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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Western Oregon University and Unitus Community Credit Union Partner to Expand Bilingual/Bicultural Teacher Scholars Program**

*Portland Credit Union combines forces with WOU Division of Education & Leadership to provide university education to become Spanish-English bilingual teachers.*

**Portland, Ore., February 2, 2022** – Unitus Community Credit Union has pledged \$75,000 to Western Oregon University's Bilingual Teacher Scholars (BTS) Program to further expand their efforts and fund an additional eight-student cohort.

The BTS program provides scholarships and extra supports for bilingual and bicultural students earning degrees for careers as Oregon K-12 teachers. Unitus' gift over three years will specifically support eight transfer students from Oregon community colleges.

"Unitus is proud to help WOU prepare the teachers needed in Oregon," said Steve Stapp, Unitus President and CEO. "It's an honor to strengthen the efforts of the Bilingual Teacher Scholars Program and deepen their reach for this critical community need so we can begin filling in the gaps for this essential work together."

"There is no higher priority in educator workforce development than preparing teachers with the cultural and linguistic assets that match our children, families, and communities," added Mark Girod, Dean of WOU's College of Education.

The Bilingual Teacher Scholars program—along with its related program Diverse Teacher Scholars (DTS)—provides bilingual and bicultural students with an annual scholarship of up to \$3,000, professional development opportunities, academic support, and individualized advising. Graduates of the program earn a Bilingual/English for Speakers of Other Languages certificate and may receive preferred hiring in their school districts. BTS specifically supports students who are bilingual and bicultural in Spanish and English; DTS supports students who are ethnically diverse or heritage speakers of a language other than English in becoming Oregon K-12 teachers.

Both BTS and DTS are for Oregon high school graduates or Oregon community college students who are admitted to WOU and incoming students to WOU's Master of Arts in Teaching (Secondary Education) or Master of Science in Education (Special Education K-12) programs.

"If it weren't for the BTS program I wouldn't be where I am today. I'm thankful for the resources, friendships, and for the enormous amount of support that the program has given me," said Cristina Olivares of Central School District and past BTS program scholar.

Eligible students interested in the BTS or DTS programs must be a student at WOU or first apply for admission to WOU ([wou.edu/apply](http://wou.edu/apply)). Once admitted, they must apply for the Bilingual Teacher Scholars Scholarship by March 1. Students must also take the Spanish placement test at [wou.edu/spanish/placement](http://wou.edu/spanish/placement) no later than March 15. Additional information is available at [wou.edu/bts](http://wou.edu/bts).

**About Unitus Community Credit Union**

At Unitus, we're dedicated to improving lives in the communities we serve. As a member-owned local credit union, we invest in people by doing the right thing. Through partnerships with nonprofit



organizations, we provide support for community groups through volunteerism and financial donations. Our 104,000 members count on us to serve them and their communities; our nearly 300 employees share that passion for service. Learn about the local impact Unitus makes by visiting [unitusccu.com](http://unitusccu.com).

### **About Western Oregon University**

Western Oregon University, founded in 1856 in Monmouth, is the state's oldest public university. Serving about 4,000 students, WOU is a mid-sized, NCAA Division II institution with about 70% of the student population being from Oregon. A significant portion of attendees are members of under-represented groups, veterans, or non-traditional students. WOU is Oregon's campus of choice for those seeking a transformative education in a supportive, student-centered learning community where classes are taught by faculty. Together we succeed.

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