

My name is Dr. Jessica Luebbers. I am an Expanded Practice Dental Hygienist and completed my Doctoral degree in Education focusing on Leadership in Higher Education. I was a first-generation college student and am an alumnus of Oregon Tech's class of 2012. I left clinical practice in dental hygiene to join Oregon Tech as an educator in order to dedicate my skills to teaching our next generation of oral healthcare providers.

Our dental hygiene students at our campus locations in both Klamath Falls and Salem at Chemeketa Community College will earn a Bachelor's degree and enter the workforce in Oregon, able to practice at the highest capability of a dental hygiene license in Oregon. The past several years, these students have had a 100% pass rate on all of their clinical and national board examinations. If you ask any of them, they will tell you that this happens not only because of their hard work, but also because of the dedication of their faculty who spend countless hours coaching and mentoring them. Our students have not missed any opportunities to continue to treat patients and positively impact the oral health of our communities, even during a global pandemic. This is true because of the copious hours the faculty spend on ensuring that our students receive the best education possible.

We know our students- their strengths and weaknesses. We mentor them and build their clinical skills through advising, teaching and mentoring in the clinic and classroom. We ensure that when they graduate, they will successfully care for the oral and systemic health of our communities. This has not happened because of our leadership at the University. If anything, it has been hindered recently due to financial barriers. For example, our students in Salem were without a Spanish interpreter in our clinic due to "budget reasons." Our clinic sees a large number of Hispanic patients who lack access to care in traditional dental settings due to financial and language barriers. We help those patients in every way that we can. It is not always easy, and has been even more difficult by the lack of funding provided by senior administration. The narrative from the senior administration has been to make do with what you have and for the faculty to be thankful for the jobs they have. There has been little consideration for how this truly impacts student learning outcomes. I can tell you first-hand it impacts all of us- students, staff, faculty, and our wonderful patients. A brilliant colleague accurately summed this up as: "Our teaching conditions, are their learning conditions." I would further add that those same conditions extend into our communities in Klamath Falls and Salem with the care our patients can receive in the dental clinics. A senior administration who gives themselves raises, but are unwilling to provide resources to hire an interpreter are showing lack of concern for success in all areas.

A polytechnic university is one that provides hand-on and applied-learning. The faculty at Oregon Tech are immensely successful at this. It is the FACULTY who are being disrespected and suffering burn-out at an alarming rate. Oregon Tech may fit the qualifications of a Polytechnic University, and a successful one in this very moment. However, we will not be successful for long if current leadership conditions continue. Retention and success comes from knowing our students and the communities they will serve in their future professions. Retention and success will slowly decline as our faculty suffer inequities at the hands of our current senior administration, who show by their actions that student success is not a priority. The outcome will be, less successful students and eventual impact at the community level.

I respectfully request you listen to my fellow alumni, our current students, and the voice that we raise for those voiceless community members who we provide healthcare services to. Oregon Tech can be a wonderful polytechnic institution for our State. But make no mistake, it is the faculty and the staff at Oregon Tech who bring the caring and impactful teaching to our students. Thank you for listening.