

May 30, 2023

Kristin Adams, LBCC Board Chair
Lisa Avery, President
Ann Buchele, Vice-President
cc: Jason Dorsette, Director of Equity and Diversity
Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC)
6500 Pacific Blvd SW
Albany, OR 97321

Dear LBCC Leaders and Stakeholders,

The Oregon Library Association's Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Committee is writing to condemn the personnel cuts made to Linn-Benton Community College's Library and Computer Science programs, in addition to the planned cuts to its Adult Basic Skills programs, and the effect this will have on the diverse students that it serves.

This committee is composed of a group of library professionals working across the state in public libraries, university and community college libraries, k12 libraries, and special libraries. Like the entire Oregon library community, we were aghast at the cavalier budget cuts. Librarians serve a critical role on college campuses, assisting students and faculty, especially in an era of disinformation and concerted attacks upon libraries. Your actions demonstrate the low regard with which you view information professionals. Moreover, we are deeply concerned about student and faculty access to information, as well as the impact upon Linn-Benton Community College's workforce diversity, and services to students of color.

Our committee works to ensure that all Oregonians, regardless of language, background, identity and culture, receive equitable access to library and information services. Libraries are more than a building and books—one of the greatest resources a library can offer its community is a culturally responsive and diverse workforce that reflects the community it serves. Your actions have ensured the aforementioned will cease to be possible.

Given the fact that most of our committee members work in majority white communities, we do not make accusations of racism without having given the matter considerable thought. It is our conclusion that the personnel and service cuts by Linn-Benton Community College are racist in nature. Your college has a self-reported full-time faculty workforce that is over 90% white. While we know that you were quoted in the press regarding personnel cuts not taking race into account, the problem lies in the fact that you did not take into account the impact that cutting so many faculty of color will have on your community. Staff representation matters to your college students and library patrons; it sends a message that their identities and culture matter. Cutting

all your staff of color within the Library, leaving behind an all-white contracted staff and director, also sends a very clear message to the community. We ask, are you sure this is the one that your college wishes to convey?

In cutting your Library faculty, you have also cut the one native Spanish speaking librarian, and by doing so, the services that she provided. The Linn-Benton Community College had been singled out by the State Library of Oregon for its efforts in serving the area's Spanish speaking population. The failure to take this community into consideration when your college made its budget decisions was a racist decision. The Latinx population makes up almost 20% of your service district, and many of those are first generation immigrants. Again we ask, is it really the intent of your college to cease serving these valuable members of the community by eliminating Spanish language services in your library, Spanish speaking bicultural staff in your Adult Basic Skills programs, and Spanish language GED classes?

Your president is cited as saying that these cuts were an "equity based decision." The *Achieving the Dream* program, in which your college has participated, states that, "in higher education, equity refers to ensuring that each student receives what they need to be successful through the intentional design of the college experience." It is impossible for OLA EDIAR committee members to reconcile your staff cuts with this definition.

In light of these concerns, the impact of your cuts on your college's staff and students, and the blatant disregard of your district's Spanish speaking population, we ask you to share with us your college's specific plans to meet your 2022-23 board goal to:

Engage in quarterly policy conversations, activities, and intentional actions that corroborates the college's commitment to advance institutional equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts that promote holistic success and well-being for all students, employees, and community stakeholders.

We expect a response addressing your specific plans to meet the 2022-2023 board goal, and the means by which you will hold yourselves accountable. While you cannot undo the harm that has already been caused to your faculty, students and community, we do hope that moving forward you will aim to be an educational institution that values students, faculty and knowledge, and welcomes people from all backgrounds to learn, teach and grow. With this in mind, we encourage you to do better. We urge you to be better.

Sincerely,

Oregon Library Association's EDI & Anti-Racism Committee
edicommittee@olaweb.org