



Dear university leadership, colleagues, and students,

**We are reaching out to our university community to foster shared advocacy and to communicate the impacts of the recent cuts on Western's scholarship, instruction, and student success and retention.**

Western Libraries is a force magnifier that increases the success of students, faculty, and staff through its diversity of expertise, collections, services, and spaces. If the Libraries continues to experience personnel cuts, it will further disrupt and diminish access to resources that advance the [university's core priorities](#) of "preserving academic programs, enhancing enrollment and retention, and creating new pathways for Washington students."

**In 2008, the Libraries consisted of 67.5 full-time employees (FTEs).** Since 2008, the Libraries has absorbed additional services such as the Center for Pacific Northwest Studies, the Hacherl Research & Writing Studio (Writing Center affiliate), the Graduate Studio, the Tutoring Center, and Writing Instruction Support. Despite an increase in services, the Libraries has continued to experience a decline in personnel, and **after the recent reductions, where roughly a quarter of our staff positions were eliminated, 49 FTEs are tasked with sustaining the Libraries' wealth of services.** The Libraries has demonstrated that strategic changes are necessary, and has worked to be proactive, creative, and responsive to meet the ever-changing needs of students, faculty, and staff. Prior to the recent university reductions, the Libraries' decrease in personnel was partly due to good stewardship. Western Libraries' leadership addressed a scarcity of resources by enacting tough decisions through the years to re-design and eliminate positions, help address the evolving needs of the university community, and accommodate budgetary constraints.

**Recent staff reductions impacting work at Circulation Services, the Graduate Studio, Libraries administration, collection maintenance, and library systems was not strategic and will have negative impacts on those the Libraries serves.**

During the recent reductions, Western Libraries had five vacant staff lines cut, while two faculty lines have been held vacant for at least three years. As the organization was already running on limited staffing and expertise, the main library buildings will now be closed on Saturdays starting spring quarter, the Graduate Studio will reduce services, current personnel will experience changes in duties, and there will be a reduction in support for specialized collections that focus on areas of distinction such as student success, sustainability, unique formats, and accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI) efforts. Library personnel are still working to identify gaps, areas where services will need to discontinue, and much more in order to foster equitable and just working expectations for current personnel.



**As a college within Academic Affairs, continued cuts to the Libraries is a cut to the core of the university's academic mission. The university cannot continue to effectively achieve its core mission and priorities if the Libraries experiences additional reductions.**

If Western Libraries receives additional personnel reductions, drastic changes to services will be necessary. For example, another eliminated line in the Collection Services Division could reduce capacity for evidence-based decision-making that ensures subscriptions, stewardship of physical collections, and purchasing aligns with current and developing curricular and research needs. There could be delays in ordering, processing, and cataloging new materials or fulfilling interlibrary loan requests, and reduced capacity to respond promptly to student, faculty, and staff issues accessing the physical and electronic collections.

The Teaching and Learning Division includes Subject Team expertise regarding information literacy, the Tutoring Center, the Hacherl Research & Writing Studio, and Writing Instruction Support. If any of these units experience additional loss of personnel, the Libraries will have to explore a reduction in service hours, research and writing workshops, and faculty writing instruction expertise. For example, teaching and learning librarians support students and faculty through their research, they teach credit courses, create research tutorials (in collaboration with staff experts), and curate collections based on curricular needs. Losing even one FTE from this area would definitely result in a decrease in these areas of responsibilities. Another example comes from the Tutoring Center, and is applicable to the Research & Writing Studio. During fall 2024, the Tutoring Center supported more than 3,330 student visits. If the Tutoring Center was to lose one more FTE, their current operations could not be sustained and would result in drastic reductions which will negatively impact access for their visitors. This in turn will have major implications on Western's student success in terms of first- and second-year retention.

The Archives and Special Collections Division is a small team of faculty, staff, volunteers, and students working collectively to offer a full range of services including mediated research support, classroom instruction, records management, public programming, and community-based projects and initiatives that uniquely support Western's efforts to create a deeper understanding of and engagement with place. Cuts in any of these areas cannot be isolated by function and will negatively impact the quality of work and donor development. Archives and Special Collections is also responsible for the university's records management and retention scheduling activities that ensure Western's legal compliance with state and national recordkeeping requirements. Layoffs in these units would result in significant reductions in services that support research, teaching, and campus-wide compliance in recordkeeping. It would severely impact ongoing efforts to address cataloging backlog, support for MABEL, and further limit opportunities for the discovery and use of key information and resources by students, faculty, and the public. Collectively, any further cuts would undermine the strength and importance of donor, alumni, and community relations that are at the heart of our contributions to Western.



Overall, the Libraries is already struggling due to reductions, and the Libraries cannot sustain operations with its current capacity of 49 FTE. Additionally, the budgetary limitations for library resources is a continuous challenge that impacts personnel capacity, student success, and university scholarship. There will be approximately \$29K in subscription reductions identified during the 2024-25 subscription review and an estimated \$100K annually in subsequent years. The Tutoring Center is already exploring additional adjustments to their offerings as their current operating budget is not sustainable for meeting the increasing needs of Western's first- and second-year students in math, science, and study skills challenges. These budgetary complexities in addition to the reductions are time consuming and demoralizing.

We acknowledge the turmoil our colleagues across the institution are facing and continue to face with an additional \$5-8 million needing to be addressed. We sympathize with colleagues who recently lost their positions. And we hope that as a community we can soon heal and experience a sense of security in the near future. But because of the centrality of the library in regards to academic excellence, additional personnel and resource disruptions will impact the university community and the institution's core priorities.

**As a collective, we will not accept any additional personnel reductions as a result of the next budget cut if the Libraries is to continue upholding the [university's values and commitment](#) to maintaining "student success, critical thought, creativity, and sustainability."**

We share this statement as a call for support and advocacy from across the university as Western Libraries is critical to you and everyone's success at this institution!

*Shevell Thibou (Director of Teaching & Learning | Western Libraries)*

*Shannon Kelly (Assistant Director of Teaching & Learning | Western Libraries)*

*Brian Davidson (Head of Tutoring | Western Libraries)*

*Jeff Purdue (Faculty Chair and Teaching, Learning, and Media Librarian | Western Libraries)*

*Gabe Gossett (Head of the Hacherl Research & Writing Studio | Western Libraries)*

*Neah Ingram-Monteiro (Teaching & Learning Librarian | Western Libraries)*

*Gabriela Martinez (Teaching & Learning Librarian | Western Libraries)*

*Chimgay Tserendorj (Teaching & Learning Librarian | Western Libraries)*

*David Schlitt (Special Collections Manager | Western Libraries)*

*Sid Devarenne (Collection Management & Assessment Librarian | Western Libraries)*

*Elizabeth Joffrion (Director of Archives and Special Collections | Western Libraries)*



*Dayna Patterson (Assistant Head of the Hacherl Research & Writing Studio | Western Libraries)*

*Sylvia Tag (Teaching & Learning Librarian | Western Libraries)*

*Joanna Bailey (Course Reserves Manager | Western Libraries)*

*Tony Kurtz (University Archivist | Western Libraries)*

*Natalie Baloy (Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology)*

*Mary Wegmann (Acting Director of Collections | Western Libraries)*

*Dubravka Ilic (CMS / Western Libraries)*

*Nathan Romond (Teaching and Learning Specialist | Western Libraries)*

*Heather Slee (Online Learning and Engagement Specialist | Western Libraries)*

*Casey Mullin (Head of Cataloging and Metadata Services | Western Libraries)*

*Megan Spiegel (Head of the Kitto Graduate Student Hub / Graduate School)*

*Xi Wang (Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Studies and Institute for Energy Studies )*

*Christine Espina (Associate Professor, Department of Health and Community Services)*

*Bidisha Biswas (Professor, Department of Political Science)*

*Adrienne Alms (Resource Access Specialist | Western Libraries)*

*Aquila Flower (Director, Spatial Institute, and Professor, Department of Environmental Studies)*

*Sam McNeil (Circulation and Reserves LAPP2 | Western Libraries)*

*Emily Whitacre (Metadata Development Specialist | Western Libraries)*

*Lysa Rivera (Chair, Department of English)*

*Babafemi Akinrinade (Professor, Fairhaven College)*

*Sondra Cuban (Professor, Director of Adult & Higher Education, Woodring)*

*Elizabeth Stephan (Student Success Librarian | Western Libraries)*

*Jenny Oleen (Scholarly Communication Librarian | Western Libraries)*

*Brianna Delker (Associate Professor, Department of Psychology)*

*Daniel Picus (Assistant Professor, Department of Global Humanities and Religions)*

*Yanara Friedland (Associate Professor, Fairhaven College)*

*Peter C. Pihos (Associate Professor, Department of History)*



*Jeremy Cushman (Associate Professor, English, Director of Composition)*

*Stefania Heim (Associate Professor, Department of English)*

*Kevin Delucio (Associate Professor, Psychology)*

*Jenny Marie Forsythe (Assistant Professor, Department of English)*

*Dan Hanley (STEM Education Researcher, SMATE)*

*Nini Visaya Hayes (Associate Professor, Dept of Environmental Studies)*

*R. Mata (Associate Professor, Dept of Linguistics / Dept of Literatures, Languages & Cultures)*

*Katie Stacy (Assistant University Archivist for Records Management and User Services | Western Libraries)*

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*Adrian J. Villicana (Associate Professor, Department of Psychology)*

*Steve Smith (Associate Dean, College of Business and Economics)*

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*Ruth Steele (Center for Pacific Northwest Studies Archivist | Western Libraries)*

*Rob Spingler (Invoice & Receiving Specialist | Western Libraries)*

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*Judith M.S. Pine (Professor, Anthropology)*

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*William Makoyiisaaminaa, Visiting Assistant Professor, Education Leadership and Inclusive Teaching)*

*Andrea Gogröf, (Professor and Acting Chair of Global Humanities and Religions)*

*Matthew Miller (Professor, Elementary Education)*

*Tasha Tropp Laman (Professor, Early Childhood Education)*

*Eva Gil (Assistant Professor, Theatre and Chair of Senate Library Committee)*

*Cathy Wineinger (Associate Professor, Political Science)*

*Tilmann Glimm (Professor, Mathematics)*

*Hilary Schwandt (Professor, Fairhaven)*

*Ezra Anisman (Teaching Professor, Fairhaven and Theatre)*

*Emily Marrs (Curriculum & Records Manager, Fairhaven College)*

*John Tuxill (Associate Professor, Fairhaven College)*

*Robert Yerachmiel Sniderman (Assistant Professor, Fairhaven College)*

*Mary Baker (Assistant Professor, Fairhaven College and Canadian-American Studies)*



*Charles Patterson (Professor, Dept. of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures)*

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*Kamarie Chapman (Senior Instructor, Department of Theatre & Dance)*

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*Tracy L. Coskie (Professor and Chair, Department of Early Childhood, Elementary, and Multilingual Education)*

*Kathleen Z. Young (Associate Professor, Anthropology)*

*Lourdes Gutierrez Najera (Associate Professor, Ethnic Studies)*

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*Carol Guess (Professor, English)*

*Gail Goulet (Senior Instructor, WCE and also mega-fan of Libraries)*

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*Kendra Bradford (Scientific Instructional Technician, Biology)*

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*Nick Stanger (Associate Professor, Environmental Studies)*

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Western Libraries

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*Katie Weed (Instructor, English Department)*

*The Faculty and Staff of the Sustainability Engagement Institute*



## Western Libraries Advocacy: Supplemental Narratives/Comments

*To supplement this statement, faculty, staff, and students were invited to share brief comments regarding their experience with the Libraries and/or thoughts regarding the Libraries' recent reductions. These comments were submitted anonymously, however, respondents' classifications (e.g. staff, student, faculty) were collected and included next to each comment.*

**Faculty** The library's functions are a core part of my teaching, and I simply will not be able to do my job without them. I bring classes to Special Collections almost every quarter, and have begun developing assignments and independent projects based on the relationships I have cultivated with the librarians and workers there. These visits are critical for my students' ability to gain an integrated, holistic understanding of the texts we study as more than abstract writings. They learn to encounter them as human artifacts that exist beyond their moment of creation, and as materials that persist through time--and are marked by it. These assignments and visits would not be possible with reductions to the libraries.

**Faculty** Among the many potential negative impacts to our work and community, I am especially concerned about the impact this will have on our students who rely on library resources for critical support (e.g., tutoring, writing services, etc.). Reductions to the library personnel who manage and provide these resources will likely have an outsized effect on our first-gen, low-income background, and ESL students.

**Faculty** I regularly use the libraries and advise my students to use our libraries because of their consistent, reliable excellence and expertise. The folks in the WWU libraries do such excellent work on a shoestring. It is unconscionable to make cuts to a system on which we rely directly in order to provide the excellent education which Western has so justly prided itself upon.

I recognize that times are tight. We must, however, fight to retain the basic elements required for world class education. A fully staffed university library, paying a good wage to all of its workers, is necessary to the basic function of our institution. Many things are nice to have at a university. Fully staffed libraries are a necessity.

**Student** As a student, the recent reduction to the libraries hours is vastly inequitable and unacceptable. The library is a resource that should be considered a necessity to making education more accessible. Without the access to a safe space to study, wifi, computers, textbooks, and the other vast amounts of resources the library provides, how can students be expected to perform equitably. The library being open through the weekend should be non-negotiable. I cannot think of a single student who won't be affected by these changes.

**Faculty** In the Education Leadership Program, we have both masters-level students and doctoral-level students accessing direct services including staff (e.g. Sylvia Tag, Gabe Gossett), to support the success of our students. Without these services, students would be limited in the use of the services that allow necessary literature reviews as part of the their masters theses and doctoral dissertations. Additionally, working directly with Sylvia Tag on a research project in the Special Collections area is only



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possible through the knowledgeable experience and expertise Sylvia Tag holds and regular and frequent access to the Special Collections and to staff supporting Special Collections.

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**Faculty** The libraries are the heart of WWU. My students rely on the library (particularly the education resources) to support their advancement into teaching. I have so appreciated the curation and support that the librarians and libraries provide. A reduction in resources is particularly challenging.

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**Faculty** As a faculty member located on the Peninsulas and as the APD for Early Childhood Education, I cannot emphasize enough the impact that the library has had on our students and faculty. Specifically, Sylvia Tag, has supported our work both on campus and off. She has hosted ECE classes and shared the libraries' many resources for engaging our youngest learners. I also worked closely with Sylvia to curate text sets and puppets to use with infants and toddlers and helped our students understand how these materials facilitate young children's early literacy development. In addition, I bring my students to the Children's Literature Conference each February. We drive 3 hours from the peninsulas to learn from world renowned authors. It was often referred to as our students' favorite experience at WWU. It was a shame that WWU decided to no longer host this event that served the university and the community. The library and its faculty and staff are essential to a thriving university.

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**Staff** Working at Western Libraries has given me the chance to meet a number of skilled employees who are passionate about the services they provide and the level at which they provide them. It has been disheartening to see the ongoing cuts hinder their ability to perform those services, while also expanding their responsibilities to the point of exhaustion, without any added protections. The actions of the last year demonstrate that the library is not being valued by university administrators, although they acknowledge that what we do is critical to its function. When cuts are levied without consultation or strategic analysis in mind, that lack of concern is clear to see. Peoples' material conditions are being impacted, as well as their mental health. Working under constant threat of "separation" while being forced to justify our own necessity is insulting and oppressive. If Western wants to live up to the values that they espouse, they won't allow additional cuts to the library and those who sustain it.

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**Student** Without the services provided by the library, I would not have been as successful in my education. The tutoring center has been vital when I was taking STEM classes, and they offered very useful explanations for precalculus that I did not receive from my teacher. Their resource of textbooks also allowed me to have a guide on me without having to lug around a large amount of books throughout the day. The Hacherl Research & Writing studio was also essential, and helped me with several essays, resumes, and even plays that I had to write for my classes. The STC has technical advice that I would normally be unable to get anywhere else, and the ease of renting equipment has allowed me to work on projects that I would normally not have the resources for.

The staff in both of these areas have been vital to my success, and the recent reductions are disappointing to say the least. I believe that the more people in these areas the better, and that each staff member hired is a dozen students given a better education. I hope that the university considers raising the budget in the future for the library, as without proper funding it will impede rather than elevate the work of the student body.

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**Student** I am a student employee in the Hacherl Research and Writing Studio in Haggard Hall, in my second year as a Research and Writing Assistant there. This space-- and the library as a whole-- has played an integral role in my time as an undergraduate student. It has been a safe zone, a place to work with classmates, and is where I spend most of my time. The development of the Studio and of other programs in the library has been crucial for many students, and it is disheartening to know that these may be under further threat. In my first year in the Studio, I learned that the library used to be open until midnight. I could not believe that this changed, since it would help so many students who see the library as their only space where they can work without disruption.

I have also witnessed cuts in real time, such as having fewer people on staff in the evenings in the Studio. At times, it is a challenge to keep up with student demand when there are more students requesting help than there are staff to respond. These cuts are harmful to students, as they take away from the resources that their tuition pays for, and limit opportunities for student employees to gain work experience. I would love to see a Western library that is open until midnight again, and a Studio that has enough staff on shift to support the university's students more consistently.

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**Faculty** Our college librarian (Social Science Subject Team), Elizabeth Stephan, has been extremely supportive of my teaching. She developed a website of resources for my course, and regularly conducts workshops on writing and presenting for my students. Her support has been invaluable in teaching students skills on how to access and use library resources in ways that help them take the quality of their work from student-level to professional-level. Our library and librarians are a core part of our educational mission and have my wholehearted support.

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**Student** The library has always been a great place to study and hang out on the weekends. After moving out of Western's dorms, there are very few places to hang out with friends in the winter where you don't have to spend money to sit there and study. Having the library open on the weekends is a necessary resource for WWU's community.

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**Faculty** Western Libraries are critical to our students success. We are able to reduce costs to our students through making materials available through our libraries.

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**Faculty** The library is central to my students' success at WWU--especially in terms of accessing course materials.

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**Faculty/  
Staff** I am both faculty and staff, so I get to interact with the Libraries in multiple ways. The libraries have helped me make my courses free for students with online course material access, I have been able to order great books for the university for professional development and student resources. The libraries are crucial for university success.

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**Faculty** Academic libraries are the backbone of the university. Every quarter, I bring my upper-division classes to the library for independent research or to visit Special Collections. Every quarter, I hear from these students that their biggest regret is not engaging deeply with the libraries sooner. To me, this tells me that we need to up our investment in the libraries. The libraries stand between us and illiteracy--cultural, civic, and actual. Library materials (especially those in Special Collections) engage students who are otherwise struggling in class, and let them see deeper relevance to what they're studying. Cutting the libraries'

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budget now is a slap in the face of everything we do at WWU, and a polite nod to the forces that wish to keep Americans uneducated and uncritical.

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**Staff** The Western Libraries-- all of them-- are essential to scholarship and connection at WWU. In this day and age making library materials MORE accessible is vital to maintaining the role that Western plays not just for its students, but also for the community at large.

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**Faculty** The library is the absolute core of any academic institution! It is the LAST place we should be making budget cuts.

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**Student** The library is a necessary third space beneficial to students who want to study, read, or learn.

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**Faculty** Library staff and resources are essential to my teaching and scholarship. I could not do either without the collections of the main library, including both books and journals (Summit is very important but not a replacement for local access) and especially without the incredibly skilled work of the archivists and librarians at the Center for the Pacific Northwest Studies, and university and state archives.

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**Student** I am a student-worker with the Research and Writing Studio. The library is the center of my life on campus. If I have 20 minutes before I need to head to class I will sit and read in the library. If friends want to meet up to study I will suggest the library. When I need to sit down and knock out a lot of work out in one day the library is the best place for me to do that. When I was taking GIS and Biostats last quarter I spent hours in the library every weekend working on labs. In my opinion the library is the most comfortable academic space on campus. The atmosphere pushes me to get work done, but manages to be relaxed at the same time. The resources have also been critical for my success and enjoyment as a student. I have utilized the Writing Studio for high stakes applications. I use the computer lab when I need to remove distractions and work on a larger screen. I check multiple books out every year, some for school, but some simply for pleasure so that I can read without having to buy the book. My experience at Western would be very different if I didn't have as much access to the library and its resources.

In addition to what the library has done for me, I have seen what a resource it is for other students. Working at the Writing Studio I see some familiar faces over and over. Sometimes people come into the Writing Studio every day and rely on it to get through their classes. Others have a routine in the library and I see them consistently on the sky bridge or in the computer lab. As it does for me, for many students the library is a stable, comfortable environment that enables them to succeed at school.

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