuals total (including myself). In order to make this inclusive to the entire student body, I aim to take students of different demographics: 3 students from the Ethnic Student Center, 2 students-at-large, and 2 AS student employees.

This proposal is to ask for \$919.11 from the Operating Enhancement budget [FXXENH] to pay for myself and 2 students-at-large. Last year, the participants were limited to ESC students and AS employees, but I think that it is important to recognize that many students of color at this campus are still not aware of the Ethnic Student Center and have not yet had the chance to attend an ESC club/event. The AS exists for the experience of *all* Western students, and I have made it a priority to use many different outreach methods including the ESC, the Education and Social Justice minor, the Center for Law, Diversity and Justice in Fairhaven College, the AS Review, the AS Communications office, the Resources and Outreach Programs (including all seven of the ROP office), the “thisweek@wwu” newsletter through New Students Services and Family Outreach, LEADS (Western Leadership Advantage Program), Student Outreach Services, AS Personnel, and CEED (Center for Education, Equity and Diversity). With these sources, I plan to get as much outreach as possible to the students-at-large. The students-at-large will be able to bring all their acquired knowledge and experiences back into the Western community and positively share their experience with their peers.

For the other targeted demographics listed above, I am asking for funding from Steering Committee (ESC) and the AS Student Development fund (personnel).

In order to uphold my commitment to inclusion throughout the selection process, I created an OrgSync conference application form where students can answer questions regarding their dietary needs and accessibility/disability accommodations, as well as the following personalized questions: 1) Why are you interested in attending this conference? 2) How do you plan to apply your gained experience back to your WWU community? 3) With your personal experiences as a student of color, what do you think you will contribute to the conference?

Throughout the selection process, I will make sure to keep an objective perspective. I will ask two other coworkers and/or advisers to help me review the submitted applications, and we will collectively decide on the final participants who can attend. This is similar to the method that Sarah Kohout used in the selection process of taking students to the USSA National Student Congress at UC Irvine this summer. I find this to be more inclusive compared to a first-come, first-serve basis.

I see that this conference is relevant to my position as VP for Diversity because in my job description, it states that my focus on diversity “includes the empowerment, retention, and full inclusion of all populations on campus that are underrepresented of a marginalized nature in society.” With this being said, this can enhance my ability to help students as the Vice President for Diversity because I recognize that there are many identities and issues that I am still learning about, where I still have opportunity to grow.

### **Fiscal Implications**

- I have been in contact with Raquel Wilson, the AS Finance Manager, and there has been a special AS budget account created specifically for this conference. I am requesting money from three different sources (AS Operating Enhancement, ESC Steering Committee, and AS Student Development Fund) and it would be easily managed if all the approved funds get transferred into this Oregon Students of Color Conference account, which is **FXXSBR asbEAT**.
- Transportation: I have already reserved an AS Vehicle for November 13<sup>th</sup> – November 17<sup>th</sup>. I reserved the Ford Expedition SUV, which seats a total of 8 individuals. The mileage rate for AS vehicles is \$0.44/mile. After doing the calculation, it will take a total of 746 miles for a roundtrip to Eugene, OR. With that said, it will cost a total of \$328.24 to cover the costs for transportation. By splitting the total by 8, transportation will cost \$41.03 per person. It will cost \$123.20 for the 3 individuals that this proposal pertains to.
  - Reference documents:
    - Doc 1: Budget spreadsheet
    - Doc 2: AS Vehicle reservation confirmation
- Lodging: The Holiday Inn Express of Eugene, OR has arranged a special rate of \$120.45/room/night for the Oregon Students of Color Conference guests. I already reserved three rooms for the three nights that we would be staying in Eugene, OR (arriving November 13<sup>th</sup> and departing November 16<sup>th</sup>). The confirmation number is 63573718, and I put my personal credit card down until I can pay it with the **FXXSBR asbEAT** account once the funding is approved. With the special rate of \$120.45, I reserved 3 rooms for 3 nights, totaling up to \$722.70.

By splitting the total cost by 8, lodging will cost \$90.34 per person. It will cost \$271.02 for the 3 individuals that pertain to this proposal.

- Reference documents:
  - Doc 1: Budget spreadsheet
  - Doc 3: Hotel confirmation invoice
- Conference Registration: I was able to reserve 8 spots for the early bird registration rate of \$80 per person. It will cost \$240 for the 3 individuals that pertain to this proposal.
  - Reference documents:
    - Doc 1: Budget spreadsheet
    - Doc 4: Conference Registration invoice
- Meals: I have been in constant communication with Yasmin Ibarra, the Events and Development Director, and it turns out that the conference will provide dinner on Friday, and then lunch and dinner on Saturday. Holiday Inn Express will provide complimentary breakfasts for our mornings at the hotel (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday) from 6:30-10:00 AM. The rest of the meals will be covered by the three different sources of funding. After breaking it down, each person will need 1 breakfast, 3 lunches, and 2 dinners. Our per diem rate, found in the travel services website, is \$11 for breakfast, \$14 for lunch, and \$21 for dinner. With that said, each individual needs a total of \$95 to cover their meals for their trip. It will cost \$285 for the 3 individuals that pertain to this proposal. Also, please note that I ask for breakfast, lunch and dinner for the day that we depart Bellingham and travel to Oregon (November 13<sup>th</sup>). According to Google Maps, the trip takes 6 hours non-stop. To be realistic, I know that there will need to be several rest stops throughout the trip in order to be considerate of all the passengers. Those stops will add up in time, and I estimate there to be at least an additional 2 hours, meaning that the trip can take up to 8 hours total. In those eight hours, the people need to eat. We will make sure to keep all the receipts, and all the unspent money will be returned to the three different funding sources.
  - Reference documents:
    - Doc 1: Budget spreadsheet
- In conclusion, I am asking for a total of \$919.11 from the Operating Enhancement Budget [FXXENH] to pay for three individuals, consisting of myself and two students-at-large.

## **Rationale**

Attending this conference will be beneficial in so many ways and it will overall enhance the everyday operations of the Associated Students as well as the campus culture of this university. The students-at-large who attend this conference can bring back their acquired skills, knowledge and experience and apply it to their communities of Western Washington University. The AS employees can apply it to their work in the AS for the rest of the year, ultimately become better resources for the students they are serving.

I have been looking at other conferences similar to this one, and the Oregon Students of Color Conference seems to be very affordable, accessible, and conveniently taking place at the beginning of the year when all the gained experiences can be applied for the next 7 months of the academic year.

Most importantly, this conference will focus on issues that hit very close to home for students of color who have felt overwhelmingly triggered by recent events surrounding systematic injustices to communities of color in this country. Relating back to the conference theme, it is very clear that students of color are becoming increasingly more aware of the institutional racism and misrepresentation of communities of color in the media. This conference provides a space and an outlet for students to talk about these important issues in a decolonized and potentially healing environment.