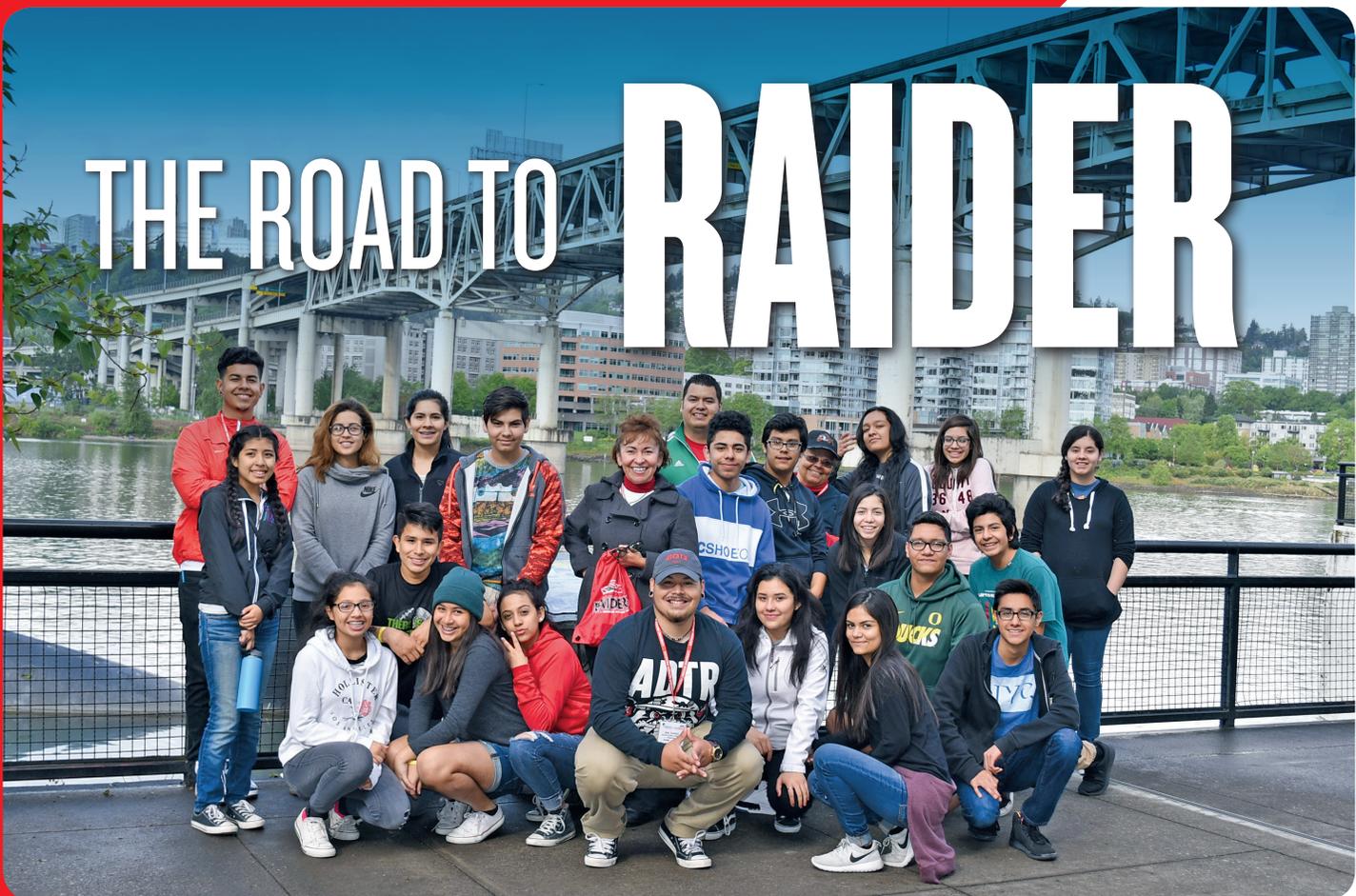


# THE ROAD TO RAIDER



## SOU Pathway Programs Put Youth on the Track for College Success



**FOR** NEARLY 40 YEARS, SOU has been offering dynamic workshops, academic competitions, residential academic camps, and other pathway programs to encourage local students to pursue their college dreams. “Our overarching mission is to get young people excited about going to college, help them build the confidence to see themselves in college, and provide opportunities to help them be successful when they get into college,” said Rachel Jones, SOU’s director of outreach and engagement.

Among these programs is one geared toward the region’s Latino students and their families. *Pirates to Raiders* began in 2011 as a partnership with Phoenix High School and has exploded into a program that serves nearly 700 students and families in Medford, Phoenix, and Talent. The other programs are based in the Medford School District—*Bulldogs to Raiders* at McLoughlin Middle School and *Hornets to Raiders* at Hedrick Middle School. The individual programs reference the name of participating high schools’ team mascots.

SOU draws from a range of community resources to prepare students for high school and college success. The program offers students academic, social, and family support, as well as mentorship all the way through the twelfth grade. “We’ve had very high success rates for both high school graduation and for college enrollment,” said Jonathan Chavez-Baez, SOU’s coordinator for minority outreach.

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Part of the program's success is the commitment that both the students and their families make when they sign up. Students who participate sign a contract in their eighth grade year to commit to the program through high school. The students also pledge to maintain a 3.0 GPA or higher and to prepare for college by taking challenging courses, applying for scholarship opportunities, and attending SOU events and meetings connected with the program.

Because Chavez-Baez understands that students fare better with family support, he has also created a number of support strategies and events to involve parents and relatives, including Latino Family Day. "There's only so much you can do with after-school programs and meetings throughout the year, but when you have a bilingual educational conference with parents



and students, and you cover all the topics in each grade, it's a whole different level," he said. "Latino Family Day, or Dia Familiar, covers the gaps for eighth through eleventh graders, and adds another dimension of support."

Chavez-Baez said he loves being part of programs that offer such needed support in the community. "I'm so proud of being part of something that helps break barriers and offers real support for families so that they are encouraged and thinking bigger."

Chavez-Baez said the pathways program empowers Latino students and offers a clear path to college. "We want students and their families to see all the possibilities ahead of them and what a college degree and SOU can do for them," he said.

### 2019 PIRATES TO RAIDERS STATS

#### High School Graduation Rates

**78.7%**

State of Oregon

**70%**

Oregon High School Latinos

**100%**

Pirates to Raiders participants

#### College Enrollment (Latino students)

**40%**

State of Oregon

**85%**

Pirates to Raiders

#### Other

275 participants in six schools