

Student Life and Success Briefing

BACKGROUND

This report provides an overview of our efforts that directly contribute to advancing student access and success in the context of Strategic Plan 4.0 (SP4.0), in addition to updates on previously reported priorities and highlights of emerging student life issues. Given that the COVID-19 pandemic had an incredible influence on university operations and the student experience this past year, and we anticipate that the consequences of the pandemic will not be fully evident for years to come, our reflections on the short- and long-term impact of COVID-19 are a central theme throughout the report.

The past year has been filled with innovation and resiliency by both Oregon State University (OSU) staff and students as we responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout this unprecedented period, OSU has remained flexible in the face of rapidly changing circumstances and focused on providing holistic, student-centered care. Some departments have discovered new ways to approach their work that have been well received by students and will lead to positive changes in post-pandemic operations.

We have also faced many challenges, as some students have struggled with feelings of disconnection, dealt with anxiety and mental health issues, and continued to confront racial injustice and other difficulties. Recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic is disproportionately impacting communities of color and intensifying financial concerns for many students, our efforts to equalize student access and success are more important than ever. As detailed in the following pages, the Division of Student Affairs (DSA) continues to prioritize working with university partners to remove unnecessary barriers that hinder student success and to increase equity and access.

PROGRESS AND METRICS RELATED TO STRATEGIC PLAN 4.0

Strategic Plan Focus Area: A Culture of Belonging, Collaboration and Innovation

Inclusivity Survey: Creating a Sense of Belonging

Every other year, DSADSA administers the Inclusivity Survey to help faculty and staff identify ways to help our institution create and maintain environments in which students truly believe they belong. The 2021 survey saw the highest ever response rate at 26%, up from 24% in 2019. We also expanded the reach of our effort, including Hatfield Marine Science Center and students who take courses at the Portland Center, in addition to Corvallis, Ecampus, and OSU-Cascades students (who have been included since the onset of this effort). Some survey instrument changes were made this year to better understand how or if students see specific identities represented in their courses and if that is done so respectfully. Additionally, a new section on career development will allow us to explore the multitude of ways that students from varying backgrounds experience career development opportunities.

While the analysis of this rich data set is in the early stages, we have some early findings to share related to how students are experiencing remote learning. Over 42% of Corvallis and OSU-Cascades undergraduates reported experiencing barriers to accessing classes, university events and/or services. When asked to identify the barriers, unsurprisingly the most frequently cited barrier was related to technology, with 33% noting this as a barrier. However, nearly as many students (32%) identified mental health issues, such as anxiety or depression, as a barrier. An additional 23% cited sensory or communication barriers like sensory overload

and difficulty tracking conversations on Zoom. Once open-ended question responses that are analyzed, we will have more nuanced information about what made students feel a sense of belonging or exclusion in remote learning environments.

We will explore student responses by race, gender, class standing, college, socioeconomic status, religious practice, experience of disability and more. From this, we hope to gain a better understanding of how students from different populations and identities experience belonging at OSU.

Beaver Connect

In June 2020, Beaver Connect (previously the Faculty-Student Mentor Program pilot) launched as a fully funded program within the Educational Opportunities Program (EOP.) The program still primarily serves students of color, first-generation students, and students with high financial need. Faculty volunteers are paired with paid student peer mentors to lead groups of three to four new-to-OSU students in bi-weekly meetings throughout their first year. The program is intended to create community, break down barriers between faculty and students, and provide leadership opportunities to student peer mentors.

Despite operating almost exclusively online during the pandemic, Beaver Connect has seen positive interaction rates. Between fall and winter terms, we had 393 students sign up for the program. Of this group, 26 students ultimately withdrew from the university. Across the 393 students we had a 69% participation rate (where students have been responsive to mentors or engaged in at least one mentoring session) and a 25% unresponsive rate, with 6% unknown data. This was not without challenge: our participation rates fell to 45% in winter term due largely to Zoom fatigue and other stressors felt by all parties. However, we also picked up new students looking for connection who had previously opted out of our fall program. In 2021, we are solidifying new partnerships to provide mentoring teams for students who participate in EOP Bridge, LSAMP Bridge and Academics for Student Athletes (in addition to more broadly identifying student athletes who may want to participate in Beaver Connect). We are also capitalizing on success with the University Exploratory Studies Program by providing more intentional team building with students who are deciding on a major. These partnerships will allow Beaver Connect to continue to grow and reach more of our target populations, while bolstering services already proven successful.

Student Mental Health

Both national and local survey data confirm what we have all been seeing: our students are struggling to navigate multiple challenges of societal-wide impact: COVID-19, a national racial reckoning, social unrest, political unrest and polarization, and climate change, including wildfires. In June 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conducted a survey of 5,400 people. For those in the 18- to 24-year-old age group, 25.5% reported having seriously considered suicide (minority groups and essential workers are at even greater risk of considering suicide). Of those aged 18 to 24, about one-quarter also said they had increased their substance use to cope with the pandemic, and about three-quarters reported struggling with at least one mental health symptom.

In fall 2020, the Healthy Minds National Survey polled 2,000 college students and found that 75% reported their mental health had worsened during the pandemic. Of these students, 89% reported they were experiencing stress as a result of COVID-19, and one in four said their depression had significantly increased. Specific to OSU students, surveys have indicated that half of students note that managing their mental health and motivation are significant concerns. Mental health represents over 17% of all diagnoses currently made by Student Health Services

clinicians. Anecdotally, counselors at OSU's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) have observed that students are struggling with anxiety due to multiple stressors, difficulty concentrating, difficulty maintaining motivation, loneliness and isolation, and financial stress. Students may also be at increased risk of experiencing abusive behavior from a partner due to the social isolation. Another observation has been that marginalized students are more likely to be dealing with additional stressors.

Paradoxically, despite the increased challenges students have been facing this past year, fewer students are accessing CAPS compared to previous years. The total number of students accessing CAPS is down 25.8% and the total number of appointments is down 21.6%. This decreased utilization is consistent with national trends. It appears that students may be less likely to access remote counseling services for numerous reasons, including that fewer students are on campus, students may be living with family and have concerns about privacy, and students may be focusing their energy on adjusting to other demands such as remote learning. A parallel phenomenon is that when natural disasters hit, there is often a six-month period between when the disaster ends and when people start to access mental health resources. People tend to immediately go into survival mode — “white-knuckling” through the disaster. It is often only afterward that they realize they need support for their mental health.

The racial reckoning that has been happening both across the country, and here at OSU, has resulted in CAPS reassessing its approaches to supporting Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) students. Toward the end of summer 2020, students requested that CAPS hire counselors who could better understand the lived experiences of Black/African American and Indigenous students. CAPS already had several newly funded positions that had not been hired yet. Seeing this opportunity, CAPS created both a coordinator of Black/African American student mental health and wellness position and a coordinator of Indigenous student mental health and wellness position. The coordinator of Black/African American mental health and wellness has just concluded, and there were two outstanding final candidates. Therefore, CAPS offered employment to both candidates and they both accepted. We are excited to have these two counselors join us over the summer. The search for the coordinator of Indigenous mental health and wellness is also currently active, and this position is anticipated to begin prior to fall 2021. These searches have received support and excitement across campus from students, faculty, and staff, and it is important to note that in addition to providing counseling, these coordinators will also be focused on strengthening Black/African American and Indigenous student communities. CAPS looks forward to the positive impact these positions will have in supporting BIPOC students.

Interpersonal Violence

The Interpersonal Violence Prevention, Support and Response program is multi-disciplinary and crosses multiple departments across OSU. The university's comprehensive approach provides a continuum of programs and services designed to prevent violence and support and respond to survivors of interpersonal violence through advocacy, including reporting options; safety planning, medical, academic, and housing accommodations; training referrals; and clinical services and OSU's Care Team. OSU also provides prevention programming to raise awareness and educate students in addressing rape myths and empowering bystanders, and also offers other engagement opportunities to create a safer and more supportive campus community. In addition, OSU provides an enforcement infrastructure to intervene and ensure compliance with law, policy, and community standards. In sum, OSU's Interpersonal Violence Prevention, Support and Response program is a shared enterprise, including collaboration with community resources and services, such as local law enforcement and community victim/survivor services organizations.

The vice provost for student affairs and the executive director of equal opportunities and access have charged a steering team with representation from DSADSA leadership and university partners to engage in a comprehensive review on interpersonal violence support and response at OSU. This process will review and clarify current roles and responsibilities across multiple units and departments; identify program and service delivery needs, gaps, and opportunities for collaboration; review past and present survivor feedback; determine areas in need of investment; and consider structural alignments that will lead to improved prevention, support, and response. The committee co-chairs will compile input from the steering team and prepare recommendations to ensure Oregon State's efforts are well coordinated and leveraged to meet the needs of our community. They will also engage outside expertise to review benchmarks and establish standards to guide the university's aligned and collaborative efforts.

Strategic Plan Focus Area: Transformative Education that is Accessible to All Learners

Black and Indigenous Student Access and Success

Black and Indigenous students have been historically underrepresented at Oregon State. DSADSA launched two initiatives approximately four years ago to better support the educational access and success of Black and Indigenous students. These initiatives are now merging and being transitioned into a center to serve Black and Indigenous students. Under the leadership of the center's director, and through reallocating funds and FTE within the Division, the center will have more support focused on both Black and Indigenous student access and success. It will provide holistic support to students and create rich and intentional collaboration across campus. Focus areas will include academic success and retention, intentional outreach and recruitment of Black and Indigenous students, and community building. The center, housed within the [Educational Opportunities Program](#), builds upon and expands EOP's 51-year legacy of supporting underrepresented students. EOP students have smaller sections of classes, a Bridge program to bring them to campus early in the summer, as well as many other support services.

The Black Student Access and Success Initiative was originally created in 2017 to address the decline in enrollment of undergraduate students who identify as Black as well as lower rates of persistence and graduation among Black students when compared to the total student population. Notably, the number of Black students at OSU has increased significantly since the initiative began. However, Black students experienced a decline in first-year retention and graduation rates this past year for the first time since the initiative was launched. During this time period, there have been increased conversations with students about challenges with financial aid, mental health, and sense of belonging. Additional research will be initiated to better understand and address this change.

The Native and Indigenous Access and Success Initiative struggled to make a strong impact without consistent leadership and programming direction, and there has been a decline in Indigenous enrollment and graduation rates in recent years. We recognize the importance of strengthening our efforts to support Native students and tribal communities. With the newly launched center and a dedicated part-time position, staff plan to apply some of the successful strategies used by the Black Student Access and Success Initiative to support Native and Indigenous students. Several challenges remain, including the need for a full-time position focused on Native and Indigenous students and the small number of OSU staff who identify as Native American/Alaska Native/Pacific Islander.

Working with university partners, initiative leadership has made great strides, creating the [Nia Black Scholar Living-Learning Community](#) and the [munk skukum Indigenous Living-Learning](#)

[Community](#), in addition to engaging in community outreach. There is still much work to do to increase the educational access and success of our Black and Indigenous communities. The recent decline in first-year retention and graduation rates for Black students and a decline in Indigenous student enrollment reinforce the importance and value of this newly established center guided by principles of access, equity, and innovation.

Fundraising in Support of Student Access and Success

The DSA [fundraising strategy](#), adopted in 2019, was developed to increase alignment in our development efforts to enhance student access and success, while also leveraging existing gift opportunities. The Division's fundraising plan supports the university's strategic priorities and the OSU Foundation (OSUF) has committed and focused resources to these efforts. For example, OSUF has led campaigns that have received broad university support to address food insecurity and strengthen diversity and equity initiatives.

Working together, OSUFOSUF and DSADSA leadership raised nearly \$2 million in both FY2019 and FY2020. Since the adoption of our plan, the Division has experienced a strong upward trend in donations (there was a roughly 155% to 175% increase in donations the past two fiscal years when compared to FY2018). Examples of focus areas that have benefited from OSUF and division fundraising include the EOPEOP, including efforts to increase access and success for Black and Indigenous students; the Dreaming Beyond Borders Resource Center, also housed in EOP; the cultural resource centers within Diversity and Cultural Engagement; and the Human Services Resource Center, which received an extraordinary \$1 million gift in FY2020 to address students' basic needs (the HSRC has provided essential services for students during the pandemic, including emergency housing support, laptop loans, laundry services by appointment and food assistance).

Fundraising will continue to play an important role in assisting programs that enhance student access and success. With this in mind, Division liaisons and the OSUF team have worked to educate donors about university priorities and ways that student affairs programming — and their support of this programming — positively impact student access and success.

Career Development Center Update

The Career Development Center team has developed and been working toward a comprehensive strategy to support all students' career development at OSU. The Career Development Center is leading a campus-wide initiative to make career planning (competency development and career readiness, industry engagement, career relevant curriculum, etc.) a signature value proposition of an OSU degree. This includes the unique career needs of international students, in an effort in partnership with INTO.

Knowing that a one-size-fits-all and opt-in approach will continue to leave behind students — particularly those who are first-generation, experience high financial need, or are students of color — the goal is to create an ecosystem that has all students colliding with their career development throughout college in both their academic and non-academic experiences. OSU's career development program will emphasize that effective career development is accomplished not by the work of a single office, but through robust collaborations with faculty, staff, alumni, and employers to meet students at each step along their journeys from college to career. Within this approach students gain the core competencies necessary to build careers and solve the toughest problems in an ever-changing global economy. Our approach includes the following elements.

- **Career Relevant Curriculum:** Students will develop and be connected to career relevant skills that industries are seeking in their coursework.
- **Skill Development through Experiential Learning:** Students are able to participate in experiential learning opportunities that prepare them for the real world through curricular and co-curricular activities.
- **Tailored Career Support:** Each undergraduate college has a dedicated assistant director of career development who tailors support and programming based on the fields of study and relevant industries for that particular college. Students receive access to resources and engagement activities that help connect them to their professional goals. These activities include industry treks, alumni and employer panels, networking events, specialized career fairs, job shadows and advising with staff that are knowledgeable about careers in students' fields of interest.
- **Industry Connection:** OSU works with hundreds of organizations that are seeking to hire students for jobs and internships. Students are connected to diverse industries through tailored events and activities that include treks, career fairs, networking events, job shadows and internships.
- **Connection to Alumni Mentor Network:** Through the Alumni Association's OSU Connections program, students have access to a caring network of knowledgeable and well-connected Beavers to offer students and recent graduates professional advice, referrals, and opportunities to support post-collegiate goals.

In addition, the Career Development Center has been working on a number of programs and initiatives to better address barriers faced by students of color and those students who are first-generation or have high financial need. The Career Champions program, a project of the University Innovation Alliance's Bridging the Gap from Education to Employment, was piloted in 2020 and explores tangible ways to integrate career readiness into the classroom. The Diversity Careers Collective brings together university stakeholders committed to supporting culturally relevant professional development; connecting underrepresented students with employers; and cultivating opportunities for OSU alumni and students with shared identities to engage together in career-relevant experiences. The "Things I Wish I Knew" career panels during the fall and winter terms have reached over 300 students exploring topics like relationship building, leadership and identity, and race and assimilation in the workplace with BIPOC identifying alumni and industry professionals who have served as panelists. Finally, the Career Development Center is developing new methods to educate employers about how to improve equity in hiring and retention practices and to identify employers committed to hiring and retaining diverse talent.

NEW PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

OSU Assist

As the university continues progress in transitioning the OSU Corvallis law enforcement service from Oregon State Police to a university-delivered program, we are also investing in program enhancements, services, and programs that will provide for improved university and agency coordination for crisis prevention, response, and support services.

OSU Assist, formerly the Community Wellness, Education and Safety Network (CWESN), will formally align OSU services and programs that include student crisis prevention, intervention, situational stabilization and assessment, resources, and advocacy, while ensuring the most

appropriate response resources are engaged during crisis. Included in this network will be new student-serving personnel who will have the appropriate training, credentials, and experience to evaluate the best possible response approach.

Since the announcement of the Community Wellness, Education and Safety Network in fall 2020, an advisory group was established and began meeting every other week. This advisory group includes representatives from the Survivor Advocacy and Resource Center, the Student Care Team, Diversity and Cultural Engagement, the Department of Public Safety and Counseling and Psychological Services. These representatives have provided expertise, gathered input through benchmarking and research, plus consulted with the Office of General Counsel and Insurance and Risk Management Services to create a position description for a new coordinator. A search is underway in anticipation of this person being hired before fall 2021. Once hired, this coordinator will help lead in the continued development of OSU Assist by hiring additional crisis responders.

During the latter part of spring 2021, student engagement sessions and discussions with other community members will be held to continue informing the university landscape about OSU Assist and to garner additional feedback. The email address OSU.Assist@oregonstate.edu is being established for administrative purposes (not requests for assistance). Questions, inquiries, and feedback can be directed to this email. The address will be published on OSU Assist webpages and be used to analyze the trends of questions and concerns to inform an updated OSU Assist webpage and corresponding FAQs.

Wellness Clinic

The new Wellness Clinic initiative, a partnership between OSU's Student Health Services (SHS) and a community health partner, continues to progress. SHSSH will own and operate the Wellness Clinic, though SHSSH and our community health partner will be co-located within the new clinic. SHSSH will maintain their health and wellness services to students, and our community health partner will provide services to OSU faculty, staff, and the broader community on the Corvallis campus. This will allow expanded hours and availability of medical services for students, staff, faculty, and the broader community.

SHSSH and our community health partner are currently engaged in biweekly building design meetings with OSU's architect and a contracted architecture firm to design a four-story modern clinic of approximately 32,000 square feet, forecasted to be open in the summer of 2023. Additionally, Oregon State, including SHSSH, the Office of General Counsel and the Office of Leasing and Strategic Real Property Management, are meeting with our community health partner biweekly to negotiate a term sheet that will form the basis of the anticipated lease between SHSSH and our community health partner.

High Promise Scholarship

The High Promise Scholarship (HPS) is awarded to students in their second year. The award is a vote of confidence from the university and tells students we believe in them and their continued success at OSU. While the scholarship has been in place for a few years, this past year, donors, students' colleges, and the Office of Financial Aid partnered to provide funding in a renewable format. Students can now renew the award for up to three years of support. The HPS was awarded to 50 students this year.

Scholarship recipients also receive a broad range of support services. In fall and winter

terms, HPS students participated in 50 check-in conversations with Academic Success Center staff and over 100 academic engagement activities like academic coaching, academic success workshops, and writing consultations. The majority of colleges have confirmed support for a second cohort, which will be selected in spring term, with the award beginning in fall 2021.

Academic Unit Partnerships

The COVID-19 related response and pivot to remote learning transformed the delivery of courses and services throughout OSU. The efforts of the Division of Student Affairs and the Office of Undergraduate Education have been central to regularly capturing the pulse and experience of students, and in doing so, shaping the design and approaches implemented at all levels of university planning. Here are a few key efforts this year:

- A series of three surveys on the “Remote Learning Experience” in April, August, and November has provided insight on the evolving challenges, concerns, ideas and needs students have had during the past year. Summary reports were disseminated widely and informed teaching recommendations for fall and winter and student communication efforts.
- The Keep Learning website development strengthened our connection to and collaboration with the Center for Teaching and Learning and other academic units as we worked to synchronize information and messaging for students and faculty.
- The newly created Student Resources Digest (SRD) collects and disseminates information about student-facing resources, events, and opportunities to key student communicators across colleges and divisions. COVID-19 exposed gaps in student communication efforts, and the SRD is one avenue for connecting students with important information.

Looking ahead to the post-COVID reality, the division will continue the momentum around gathering and disseminating student perspectives, collaborating with academic units for a more seamless student experience and exploring student communication pathways to ensure access to and knowledge of key resources and information.

TRENDING AND EMERGING ISSUES

COVID-19 Student Care, Support and Engagement

University leaders rapidly initiated pandemic planning and response protocols for Oregon State in late winter and spring 2020, and Division of Student Affairs departments shifted their efforts to support students remotely and help them feel connected throughout the pandemic. Our efforts have recognized that the pandemic has created additional strain for many of our students due to family, economic, individual health, and demographic factors (i.e., social determinants of health).

Student life departments and programs are now preparing for additional in-person activities and a more traditional fall experience. The content below reflects upon the past year, considers the impact of the pandemic, and explores emerging issues for key topics as we begin to shift practices for the fall.

International Student Care

The total number of international students at OSU is 2,846. This makes up 8.8% of the total student population, a decline of 2.2% from fall 2019. Due to COVID-19, some of these students

are currently studying from outside of the United States. A spring 2021 survey, which generated 2,525 student responses, reported that 1,174 survey respondents were studying in the U.S., 666 were studying from outside the U.S., and 55 were unsure at the time of responding. Of those studying from outside the U.S., 297 are located in China.

Regardless of location, students continued to be supported and provided immigration advising through daily virtual appointments, virtual drop-in meetings, workshops, and monthly newsletter updates. Community building and networking has continued through the International Peer Mentor Program and International Friendship Program, which connect students and exchange visitors to Corvallis community members.

As we prepare for a return to in-person learning in fall 2021 the following are emerging issues:

- Backlog and delays in processing of visa applications;
- Possible delays in issuing Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE) guidance for fall 2021;
- Continued or expanded COVID-19 travel restricted countries;
- The U.S. restoring the confidence of international students and exchange visitors as they choose where to study.

Racial Bias and the Student Experience

COVID-19 continues to create incredible challenges for our students, directly and indirectly. Many students are finding it much harder to be academically successful as they struggle to deal with the disproportionate number of BIPOC deaths due to COVID-19, parents and family members losing jobs, increased food insecurity, unemployment wage delays and lost childcare. Taking classes with siblings and parents in the same home, while having to share digital resources and Wi-Fi, has also taken its toll on our students.

The challenges created by COVID-19 combined with the murder of George Floyd and many other people of color at the hands of police officers, the rise in anti-Asian and anti-Asian American hate crimes, and the increase in emboldened white supremacist hate groups around the country have sent the lives of many students into disarray and threatened their overall well-being and sense of safety.

These factors clearly have an impact on students' abilities to demonstrate their knowledge and mastery of course material. Students have acknowledged feeling scared, angry, and even hopeless while trying to deal with is happening around them. Most have limited access to professionals who can help them process past and current stressors, and they are still expected to meet the expectations of faculty who most likely do not share the same fears and anxieties.

As we anticipate a more traditional student experience this fall, and additional transitions and adjustments for our community, students need to know that the university supports them and will work to meet their needs in a proactive manner with compassion and understanding. It is important that the university provide a source of stable support in the context of such an unstable larger context.

Readiness for College and Academic Success

The 2021 Welcome Week committee has recently been established and will begin meeting every two weeks. Welcome Week will address four core domains: Orientation to the Academic Environment; Inclusive Communities; Holistic Health, Well-Being, and Safety; and Developing a Sense of Belonging. Within these domains, the committee will focus on meeting the needs of incoming students, transfer students and returning students who did not experience a traditional

first year at Oregon State due to the pandemic.

Regarding academic readiness, DSADSA and the Office of Undergraduate Education have begun to strategize the potential of supplemental instruction options for first-year students during Welcome Week. A communication plan to incoming students, parents and families, and staff is being developed.

Student-Focused Health Care

Starting in spring 2020, SHS began offering a wide range of medical services via telehealth, which has been very well received by students and has helped protect public health and safety during the pandemic. SHS currently has clinicians licensed in Washington and California who provide telehealth to students in those states, as well as Oregon. SHS had begun building capacity for telehealth prior to the pandemic and this service has only grown including provision of appointments to OSU-Cascades students. While the pandemic accelerated the timeline and scope of these services, students have responded favorably and SHS hopes to be able to continue this service into the future.

In 2019-20, a total of 39,288 patients were seen at SHSSHS, 3,391 of these patients were seen through telehealth appointments, or 8.6%. In 2020-21, however, 22,296 patients were seen by SHS with 7,687 of those visits through telehealth appointments, or 34.55% — a substantial increase of nearly 26%. While more in-person visits are expected to resume in fall 2021, this service has expanded access to care and has been an efficient way to conveniently reach more students and address issues that do not require an in-person visit.

CAPSCAPS pivoted to teletherapy rather abruptly with the onset of the pandemic. This shift, which would have likely taken two years during normal circumstances, took about two weeks. The strategy was to focus on figuring out the big questions initially (e.g., how to protect client confidentiality and the legalities of cross-state practice) and then to continually finetune through trial and error. In reflecting on this past year, several aspects of teletherapy stand out. Despite its drawbacks, teletherapy is much better than no therapy. CAPS has provided 12,293 teletherapy appointments to 2,642 students thus far, and anecdotal evidence suggests that student have benefitted from these remote services. Teletherapy also offers a level of convenience, not requiring students to come to CAPS. Additionally, students may have a higher level of confidentiality because they do not need to physically come to CAPS where others might see them. Teletherapy also extends CAPS' reach, so that students across the state can be served. Teletherapy does appear to have some drawbacks, including technology interruptions, limited privacy if the student is living with other people and a sense that it is harder to read emotions, which is critical to good therapy. Teletherapy is also considered less than ideal when serving students in crisis, including those who have suicidal thoughts. Although it is too early to tell exactly how effective teletherapy is compared to face-to-face therapy, it is likely that near-universal reliance on teletherapy during the pandemic has normalized this form of treatment to the degree that teletherapy will outlive the pandemic. It will be critical for CAPS to thoroughly research emerging best practices and student needs in order to determine what role teletherapy will play in future service delivery.

Post-Pandemic Student Mental Health

It is unlikely that the decrease in student utilization of CAPSCAPS compared to previous years will continue post-pandemic. It is likely that as students begin to recover, they will need even more mental health support than they did pre-pandemic. Although we are truly entering uncharted territory, it is reasonable to believe that when our students return in the fall, they will

benefit from our help in navigating multiple challenges as they create a new normal. The social isolation that has been adaptive in managing the spread of COVID-19 may become maladaptive; many students may need help developing their “social muscles” again and reintegrating with friends and loved ones. Many have acquired habits during the pandemic that have negatively impacted their mental health, including increased substance use, disrupted sleep and decreased exercise. They will need to relearn how to foster their motivation and strengthen their concentration. Others will need support in managing increased financial concerns and housing and food insecurity, given the state of the economy.

On top of the COVID-19-related stressors are the multiple concurrent stressors from the other pandemics we previously mentioned, including racism, political unrest and polarization, and climate change. To remain relevant and attentive to student needs, Oregon State will need to find ways to help students address these challenges, both academically and personally. OSU must also recognize the disproportionate impact these stressors have on students with marginalized identities and provide holistic support that is tailored to their needs and experiences.

Adequate Health Insurance Requirement

Oregon State University maintains a strong institutional commitment in supporting the holistic health and well-being of all OSU students as the foundation of student success. SHSSHS is further committed to supporting equity in access to essential health services outside what SHS and CAPS can provide, including hospitalization, pregnancy care, long-term mental health care and other essential benefits. Therefore, Oregon State is exploring the appropriateness of a requirement for all OSU students to have adequate health insurance as a condition of enrollment. A mandatory insurance policy would align with national college health standards and follows the example of numerous peer institutions in protecting students’ educational investment, while ensuring access to needed care and support.

To support students in meeting the requirement, OSU offers a sponsored Student Health Insurance Plan, which is a comprehensive and affordable plan developed explicitly with students’ health needs in mind, including low out-of-pocket expenses and access to a wide network of care providers nation-wide and internationally. If the requirement moves forward, students could also elect comparable coverage, such as remaining on their parent’s plan or an employer plan, if the plan meets the university’s definition for adequate health insurance. Enrollment in the Oregon Health Plan (Medicaid) will also meet OSU’s requirement, so students with high financial need would not face additional costs.