



WAVELENGTHS



League of Women Voters of Lincoln County, Oregon

January 2017

President's Message

Happy New Year!! I trust everyone enjoyed the holiday season with family and/or friends. I'd like to take a moment to reflect on our annual holiday luncheon and then move on to some reminders of the busy January ahead of us.

Our December luncheon was very well attended and, as usual, the Sylvia Beach "Table of Contents" prepared a marvelous meal for us. It is times like that that I'm pleased to mention that their cook is a distant cousin of mine, Nanci Courtney.

Our speaker for the event was Lola Jones, Executive Director of Samaritan House, and she had some sobering facts to share with us about the challenges that finding appropriate housing presents for far too many of our citizenry. She explained the origin of Samaritan House and complimented fellow leaguer, Maxine Demory, on her visionary efforts to develop the badly needed services.

Particularly interesting was Lola's enlightening detail of the steps that families progress through as they are served by her program, including the requirement that employed individuals deposit half of their earnings to a savings account. These funds are then held for them as a nest-egg to finance the up-front costs of finding their own housing at the end of their time at Samaritan House. This is a new concept for many of the families served and helps to assure future success living independently.

Lola also shared some of her vision for the development of mid-level rental units in Lincoln County, which would then free up some of the low-cost options for the more financially challenged families. Two actions that might encourage such expansion are: forgiveness of Systems Development Charges (SDC) and Property Tax Abatements. Both present challenges for the municipality that hosts such expansion, but are opportunities that

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1st 2017 Meeting

January 12

Newport Public Library

11:30 AM



"The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a grassroots, non-partisan political organization which encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government in order to build better communities statewide."

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should be explored. During the question and answer period, we also talked about the lack of current data to validate for potential funders that a significant market does exist in this area for such housing growth. Existing studies date back to 2007 and need to be updated.

In follow up to this program, I spoke briefly to County Commissioner Bill Hall and he agreed to talk with us about these concepts. Stay tuned – possibly for our regular March meeting.

January and February will be consumed with the review of two State League Studies and their consensus questions. So, it's time to prepare ourselves for a busy January, full of lots of LWV happenings. I look forward to seeing everyone on January 12th!

Legislative Process Day **(REGISTRATION DEADLINE** **JANUARY 4)**

LWVOR will host Legislative Process Day in Salem on Tuesday, January 10, beginning at 9:30 am at the State Library building, across from the Capitol. The pre-registration form was included in the December newsletter and is also available on the LWVOR website, www.lwvor.org.

Please note: advance registration is required and the deadline for submitting your registration form is **January 4**. The cost will be \$30, including ticket and lunch; (\$20 without a noon meal.) The lunch options are listed on the registration form.

The speakers will be Secretary of State Elect Dennis Richardson, the Clerk of the House and the Secretary of the Senate. It is also hoped that someone from the new Legislative Research Office will be available to tell us about their work. For our entertainment, the *Not Ready for Prime-Time Players* will present a skit concerning the National Popular Vote. League coordinators will provide information on what they expect to see during the upcoming legislative session, which will convene February 1.

To date, three local members plan to attend, Georgia Roelof, Ruth Kistler and Jean Cowan. Jean is willing to drive and can accommodate 3-4 passengers (depending on how crowded you wish to be in the back seat.) Parking passes for the day can be obtained for \$15.50. Please let Jean know if you are interested in attending so that transportation can be coordinated.

State Study Reviews **(PLEASE READ)**

The Election Methods Study Update 2016 has been mailed to all members and it will be the topic of our January 12 regular meeting. If your copy has been buried under the holiday mail and “to-do” lists, please dig it out and review it prior to the 12th! It is a rather challenging read, but if everyone has some understanding of the content, our discussion of the material and response to consensus questions will be much more efficient and effective. For reference, the Executive Summary can be found in the November Newsletter and the Consensus Questions were published in the December Newsletter.

This review should not be confused with the National Popular Vote Compact (NPVC), which was the subject of a LWVUS study in 2008. The League supports state-by-state adoption of the NPVC until the U.S. Constitution is amended to abolish the Electoral College and provide direct popular-vote election of the U.S. President and Vice-President. Oregon legislation supporting NPVC in 2015 (HB 3475) passed the House, but died in the Senate Rules Committee. We will watch for the development of similar legislation in 2017.

Jean Cowan will do her best to lead us through the Election Methods consensus conversation in just one meeting, because the second state study, Public Postsecondary Education in Oregon, is also on its way to you. The Executive Summary can be found at the end of this newsletter and we will be reviewing consensus questions at our February meeting.

Both sets of consensus questions are due at LWVOR by March 1. The material that is gathered from local league discussions will then go to an “Agreement Committee,” currently being appointed. (Please let Ruth know if you would be interested in serving on that committee.) The overall goal is to update league positions in a timely enough manner to allow us to take a position on any potential legislation this session.

Calendar of events

Jan 4			Last day to register for Legislative Process Day
Jan 10	9:30 AM	Salem	Legislative Process Day
Jan 12	11:30 AM	Newport public Library	General Meeting – Election Method Update Study
Jan 26	9:30	Church of the Nazarene-Newport	Project Homeless Connect
Feb 9	11:30 AM	Newport Public Library	General Meeting – Post secondary education study

PUBLIC POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION IN OREGON: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2013, the League of Women Voters of Oregon voted to update their position on Postsecondary Education in Oregon. This study provides information on the current organization of education in Oregon.

Today, three-quarters of the fastest-growing occupations require education and training beyond a high school diploma. Yet nearly half the students who begin college in this country don't finish within six years. And tuition continues to rise, putting college out of reach for the very families that need it most to join the middle class¹.

Today Oregon has seven public universities and two centers and affiliates. These institutions include Eastern Oregon University, Oregon Institute of Technology, Oregon State University, Portland State University, Southern Oregon University, University of Oregon, and Western Oregon University. The centers and affiliates are Southwest Oregon University in Coos Bay and Oregon Health and Science University. In addition, Oregon has 17 separate community college districts with independent governing boards and with campuses throughout the state. The state also has many private universities and over 208 private career schools.

RECENT CHANGES IN ORGANIZATION OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION IN OREGON

Since 2011, in recognition of the need for more advanced education for future employment and community well-being, the Oregon legislature has set educational goals and reorganized the higher education landscape. In 2011, the 40-40-20 goal (SB 252) called for a population in 2025 of which 40% of Oregonians achieve a bachelor's degree or higher, 40% achieve an associate's degree, technical degree or certificate, and the remaining 20% have a high school diploma. Many see the goal as aspirational. Others emphasize that that the goal drives the push to improve access to higher education and provide support for successful completion.

SB 242 established the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC), consisting of 14 volunteer members appointed by the Governor. The commission appoints an executive officer. Currently HECC is an independent education unit answering directly to the governor and legislature, coordinating with other state education units. Legislative action transferred administrative authority of the Oregon Student Access Committee to the Office of Student Access and Completion under HECC, and moved authority over community colleges (Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Development) from the Department of Education to HECC.

In 2013, (ORS 352) the Legislature authorized independent boards for the University of Oregon and Portland State University. By 2015 all the universities had independent boards nominated by the Governor and approved by the Senate. The Oregon University System, Office of Chancellor, and the Board of Higher Education were abolished, and their responsibilities were divided by the Legislature between the independent boards and HECC. The new boards were given the power to manage the affairs of the Uni-

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versity, such as choosing a president, fund raising, budgeting, and managing tuition and fees. The Boards must work with HECC, including submitting mission statements, annual evaluations, and budget requests. Substantial academic changes must be reviewed by HECC. The individual budget requests are submitted to HECC, which, in turn, compiles a combined budget request. This is then sent to the Governor to be considered as part of the Governor's budget for recommendation to the Legislature.

HECC duties touch on all aspects of higher education, including public and private universities, colleges, career schools, community colleges, and student financial aid.

THE EQUITY LENS AND THE 40-40-20 GOAL

The disparity of student opportunity in higher education is a major focus in discussions of public postsecondary education in Oregon. Oregon's *Equity Lens* was established to focus on these issues at all levels of education, recognizing the achievement gap between populations of communities of color, immigrants, migrants, and low income rural students, when compared to the majority population. All public higher education institutions are being asked to address these issues in their programs and supply support to allow these underrepresented groups to progress.

To meet the 40-40-20 goal, HECC is working with the universities, community colleges, and career schools to design educational programs. To meet the goal and honor the Equity Lens, the state, through HECC, the Legislature, and postsecondary institutions, is developing programs both to encourage pursuit of postsecondary education and to improve student outcomes.

A variety of programs to speed student progress and achieve better outcomes are in the early stages of implementation. These including Accelerated Learning programs beginning in high school, dual credit programs that allow the transfer of credits between institutions, credit for prior learning (allowing credit for appropriate experience and other training), Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs, and better transitions between community colleges and universities.

DECREASED FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND ITS IMPACT ON TUITION

One major challenge for the achieving the 40-40-20 goal is the cost of higher education. State support for higher education has decreased significantly. In the 1980s, state support accounted for approximately 15% of general fund, but had dropped to about 5% by 2014. Institutions have made up for this loss of state funding through increases in tuition, which now provides approximately 60%. Although the state has increased higher education funding in recent years, state support still falls well below past levels.

Increased tuition rates provide an even greater challenge to meeting the goals of the Equity Lens. The Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) under HECC administers numerous grants, scholarships, mentoring, and financial outreach programs for students. Funding support for low-income students is provided on a federal level through Federal Student Aid and the Pell Grant program. Oregon has a number of programs that build on the federal programs, including the Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG), the largest state grant program, which has operated in various forms since 1972, and currently is funded through the general fund. This grant can be used in any Oregon higher education institution, public or private.

In the 2016-17 academic year, high school students attending a community college within six months of graduation are eligible for a new program, Oregon Promise. This "last dollar" award is currently serving 6000 students. Students must first accept all federal and state (OOG) funding. The 2015 Legislative budget provided \$10 million for this program. Additional funding will be required to extend the program for the future.

Individual universities also have developed programs to support students, such as the PathwayOregon program at the University of Oregon, Western Tuition Promise at Western Oregon University, Bridge to Success at Oregon State University, and a new "Four Year Free Program" at Portland State University.

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OUTCOMES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

HECC is responsible for measuring the effectiveness of state funding for public higher education institutions. Under ORS 251, HECC is given direct responsibility for determining the distribution of funding from the Legislature to community colleges, public universities, and student access programs. Prior to 2015-16, funding for the seven universities relied heavily on enrollment (70%). In 2014, HECC initiated a new approach, the Student Success and Completion Model (SSCM). The model has three major components: Mission Differentiation Funding, supporting regional, research and public service mission; Activity Based Funding, investing in credit hour enrollment of Oregon resident students; and Completion Funding, focusing on program completion for Oregon residents with emphasis on underrepresented populations. Community college funding continues under the Resource Allocation model. The complex nature of community college roles has made development of a SSCM model for the community colleges much more difficult.

A number of high-profile activities, including STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) programs, online education, research, and athletic programs, are among the complex aspects that HECC will continue to revise and coordinate.

In addition, HECC, in its Strategic Plan: 2016-2020, continues to monitor progress toward the 40-40-20 goal and plans to present modifications to the Legislature that better reflect needs not originally covered by the original goal. For example, HECC plans to propose a modification of the goal for Oregon's adult population. Goals for research and graduate level education may also be addressed.

IMPLICATION AND CONCERNS FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Funding is a major issue. With the state providing a lower level of funding, institutions must seek alternate sources of revenue. One major source is increased tuition. Also, institutions are recruiting out of state students to take advantage of higher tuitions for non-residents. Funding needs for faculty and facilities may redirect university educational priorities.

College preparedness is also a concern. Numerous programs have been developed to offer students opportunities to gain college credits in high school. However, postsecondary institutions have found that many students are inadequately prepared for college, particularly in math and written work. The need for remedial courses leads to greater expense and time to completion. Often, this leads to a student dropping out of college. Educators see a need for a support network of mentors and advisors to identify problems for students before they enter or early in their college experience and help them to progress.

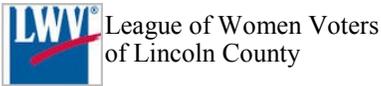
The Internet is impacting the academic and social structure of colleges. Students' expectations and communications are changing with the increased access. The technology age will change the classroom both physically and conceptually, with more online course and degree offerings. Institutions are also facing campus security challenges that may require different levels of staffing and reduce campus flexibility.

Oregon is facing the challenge of making our higher education institutions the best possible at reasonable cost and with maximum diversity. The level of state support will reflect the commitment of Oregonians to move forward towards goals of a better-educated population.

FOOTNOTES:

1. U.S. Department of Education, College Affordability and Completion: Ensuring a Pathway to Opportunity, <http://www.ed.gov/college> accessed 9/19/16


 League of Women Voters of Lincoln County
 P. O. Box 1648
 Newport, OR 97365



Membership Form

For information call Marilyn Podesta
Membership Chair, 541-765-4422

Name _____ Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

	Individual	Household	Low income: Individual	Household
<u>Annual Membership Dues</u> (Circle one.)	\$60	\$90	\$40	\$60

I am a new member

I am renewing my membership

The membership year begins October 1.

I am interested in working with the League.

Please call me.

I wish to make a contribution to LWV Lincoln County in addition to my dues \$ _____

Total Member Dues and contribution Make check out to: LWV of Lincoln County \$ _____

I wish to contribute to the LWV of Oregon to assist LWVLC's Voter Service activities and education projects. (Separate Check Required. Make check out to "LWVOR".) \$ _____

Only contributions to LWVOR are tax deductible.

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Please mail to: LWVLC P. O. Box 1648, Newport, OR 97365