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WOU Bellamy Hall 11.24.2020 12:30 pm

Mary Pettenger

Western Oregon University, pettenger@wou.edu

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Mary Pettenger, Professor of Political Science, Western Oregon University



WOU Bellamy Hall 11.24.2020 12:30 pm

When I entered Bellamy Hall on Tuesday, November 24, 2020 at 12:30 p.m., my footsteps echoed in the empty hallways. I could hear no one in the building and most of the lights were out. Classroom doors were closed with no lights on. I walked down the hallway with empty chairs, empty bulletin boards or holding flyers from events from March 2020, frozen in time. It felt eerily like movies I've watched about Armageddon or a ghost town when people fled quickly. This hallway is usually busy with students at this time of the quarter, waiting for a class to begin, gathering in the hallways talking or on their phones. I would usually pass several faculty members rushing to make copies and walking quickly off to class. Now I enter a building that is closed, vacant, empty. But while this seems so alien, I know that having our physical building empty does not mean that our university is empty and gone. We are all still going to class, engaging in conversations and learning, keeping each other safe, missing each other. We don't need a building to be together, and while the building may feel empty, it is not. It is waiting for the day that will come soon, when the hallways will be filled with many footsteps and voices, and we will gather again in person to go to class, and to share with each other our joy in learning.