



# Academic Year 2016-2017 Annual Report

Prepared July 20, 2017

## Program Highlights

- In Academic Year 2016-17, Willamette Academy students participated in more than 50 workshops, campus visits, lectures, and events, including:
  - ❖ Community service activities at locations including Salem Hospital, Salem Fire Department's Fill the Boot Campaign, and at various local churches, schools, and sporting events.
  - ❖ A campus lecture by 2015 MacArthur "Genius Grant" recipient Ta-Nehisi Coates, who is the author of *Between the World and Me*, which won the 2015 National Book Award for Nonfiction.
  - ❖ Meeting with Oregon State Representatives Brian Clem and Teresa Alonso Leon and learning about the recently passed Ethnic Studies Bill from Representative Diego Hernandez.
  - ❖ The Willamette University Lu'au celebration.
  - ❖ A six-week Feminist Film Series, in which students watched and analyzed feminist films, and ultimately hosted a film screening for Willamette University students.
  - ❖ A three-part workshop series with award-winning author Alma Flor Ada.
  - ❖ Mentorship from Willamette University College of Law students as part of a new partnership between the Academy and College of Law students.
  - ❖ Visiting six regional colleges, including Western Oregon University, Oregon State University, Linfield College, Lewis & Clark College, the University of Oregon, and the Willamette University College of Law.
  - ❖ Presentations from admissions counselors at colleges and universities across the country, which featured information on college applications, financial aid, and navigating the college selection process as a first-generation student, low-income student, and/or student of color.
- Led by the Academy's senior students, **Willamette Academy Saturday Sessions** engaged younger Academy students in community-building exercises, goal setting activities, and conversations about the process of transitioning to high school. In addition to their work as Senior Academy Leaders, the Academy's high school seniors participated in **College Track** activities, including a College Fair and workshop sessions on financial aid, college and scholarship applications, and matriculating and transitioning into college.
- The **PUNTES Program** (Parents and Guardians Using Education & Networking to Empower Students) provided timely resources and presentations for more than 150 Academy parents and guardians. PUNTES sessions featured topics such as resume building, SAT preparation, the college search process, and applications for admissions, scholarships, and financial aid (including the FAFSA). These presentations were held in tandem with Academy students' Saturday Session activities with Spanish interpretation provided.
- After a recruitment hiatus in Spring 2016, the Academy recruited two new classes (both rising 8<sup>th</sup> grade and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students) in Spring 2017. The program received over 200 applications and interviewed 120 students and families. In June 2017 the Academy welcomed 32 new rising 8<sup>th</sup> graders and 34 new rising 9<sup>th</sup> graders.
- During Willamette's national search for a new executive director, the Academy offered a modified **Summer Program** in 2016. This seven-day day program was led by Willamette Academy Curriculum Coordinator Rebecca Moore, Willamette University Associate Professor of Sociology Emily Drew (who served as interim director), and Willamette Academy Administrative Support Coordinator Nicole Rodgers. Students took classes on topics such as college-level writing, narrative and personal story-telling, and elective courses such as Animal Behavior (which included an off-campus field trip to the Oregon National Primate Research Center, where students met with a professional Animal Behaviorist and Center staff to discuss their research). Students also participated in multiple conversations in topics around social justice—including the Summer 2016 Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida.



## Class of 2017 Graduate Outcomes

- On May 29, 2017, the Willamette Academy celebrated 20 graduates from the Class of 2017. Their graduation ceremony was held on Willamette University's campus, and was attended by approximately 300 family members, community advocates, and friends. Along with the presentation of certificates to Academy graduates, the event featured remarks by Professor Emily Drew who—along with being a long-time advocate and leader in the program—served as the Academy's Interim Executive Director before Emilio Solano joined in September 2016.
- Willamette Academy Class of 2017 graduates have enrolled at colleges and universities throughout the region, with 14 of the 20 Academy graduates enrolled in Willamette University—the largest class to enter Willamette University in the Academy's history.
- Two 2017 Willamette Academy graduates were selected as Ford Scholars by the Ford Family Foundation, which provides substantial tuition scholarships to Oregon students who are academically strong, of good character, demonstrate the capacity for leadership, and demonstrate financial need.

## Willamette University Contributions

- Willamette Academy graduates enrolling at Willamette University received free access to Ohana, a summer program that provides the University's incoming multicultural students with resources and opportunities to form friendships and connections prior to the beginning of the academic year.
- Academic Year 2016-17 also saw stronger curricular ties between Willamette University and the Academy program. Students in Spanish Instructor Michael Woods's service-learning course spent a semester tutoring, mentoring, chaperoning, and helping with administrative functions at the Academy. In addition, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Michael Niño, engaged his Latina/o Sociology undergraduate students in a year-long program assessment in which they gathered and analyzed Willamette Academy materials such as demographic data, alumni data, student and parent survey data, and transcript and GPA data for students enrolled in the program throughout its fifteen-year history. The outcomes of this assessment will directly impact and contribute to Solano's development of the Academy's revised strategic plan. These co-curricular activities also lead to stronger relationships between Willamette University faculty and the Academy program, and help to embed the Academy more deeply into the University's mission and academic programs.

## Programmatic Updates

Willamette Academy was established in 2001 and has just completed its 15<sup>th</sup> year of programming. Following a national search for Willamette Academy's Executive Director, Emilio Solano was hired in September 2016. Solano was raised in Salem, is a 2009 Willamette University graduate and former Willamette Academy student volunteer, and is the elder sibling of one of the Academy's first participants (who is also a Willamette University graduate). He brings with him experience as a former middle school history and language arts teacher, and has served as assistant principal at Camino Nuevo Charter Academy in Los Angeles, as dean of students at the ICEF Inglewood Middle Charter Academy, and as a Teach for America Corps member. He is now working closely with Willamette University and the greater Salem community to lead the Willamette Academy program and plan its future course.

In June 2017, Delia Olmos Garcia was hired as the Academic and College Access Coordinator. Delia grew up in Salem, is a 2010 Willamette Academy graduate, and earned her B.A. in Sociology from Willamette University. She is the daughter of immigrants, the first in her family to graduate from high school and college, and is excited to be the Academy's first alum working in a full time position. Delia comes to the program after working as a Development Manager at Causa, Oregon's Latino immigrant rights organization, where her responsibilities included fundraising, advocacy, and community organizing. At the Academy, she will be leading the program's daily operations and directly supporting Academy students and families.

