



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor



State Library
of Oregon

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Selena Grace, PhD
President
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
8060 165th Avenue NE, Suite 200
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Dr. Grace:

The State Library of Oregon supports libraries of all types in Oregon. The essential role academic librarians serve is to support information and media literacy that foster student and faculty success. As the Association of College and Research Libraries Oregon states, colleges and universities need librarians who have “specialized graduate education, typically a master’s degree from an ALA [American Library Association]-accredited program, in information organization, research methodologies, instructional design, and collection management.” [Research shows](#) that a lack of such professionally trained librarians negatively impacts students’ ability to learn and grow, and faculty’s ability to teach and research.

The draft 2027 NWCCU Standards for Accreditation include the proposed Library and Information Resources standard 2.F.1, which states “Consistent with its mission, the institution 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.” Notably the revision no longer says that an institution “employs qualified personnel,” as in current 2020 standard 2.H.1. The State Library of Oregon strongly encourages NWCCU to retain qualified library personnel as a standard for accreditation.

Libraries, and the trained librarians who make them possible, help spark the curiosity and creativity that are core to the mission of every institution of higher education. Information is essential to any field of study. The amount of readily available information is increasing exponentially. Students and faculty must sift through that growing data to determine what is useful, credible, and current. That task can be daunting for new students and seasoned experts alike.

This is the power of professionally trained librarians. Every day, these valuable personnel are finding, evaluating, collecting, and facilitating access to information. Librarians share their expertise with students and faculty by:

- Providing instruction on information literacy and research skills.
- Keeping costs affordable by providing access to resources that help students succeed.
- Creating learning conducive spaces and technology hubs.

- Increasing student feelings of belonging and engagement.
- Assisting with multi-disciplinary work and other research.
- Promoting equity for underserved and under-resourced communities, who may need additional support gaining critical evaluation and research skills.

Professional librarians, together with support staff, are essential to effective and equitable educational institutions. Libraries are more than book warehouses. They are a set of services that ensure equitable access to information, support students and faculty, encourage information literacy, and instruct in skills necessary to succeed in today's academic environment.

Organizations such as NWCCU should be encouraging institutions of higher education to employ professional librarians, as this will help each institution meet their mission while providing students with the most affordable, well-rounded educational experience that will prepare them for the challenges to come. I urge you to retain reference to having qualified library personnel in the 2027 NWCCU Standards for Accreditation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy Cornelisen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Wendy Cornelisen
State Librarian