

**Good afternoon, Co-chairs Frederick, and McLain.** Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Lori Bullis and I live in Corvallis and work at Western Oregon University's (Western) Hamersly Library as a library technician 3 since 2006. At Western, I manage the resource sharing for our campus.

**Western** originated in 1856 as Oregon Normal School predating Oregon's statehood in 1859. Since its establishment, Western has and continues to produce K-12 teachers, and standardized K-12 education for all Oregonians.

**However**, due to lowered enrollment and lack of government support, Western is now in what is called 'retrenchment', meaning, within the next five years, we do not know whether Western will exist or continue to meet Oregon's K-12 public schools need for teachers.

**Since March 2020**, the beginning of our COVID pandemic, to try to correct Western's financial quagmire, administration has laid off, fired at least 20-percent of our classified staff. Western has also cut or eliminated critical degree courses and programs and has invoked Article 15 of the WOUFT Collective Bargaining Agreement which means WOU is currently notifying tenured faculty that their positions will be eliminated or their FTE greatly reduced effective spring of 2022. This is in addition to voluntary retirements, quits, position eliminations, hiring freezes, and long-term furloughs of classified staff.

**Within Hamersly Library alone**, our classified staff has been reduced by 10-percent. And, due to a major reduction to our library budget, our library operating hours has been reduced from 7-days per week to only Monday through Friday, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. Daily, we hear concerns about our reduced operating hours. Yet, university administration wants our library to be open during evenings and weekends, but, because they cut mission critical classified staff and librarian faculty positions, we are not able to fulfill their request. Due to COVID, our library occupancy capacity has been reduced to only 35 people. Study rooms remain closed and locked. Most days, for social distancing purposes, librarians and staff telework, except for work that can only be completed onsite. When onsite, we mask and glove up for our own and our students and faculty protection. Yet, despite these reductions, protections, and COVID compliance, our library has expanded our services to meet our patrons expanded needs for our nouveaux online, off-campus learning environment. For example, since March 2020, we scrambled and continue to lend and ship to our patrons Wi-Fi-hotspots, computers, and webcams in addition to all other library materials. Some students have retained use of these items since March 2020. This at library expense, including return shipping. To date, Hamersly Library has spent approximately \$15,000.00 in shipping to ensure our students and faculty have the library resources and tools they need to ensure their academic success during this pandemic. Due to COVID protocols, library access is restricted to only WOU patrons, which means Oregon school districts are not able to visit our library to review our Oregon Adopted Instructional Materials (OAIM). As a result, our library is piloting a project to lend a complete subject area of our OIAM collection to an Oregon school district, which

includes pulling from the stacks, checking out, packaging, and if needed, shipping this collection to an Oregon school district. AND, to obtain additional library funding, I am currently serving on my second COVID relief grant application committee. And that classified position (1.0 FTE) that administration cut in December 2020? That person's assigned tasks have been redistributed to myself, and my three remaining library classified staff. We are all doing our pre-COVID assigned tasks, PLUS our COVID assigned tasks, PLUS one or more of our eliminated co-workers assigned tasks...at the same rate of pay.

**On our Western campus**, our university administration was woefully unprepared for this pandemic, despite *years* of advice to prepare for such an event. In March 2020, one of the first positions Western eliminated was approximately one-half (1/2) of our custodial crew. Then administration ordered Facilities Services crews, such as electricians, plumbers, and landscapers, to complete daily building sanitation, in addition to their previously assigned daily duties. This crew was also instructed to do hazmat cleaning of rooms where people who had tested positive for COVID either worked or lived, all without proper personal-protective-equipment (PPE). Administration's lack of preparation resulted in *not* only an inadequate supply of PPE, but WE HAD NO PPE! Except for the minimal, OSHA mandatory supply already on hand, which was quickly depleted. Otherwise, if we wanted PPE, we supplied our own. It was not until mid-summer 2020 that Western set up a centralized coordination, organization, acquisition, and distribution system of PPE. To date, this centralized PPE distribution system is woefully slow to respond to our protective needs. For example, while working onsite at the library yesterday, I discovered our supply of face masks was depleted. Our library administrative assistant submitted a supply request and was promised delivery of two boxes by 5:00 p.m. that day. Those two boxes were a no-show and were finally delivered 24-hours-plus later!

**Please** fund higher education and the Public University Support Fund at \$900 Million for the upcoming biennium so our Universities like Western Oregon University can provide their staff and faculty with required PPE, hazardous-duty pay, and continue to produce K-12 teachers, to provide our students, our library patrons, with the library services and support they need to have a successful and exceptional university education.

Thank you.

Lori Bullis