It is with profound optimism and gratitude that I write to you as we look to the future. In just over two years, we have accomplished much to be proud of. However, we still have much to do in this essential work.

To continue our momentum, it’s helpful to reflect on the mission of the Office of Institutional Diversity: to design, plan, lead and implement, in collaboration with university partners, institutional change actions, initiatives and communications to advance diversity, equity and inclusion throughout all facets of Oregon State University.

With that mission in mind, OID is taking steps to achieve our goals. For example, since our last newsletter, OID hosted over 50 chief diversity officers in Corvallis for the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education’s Standards of Professional Practice Institute. This was a time to network and learn from each other, review standards of professional practice and contribute to revisions of national standards.

Additionally, as a member of the Southern Regional Education Board, OSU was fortunate to have three doctoral students, Michael Harrison, Christopher Hughbanks and Brittany King, attend the Institute for Teaching and Mentoring. This 4-day conference has become the largest gathering of doctoral scholars of color in the country. The institute gives the issue of faculty diversity a national focus and provides scholars with the strategies necessary to complete their doctoral programs and be successful members of the professoriate.

OID also published the annual President and Provost’s Leadership Council Report on Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice. This report, along with summaries of the 2018 Faculty/Staff Climate Survey and the 2019 Student Inclusivity Survey, are available on the OID website.

INSIGHT into Diversity, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education, recognized Oregon State University’s commitment to inclusiveness with a Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award for the second year in a row. President and Co-publisher Lenore Pearlstein presented the HEED award to President Ed Ray on Oct. 21.

In our first newsletter in spring 2018, I shared my optimism for our future and the power and impact of an OSU education. At the recent Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities annual conference, two presentations left a significant impression of the brilliant work happening at OSU (see story on page 12). Additionally, HACU awarded Christopher Cousins a $5,000 scholarship to complete his education in the College of Agricultural Sciences.

At our State of Diversity at OSU address in June, I provided an update on our Diversity Strategic Plan. We had a full house present to celebrate our accomplishments, and we have positive momentum — even with some very serious challenges, which have created opportunities for our community to address issues of safety for all at OSU.

Finally, when a member of our community hurts, we all hurt. These incidents call on us to take action, have courageous conversations and challenge the status quo. We keep building on those who came before us, and it’s our responsibility to keep that work moving forward.
This is an important time in our history. Together, we will articulate our core values and what it means for all students to know they are safe at Oregon State University. I encourage all of us to be active participants in those conversations, knowing that they may be difficult, but we will remain resolute in our common goals. I am especially proud to be part of a team that is thinking strategically and carefully about our collective safety.

Sincerely,

Charlene Alexander
Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer

In this issue:

**Inclusive Web Design**
Ensuring websites are accessible for all

**Bernie Foster**
Righting wrongs, opening doors

**Luhui Whitebear**
Finding her voice, empowering others

**Pamela Johnson**
Diversity work behind the scenes

**Advancing women in engineering**

**Beaver Hangouts**
Bringing the college experience to K-12 schools

**OSU Stem Leaders**
Mentored students become mentors themselves

**Doing right by indigenous communities**

**Black student initiative builds pathways to success**

**ON THE COVER:**
Environmental sciences major Mia Arvizu sets out salmon to be cooked over an open fire at the Native American Longhouse Eena Haws. The 21st-annual Salmon Bake, held in May, celebrates Oregon State's indigenous community.
At Oregon State, inclusive web design isn’t a bonus. It’s imperative.

The internet, while often praised for its inclusivity, is rarely one size fits all. Every day, inaccessible web design prevents millions of people with disabilities from enjoying uncomplicated access to online information — something many would consider a basic human right. And yet, even with 20% of the global population living with a disability, investing in more inclusive digital content continually falls to the bottom of the priority list.

For most organizations, this neglect is the result of a single persistent shortcoming: people without disabilities simply don’t know what needs to be fixed. Enter Monsido, a web governance tool that takes out the guesswork by identifying coding issues that would otherwise be unapparent to those who don’t have disabilities.

Derek Whiteside and Gabe Merrell, the pair who brought Monsido to Oregon State in 2018, call the tool “a Swiss army knife” for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

“Monsido scans our domains weekly across multiple dimensions to identify any issue that might hinder accessibility and usability or result in a violation risk,” says Whiteside, who serves as Oregon State’s director of web and mobile services.

“Those errors could be broken links, missing image descriptions, grammar errors...any spot where quality is lacking, we’ll know about it.”

In an organization as decentralized as a public university, this streamlined review process is crucial. Monsido highlights concerns like missing alternative text or a lack of heading structure, then presents them in dashboard form to the website manager. From there, it’s a matter of using the tool’s amateur-friendly review system to make accessibility changes on a routine basis.

“Most of the folks managing our websites are not website professionals,” says Merrell, Oregon State’s director for access and affirmative action within the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access. “We’re talking office assistants who have been tasked with updating their units’ websites or communicators with just enough web experience to get by. Having a tool that helps laypeople find those compliance issues that aren’t apparent to those of us that don’t have disabilities is huge.”
Identifying accessibility issues hidden just under the surface

Imagine for a moment that you are a legally blind person, shopping on your college bookstore’s website for a required chemistry textbook. You need to be able to locate the correct title, in the right edition, input a voucher provided by your professor and check out with your debit card. Not too much to ask, right? Screen reader ready, you take the routine steps required for a blind person to navigate a website built for sighted people.

But the web page you need is tucked inside a non-descriptive hyperlink that says “click here.” The arrow you’d use to get to the second page of titles was improperly labeled. And the thumbnail image of the book you’re looking for is lacking descriptive alternative text.

For a sighted person, these little hiccups would never become a barrier — in fact, they’d be entirely unnoticeable. But for a legally blind person? Those errors could be reason enough to leave the site and never come back.

“So often I find myself asking, “Are we doing the best we can for disabled folks? If our websites aren’t accessible to 20% of the population, we’ve certainly failed,” Merrell says. “And I’d hate for us to lose a student or hinder someone from coming to OSU because they’ve visited our sites and realized they can’t use them.”

Creating an internet that works for everyone

Making digital platforms accessible and usable to everyone, regardless of age, language, education or ability is a vital part of inclusivity. Unfortunately, many institutions wait for disadvantaged groups on the receiving end to make complaints, rather than taking a proactive approach to accessibility.

“As with any identity–based inclusion effort, relying on the target group to fix the problem is inherently flawed,” says Merrell. “We should never be relying on people with disabilities to bring these issues to our attention, especially with tools like Monsido available. It’s up to us to remove barriers to access before they ever become a real problem.”

In practice, this means taking the time to develop user interfaces that are intuitive, flexible and perceptible to all types of users, regardless of age, size or physical, sensory or intellectual ability or disability. Whiteside describes it as “personalizing and contextualizing digital interactions,” something his team in University Information and Technology is working hard to make more commonplace.

“It might sound silly to say this, but people with disabilities are people,” Merrell says. “Working to make our websites more accessible communicates that the disabled community matters, that they are part of the conversation and that we’re working hard to do right by them.”

At Oregon State, we wouldn’t have it any other way.

Now, web accessibility is in your hands.

To learn more about Monsido or get advice on bringing it to your organization, contact Web and Mobile Services, wams.contact@oregonstate.edu. Seeking specific accessibility advice? Get in touch with Equal Opportunity and Access, accessibility@oregonstate.edu.

We look forward to hearing from you!
Long-time Portland publisher Bernie Foster gives back to his community by getting the word out about the issues they face.

Bernie, alongside his wife Bobbie, established The Skanner in 1975. An African American newspaper reaching underserved communities in the Pacific Northwest, The Skanner addresses topics like housing, police accountability, local and national news.

He says he was motivated to start The Skanner because “I wanted to have a voice to help shape Portland and keep fighting some of the injustice we face every day.”

One story that stands out to Foster details his experience in the movement to successfully petition and change the name of Portland’s Union Avenue to Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard in 1994 — an action that was considered controversial at the time.

In addition to his community work, Foster is helping Oregon State students achieve their goals. Through work with the Oregon Board of Pharmacy in Portland, he met with — and was impressed by — several students entering the College of Pharmacy. At that time, he noticed there weren’t many black students entering the program. So he made it his mission to support them and reduce the burden of college expenses by creating a scholarship through The Skanner.

And Foster’s giving doesn’t stop there. At the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. breakfast in Portland — the biggest event of its kind on the West Coast — the community comes together to commemorate King’s legacy through speeches, discussions and scholarship presentations. Over the event’s 37-year history, approximately $1 million in scholarships have been awarded to university students throughout Oregon studying business and journalism.

Foster finds joy in helping others succeed and sharing stories that make an impact. Most of all, he is dedicated to doing his part in making our country a better place, every day.

“Freedom doesn’t come free. You’ve got to work for it and fight for it,” he says. “You have to be vigilant and fight for the issues facing you on a constant basis. That’s what my paper does.”
She found her voice and now empowers others to make their voices heard.

Students of color are often lumped into a single category without recognizing their differences. So it takes extra effort to identify their unique experiences on a campus as diverse as Oregon State.

Helping people understand and accept different perspectives is how Luhui Whitebear is building a community where all students, staff and faculty can feel welcome.

“I want people to feel really connected to OSU,” Whitebear says. Her efforts to make connections, particularly her advocacy in reclaiming indigenous identity, was recognized with the Outstanding Diversity Advocate Award at the annual University Day celebration in September.

As assistant director of the Native American Longhouse Eena Haws, one of seven cultural centers on campus, Whitebear is the only staff person whose full-time job is working with indigenous students.

It’s a step forward from what Whitebear experienced when she arrived at Oregon State as the first person in her family to attend college in 1998. Communication was strained when people didn’t understand or accept her cultural viewpoint.

“Sometimes, I felt really shut down,” she recalls. “What I needed to know was that I belonged.”

Whitebear earned a degree in ethnic studies in 2003, then worked for 10 years as a college advisor for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. During that time, she earned a second bachelor’s degree in anthropology online through Oregon State’s Ecampus.

In 2013, she returned to Oregon State to work at the longhouse and complete a master’s degree in interdisciplinary studies. Now she’s finishing a Ph.D. program in women, gender and sexuality studies. Her research focuses on intergenerational storytelling within indigenous activist circles.

Whitebear says even within a culture, perceptions can be shaped by dominant voices. One heartbreaking example is how federal laws and policies quell the response by law enforcement to violence against indigenous women. Whitebear’s testimony about the problem led to the passage of legislation earlier this year requiring Oregon State Police to conduct closer investigations of missing and murdered indigenous women.

As she finishes her dissertation, Whitebear is mindful of the example she’s setting. “I am doing this for our community,” she says.

Because advocacy isn’t telling someone what to think or say. It’s empowering people to find their own voice and teaching them how to use it.
Diversity work isn’t just for those out front. It also takes root behind the scenes.

When Pamela Johnson first stepped into her role as executive assistant to Oregon State University’s chief diversity officer, she knew she was taking on work that matters.

Diligent, humble and a self-identified Type-A personality, Johnson is a vital part of the collective that keeps diversity and inclusion work at the university a top priority. Scheduling meetings, arranging travel, taking impeccable notes at board meetings — it’s an aspect of institutional diversity work that few get to see, but everyone should value.

Read on to learn more about how one of Oregon State’s behind-the-scenes changemakers is advancing the work.
Q. What are your responsibilities as an executive assistant in the Office of Institutional Diversity?
A. I schedule a lot of meetings. That’s the quick answer I always give, because it’s the part of my job that is easiest for most people to understand. I primarily support Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer Charlene Alexander, which helps her to achieve more. I provide support to the President and Provost’s Leadership Council for Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice; the Board of Visitors; the Faculty and Staff Climate Survey committee; and other committees as required. I also manage the budget for our office, arrange travel, manage the website and social media accounts, and provide logistical support for OID’s events, programs and committees. I’m the Type-A person behind the curtain keeping OID on track.

Q. Why do you think diversity and inclusion matters?
A. If everyone was the same and thought the same, life would be boring, and not much would get done. Everyone has something to contribute to the world, and everyone deserves the opportunity to do that.

Q. What does an inclusive university look like? And how can we get there?
A. This is a really hard question to answer… I think an inclusive university means everyone feels welcome, because they are welcome. Diverse people should populate every strata of the university. Even among executive assistants, when a group of us get together, you mostly see a collection of white women. This is not a reflection of the demographics of the state or of the university. I would like to see Oregon State do a better job using its recruitment process to reflect that.

Q. How do you contribute to building a more inclusive campus on an individual level?
A. As an individual, I want to know everyone’s story, because I’m curious and I love stories. I try to make everyone feel welcome. I’m very introverted, but when I’m walking around campus, I try to make eye contact with people and smile. I like to think this small act makes people feel more welcome — especially those who may not otherwise.

Q. How has Oregon State changed since you started working here?
A. I’ve only been here three years, so without thinking I would say, “not much,” but that’s simply not true. There is more awareness of our office and its role in the university and a greater understanding of diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice issues on campus. People across the university want to make changes, they want to learn, and they reach out to our team to do that.

Q. How do you have a background in journalism. How does that inform your work at Oregon State?
A. I draft a lot of emails and documents and copy edit documents for all of my colleagues. I manage our website and social media accounts, and I do some simple design work for OID’s events, programs and committees. I’m the Type-A person behind the curtain keeping OID on track.

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Values backed by actions advance women in engineering.

Actions in recruiting, promotion and professional development are achieving results in the College of Engineering. Under the leadership of Kearney Dean of Engineering Scott Ashford, the number of women among tenured and tenure-track faculty in the college has more than doubled since 2014. Oregon State ranks second among land grant universities and third out of 94 public Carnegie R1 universities for the percentage of engineering faculty who are women.

Those actions are also being noticed. Ashford was recently honored as one of three recipients of the 2019 Rodney D. Chipp Memorial Award from the Society of Women Engineers. Chipp, the husband of the society’s original president, Beatrice Hicks, was known for his support of Hicks’ efforts on behalf of women engineers.

Oregon State was also recognized by the American Society for Engineering Education as an “exemplar” recipient of a Bronze Award in the ASEE Diversity Recognition Program, one of 28 schools awarded the highest recognition offered in the program’s inaugural year.

“The College of Engineering has created a more inclusive environment in support of female engineers by taking a deep look at the root causes of longstanding barriers and implementing programs to achieve the desired changes,” Ashford says. “The transformation began with a strategic planning process, which led to changes in faculty recruitment, promotion and tenure, and professional development. The process includes a ‘change team’ working as an overarching body to support a change in the culture.

“Recognition like these distinctions demonstrates the progress we’ve made in diversity and inclusion,” Ashford adds. “We also know that we still have work to do in changing the culture and creating an environment where every member of our engineering community feels a sense of belonging.”

That work is continuing. The ASEE Diversity Recognition Program includes three levels of achievement: Bronze, Silver and Gold. Because these levels must be achieved in succession, only the Bronze level could be awarded in this first year. Ashford says the college has included achieving Gold status in its strategic plan. Metrics outlined by the ASEE include diversity in enrollments, retention and graduation rates and increased diversity in faculty and in the workforce.

Based on undergraduate enrollment, Oregon State has the 10th largest engineering program in the United States. Women make up 50 of 200 tenured and tenure-track faculty in the College of Engineering. Two of its five school heads are women, as are two of five associate deans.

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It’s hard to imagine yourself in college — or get excited about it — if you’ve never seen it for yourself. And for K-12 students living in remote areas in rural Oregon, there’s another obstacle: getting to campus. That’s where Beaver Hangouts comes in.

Using video conferencing software, Beaver Hangouts brings campus into the classroom, giving elementary, middle and high school students a glimpse of what college life is really like. Each participating classroom is paired with a student coach from Oregon State who guides them through a curriculum designed to make college feel a little more real. Lesson plans include topics ranging from “a day in the life of a college student” to myths and fears, personal finance, what to expect during your first year and virtual campus tours.

Beaver Hangouts is also helping middle school students envision themselves in STEM careers. Through a partnership with the College of Engineering and the Society for Women Engineers, Beaver Hangouts developed an after-school program that introduces young people to various engineering majors. Dominique Brooks, precollege programs coordinator at Oregon State, says she plans to expand the program, using the engineering course as a blueprint for similar partnerships with other colleges on campus.

Brooks adds that one of her favorite things about Beaver Hangouts — in addition to opening doors to higher education for Oregon youth — is watching her coaches grow. Emi Anderson, a third-year Beaver Hangouts coach, has discovered how much her classes value having a mentor.

“Most of the students we work with do not have someone in their life who can give them accurate information about higher education,” she says. “We are able to teach them about the different forms of higher education and the steps you need to take to get there.”

Anderson adds that the relationship she builds with each class is what keeps her coming back every year.

“When my students take the information they learned in our sessions and apply it to their lives, it’s heartwarming,” she says. “It’s reassurance that they are taking everything in.”

While Beaver Hangouts has already made a difference in Oregon communities, there are many exciting expansion plans in the works. Brooks says she is pursuing a plan to reach international schools through Skype in the classroom, and is also interested in franchising the Beaver Hangouts program so other institutions can incorporate it into their outreach efforts.

In the meantime, Beaver Hangouts will continue to reach more schools, encouraging students to consider that the college experience they’ve been craving might just be within reach.
When we take the time to mentor students, they become mentors themselves.

Yenifer Ramirez Gonzalez and Allan Aguirre-Burk are a great example of this. Because members of the Oregon State STEM Leaders program looked out for them, they found themselves surrounded by opportunities — including undergraduate research, internships, attending the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities conference and more.

The program, which was created to increase the diversity and success of undergraduates in STEM fields, places students in cohort-based workshops, with peer and faculty mentoring. Ramirez Gonzalez and Aguirre-Burk, both first-generation college students, say STEM Leaders was invaluable in helping them find a path to success.

**Yenifer Ramirez Gonzalez: breaking the mold in STEM**

Ramirez Gonzalez first became interested in electrical engineering after taking a robotics class in middle school. She had long dreamed of breaking into a traditionally male-dominated field.

“I wanted to represent the fact that girls can do it, too,” she says.

While she is leaning toward a career in robotics or programming, Ramirez Gonzalez is also exploring the power side of electrical engineering, thanks to the connections OSU’s STEM Leaders has provided. This past summer, she interned with Eduardo Cotilla-Sanchez, associate professor of electrical engineering and computer science, to assist in developing emergency generators to sustain Oregon’s coastal communities in the event of a Cascadia subduction zone earthquake. Prior to that, she worked in the lab of Mario Magaña, associate professor of electrical and computer engineering, discovering new ways to harness power from wave energy, similar to the way solar and wind power are generated.

One of the biggest payoffs in all her hard work came when she was introduced to OSU’s Human-Computer Interaction — an applied degree option that combines computer programming with human psychology. Under guidance from Anita Sarma, associate professor of computer science, Ramirez Gonzalez and a group of other students conducted a study on how software developers create context around their programming tasks. Their work was published in a conference paper.
Allan Aguirre-Burk: Health care for all needs

Aguirre-Burk has had a passion for the medical field for as long as he can remember. After exploring his options, he decided to pursue a career as a physician’s assistant, which would allow him to look into a variety of subspecialties, including cardiology and neurology. To get there, he’s working toward a dual degree in molecular biology and biochemistry.

Aguirre-Burk says he was impacted by the STEM Leaders program in more ways than one.

“For a lot of underrepresented students who come to college, I think it’s hard for us to feel like we deserve to be here,” he says. “The STEM Leaders program didn’t just tell us we did — they truly made us feel that way.”

Aguirre-Burk is making strides in his research, too. He recently worked in Oregon State’s skeletal biology lab with two professors in the College of Public Health and Human Sciences, Urszula Iwaniec and Russell Turner. Their study focused on the effects of an anti-rejection drug used for transplant patients on bone health, which also has anti-aging properties. Aguirre-Burk is a co-author on this research, which will soon be in review for publication.

Stephanie Ramos: Mentor. Supporter. Advocate

Stephanie Ramos, STEM Leaders program coordinator in the Office of Undergraduate Education, served as the link between Ramirez Gonzalez, Aguirre-Burk and nearly all of the research opportunities and faculty connections that came their way.

She also connected them with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities conference — and offered them a chance to tell their stories.

One presentation, big results

The three of them, along with Charlene Alexander, vice president and chief diversity officer at Oregon State, flew to Chicago to speak about the importance of programs like STEM Leaders for Latinx students.

The narratives provided by Ramirez Gonzalez and Aguirre-Burk — which emphasized student needs like building confidence, feeling supported and gaining experience outside the classroom — made a big impact. And in that moment, the students became the educators, teaching decision-makers how to guide students toward success.

Following the presentation, Ramirez Gonzalez was approached by multiple universities that encouraged her to apply for graduate school. She was also sought out by recruiters from the Department of Energy and several tech companies.

Ramirez Gonzalez and Aguirre-Burk credit their achievements thus far — and their inspiration to achieve more — to the STEM Leaders program and to Ramos, who has been at their side throughout the process.

“I’m so thankful that STEM Leaders has given me the chance to impact their lives,” Ramos says. “But I didn’t do it alone. The students have the support of their deans, their colleges, their provost. That’s why it works.”
For Native American students, earning a college degree can be a lonely pursuit. Nationally, Native American students have the lowest total college enrollment rate of all ethnic groups in the United States, reaching only 16% in 2016. Of these 16%, only 14% ever actually attain a bachelor’s degree, and these numbers continue to fall. According to a recent report by the American Indian College Fund, Native students continually feel invisible and alone in the maze that is higher education. With few role models, their isolation can prevent them from graduating or even enrolling.

Last year, Oregon State University took action to reverse that trend.

The Tribal Communities Initiative is a partnership between Oregon State Ecampus — the university’s top-ranked online degree program — and the Office of Institutional Diversity. It aims to help Native American students navigate the college experience and see them through to graduation.

“College can be really difficult to navigate if you don’t come from a privileged background,” says Marleigh Perez, director of student success for Ecampus. “So many of the students that come through our program are balancing multiple priorities. They are taking care of children or elders, maybe mid-career, and they need the flexibility of distance learning to make things work.”

From day one, the Ecampus team prioritized creating a personalized, culturally sensitive experience for place-bound Native students.

“Every Native student who enrolls in an online degree program is paired with a dedicated Ecampus success coach,” Perez says. “These coaches meet with our students on a regular basis to set goals, explore work-life balance...
and help them navigate hurdles that could otherwise send them off the rails. It’s like having a friend in your corner.”

Native students are also immediately connected with the university’s Native American Longhouse Eena Haws, through which they can build community with OSU’s worldwide network of classmates from similar indigenous backgrounds.

“The first week of classes, we would have introductions on message boards, and I would say I was Penobscot Indian, trying to reach out to other Native students,” says Orman Morton III, a Baltimore resident who earned his degree in environmental sciences through Ecampus. “It was amazing to have four, five, six people in every class say, ‘Yeah, I’m Native’ and make that connection.”

Allison Davis-White Eyes, director of community diversity relations in the Office of Institutional Diversity, who herself has indigenous roots, says building a foundation of trust with students and the tribal communities they come from has been vital to the success of the program.

“Those investments we’re making in personal, human relationships... they take time,” Davis-White Eyes says. “But I am confident we are building something that will last, well past our time here. There’s nothing more encouraging than hearing tribal leaders say, ‘We trust you to take care of our students.’”

Walking the Talk
Oregon State University is located within the traditional homelands of the Marys River or Ampinefu Band of Kalapuya. While we can never truly amend the injustices committed against indigenous people, we can make sure they have every opportunity to access education programs that will help improve their lives, protect their land and water rights, and preserve their cultural heritage.
Educational Opportunities Program’s black student initiative is building pathways to success — from hair care to hangouts.

Fifty years after the Educational Opportunities Program formed to help underrepresented students succeed at Oregon State, the new Black Student Access and Success Initiative is showing promising results.

Progress can be seen in big ways, like the 33% jump in college applications from African American students, along with increases in first-year retention and overall graduation rates. It’s also apparent in small steps, like the addition of hair care products for black women being sold on campus for the first time. And there’s more to come, including an African American themed living-learning community opening in fall 2020.

The strength of these efforts is they are holistic, says Dorian Smith, the initiative’s coordinator.

“It looks at how we can have an impact on the whole life cycle of students, from before they get to campus, to creating better pathways to attend and making everyday life better,” Smith says.

Guided by the principles of access, equity and innovation, the initiative seeks to create a pipeline for black students to attend college. This summer, Oregon State welcomed Portland-area middle school students for the Beaver Achiever STEM camp. Participants built and programmed robots and got a taste of college life.

Oregon State is hosting the upcoming annual African American Youth Leadership Conference. The camp and conference give current Oregon State students meaningful opportunities to be involved, along with numerous black student organizations that participate.

Oregon State is also increasing its presence in the black community. For the first time, Oregon State’s pre-college program Beaver Hangouts did a video chat in an urban setting, with volunteers from the Lonnie B. Harris Black Cultural Center staffing the campus side of the hangout.

Another measure of progress is the Distinguished Scholars Initiative housed within the Office of Advancing Academic Equity for Student Success. The program, which matches male students of color with black male mentors on campus, boasts a 100% retention rate to date.

As much as has been accomplished, the initiative is just getting started. The work will continue to ensure all students receive the support they need to achieve their goals.