

October 30, 2015

Dr. Barbara E. Brittingham,  
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education  
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100  
Burlington, MA  
01803-4514

Dear Dr. Brittingham:

As President of the Oregon Library Association, I am writing to comment upon the proposed changes to the NEASC Standards for Accreditation. Despite the fact that institutions of higher learning in Oregon are outside of the NEASC's accreditation purview; my academic librarian colleagues have brought this to my attention, as we are all concerned about educational standards on a national level.

Our concern is specifically with the omission in the new draft of Standard Seven: Library and Information Services, which speaks to inclusion of library services as part of an institution's broader academic purpose, as well as other extremely important elements of service including Information Literacy instruction, adequate staff training, and sufficient organizational support.

Accreditation standards act as a high benchmark for institutions of higher learning: they exist in order to motivate an institution to offer the most superior education possible to its students. If these standards are softened or generalized in regards to Library and Information Services, and omit a specific call to action regarding Information Literacy, we will very likely see a decline in institutional support for these services.

Librarians in Oregon support their colleagues in the Northeastern States, and are aware that our local accreditation agencies may follow suit if the NEASC omits library standards. We urge you to reconsider this omission, and retain your commitment to strong libraries in our institutions of higher learning.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane Corry', written in a cursive style.

Jane Corry  
President, Oregon Library Association