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Dear President Avery, Vice President Buchele, Dean Winder, and LBCC colleagues:

Oregon State University and Linn-Benton Community College have a long history of productive partnership. We share many students between our institutions and consequently, we also share a responsibility for their success. Given the high rate of transfer between LBCC and OSU, we write with profound concern over your planned elimination of full-time faculty librarian positions, and by extension, qualified research support and information literacy programs for all LBCC students. This decision—if finalized—will impact the readiness of LBCC students to succeed at OSU and elsewhere; place pressure of LBCC’s NWCCU accreditation; and imperil Oregon’s progress with respect to OER material. For these reasons, we strongly encourage LBCC leadership to reexamine these resource cuts and find an alternative solution.

In our different roles at OSU, we all believe deeply in the value and purpose of a strong general education curriculum. We also understand the challenging financial circumstances LBCC leaders currently face. It is from this perspective—one of empathy, collegiality, and shared vision for supporting students in core educational outcomes—that we write to you today.

Information literacy is vital to OSU’s general education curriculum. The ability to find, read, evaluate, and ethically use information from multiple sources is a cornerstone outcome for both our Writing Foundation and Writing Elevation categories. Students in WR 121—the sole course comprising our Foundation category—are expected to learn how to “create texts that synthesize multiple viewpoints around a central idea supported by evidence.” Subsequently, in the Writing Elevation category, students must “integrate critically-evaluated sources in knowledge-domain-specific documents and arguments” and “synthesize diverse perspectives in complex conversations.” Such skills are not only essential for success in writing, of course, but across myriad disciplines, even as students often *only* encounter explicit information literacy instruction in their WR courses.

Given that the LBCC librarians currently provide direct instruction on information literacy (IL) and library research skills to nearly 100 classes each year, how does LBCC plan to provide IL instruction *without* professional librarians? We respectfully request to know if all faculty are expected to change their curricula and if so, what forms of support they’ll receive. We will consider this information when evaluating transfer articulations.

Learning how LBCC administration plans to account for information literacy instruction—should you move forward with the elimination of IL programming and support—is especially necessary given AAOT requirements and NWCCU accreditation standards. According to Appendix E in the [Outcomes and Criteria for Transferable General Education Courses in Oregon](#), “Information Literacy outcomes and criteria will be embedded in the Writing Foundational Requirements Courses.” These outcomes and criteria are robust, requiring

relevant WR courses to include “instruction and practice in finding information efficiently and effectively, using appropriate research tools and search strategies” and “instruction and practice in evaluating and selecting information using appropriate criteria,” so that, as a result of having taken the course, students can “access relevant information effectively and efficiently.” It is unclear how LBCC will achieve these required outcomes if the proposed cuts are implemented.

The same point can be made with reference to NWCCU Standard 2.H.1 for accreditation requirements, which states, “Consistent with its mission, the institution employs qualified personnel and provides access to library and information resources with a level of currency, depth, and breadth sufficient to support and sustain the institution’s mission, programs, and services.” How can LBCC achieve this baseline accreditation requirement if you eliminate full-time faculty librarian positions?

It is important to note that information literacy instruction includes more than direct classroom-based teaching; it also includes the development of asynchronous learning materials, 1:1 or small group consultation with students, and consultations with faculty on assignment design. All forms of effective instruction presume that collections are accessible and usable. We expect students in WR 121 to be capable of finding and using quality sources, which makes well-tended and curated library collections absolutely essential.

Without faculty librarians, LBCC is devaluing the labor necessary to acquire materials, maintain a sustainable and relevant collection through regular deselection, and create and maintain the systems that allow for the sharing of the resources that we want students to use as evidence. Without faculty librarians, LBCC is also devaluing the critical support students need to learn these skills. In our professional perspective, this lack of sustained collection support guarantees that students will be set up to fail. Well-organized and easy-to-use collections can help students get by with less robust instruction. Expert instruction can help students navigate inadequate collections. Take both away, and students will not develop new skills and abilities to do college-level research.

This is also an equity issue. The students who will be hit hardest by the lack of faculty librarians are those students who need them the most. Students who come from well-resourced schools with school librarians can apply that experience to get by. However, very few Oregon schools have these resources. In 1980, there were 818 licensed school librarians in Oregon schools. In 2019, there were 165. Over that same period, the student population in Oregon schools grew by thirty percent. LBCC and Oregon state are both committed to providing opportunity for all Oregon students, not just for a privileged few who can afford well-resourced schools.

Access to materials will be further compromised, given LBCC’s involvement with OER initiatives. The library’s capacity to manage information architecture and catalog maintenance will be dramatically impacted by these cuts, placing students’ access to OER materials in peril, further exacerbating equity issues. It should also be noted that the total number of faculty being cut accounts for 46% of the LBCC’s faculty of color, in a college where the faculty make-up is over 90% white. The implications with respect to diversity and equity are layered and concerning, and we urge you to consider the long-term consequences to student success and our collective institutional health.

Again, we fully appreciate that as LBCC leaders, you currently face extraordinarily challenging financial circumstances. However, we strongly encourage you to reexamine the decision to eliminate the faculty librarian positions. This action will result in significant and long-term negative impacts on student learning at LBCC and its partner institutions. It represents a move away from OSU and LBCC's shared vision for supporting students in their progress toward state-level educational outcomes, and we beseech you to revisit the financial plan in light of the issues mentioned here.

Please feel free to contact any of us if you have questions or would like to hold a more in-depth conversation, which we would welcome.

Respectfully,

Anne-Marie Deitering, OSU Dean of Libraries

Tim Jensen, OSU Director of the School of Writing, Literature, & Film

Kristy Kelly, OSU Director of Writing

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