

Members of the Joint Ways and Means Capital Construction Subcommittee:

I am writing this letter to lend my voice in support of the capital construction request for the much-needed safety upgrades on the 17 Oregon community college campuses.

I am a Science Lab Coordinator and President of the Classified Employees Association at the beautiful campus of Mt. Hood Community College, located in Gresham. In addition to my responsibilities of making sure the materials and supplies are ready for the instruction of almost 5000 students per year who come through our labs, I also provide training and employment of students in the lab as they further their career goals. I also serve to advocate for the safety and security of my coworkers. One critical component of my work is maintaining and providing for the security of our chemical inventory and storage of our hazardous waste.

In the late summer of 2014 an adjust professor who had recently worked at Mt. Hood Community College was arrested and charged with delivery, possession and unlawful manufacture of methamphetamine. We were able to quickly determine that our inventory had not been compromised, and evaluated our security measures around the issuing of keys to the lab area. At that time, it was determined that the best solution would be a keyless entry system that individual rights could be revoked and that could be locked down in case of an active event on campus.

Our current system of issuing a key that serves to get into the area is prohibitively expensive to revoke rights as it requires an entire rekeying of all the locks in the area. The cost of rekeying, or the cost of moving to a keyless system has prevented us from moving forward in the direction that we know is best for our staff and students.

At the Northwest Laboratory Hazardous Materials Management Conference in the Fall of 2015 one of the guest speakers said something that resonated with me and my colleague. She was a member of the public safety department at Seattle Pacific University in 2014 when they had an active shooter on campus, and to paraphrase she stated: "Even though issues were identified, and security measures requested even a private school could not find the money to make upgrades. The additional tragedy is after the event where 1 person was killed and others injured, they managed to find the money."

These campus improvements are critical for the safety of our students and staff on our campuses. The tragedy at Umpqua Community College should remind us to to act quickly, and implement these upgrades before we have another community paying a terrible price for our inaction.

Please prioritize the request from the community colleges for the resources needed to help keep the students and staff at my college, and all 17 community colleges across Oregon safe.

Thank you,

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