

**Date:** March 30, 2015

**To:** Senate Education Committee

**From:** Ross Tomlin, Southwestern Oregon Community College, Vice President of Instruction & Student Services

Kathy Calise, Lane Community College, Director of Allied Health and Continuing Education

**Subject House Bill 2410**

Good morning Chair Roblan, Vice Chair Knopp and members of the committee. For the record, my name is Ross Tomlin, Southwestern Oregon Community College, Vice President of Instruction & Student Services. With me today is Kathy Calise, Director of Allied Health in the Continuing Education Department at Lane Community College and the President-Elect for the Oregon Association of Community and Continuing Education.

In the Spring of 2013, the Oregon Association of Community and Continuing Education membership met for our annual meeting. This association's membership represents the noncredit divisions in the Oregon Community Colleges and Community Educators. At that time, we joined together to form a workgroup representing ten of the seventeen community colleges, and a representative from the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development to explore a change of the Oregon Administrative Rule to allow noncredit divisions to award training certificates. We called ourselves the OAR Workgroup and worked throughout the summer and into fall 2013 on the definition, rigor, and approval criteria for the noncredit training certificates. The workgroup studied what other states allowed for noncredit training certificates by conducting a survey with the support of the National Council for Continuing Education & Training. We looked at the benchmarks and guidance from the Learning Resource Network and reviewed the criteria in Oregon Administrative Rules regarding Occupational Preparatory and Occupational Supplementary noncredit course approval.

Employers need change quickly and most often, they turn to community colleges for the varied trainings they require their employees to have. The noncredit divisions of community colleges can quickly meet the training needs of industry in their local communities. Noncredit training certificates will give current and future employees the documentation required to show proof of skill attainment needed for entry-level skills in a variety of industries.

The workgroup was just completing the white paper in January 2014 when we were informed that the Department of Justice had reviewed the current law and determined a law change, not a rule change, would be needed for the noncredit divisions to give a certificate. The workgroup actively worked throughout the spring and summer of 2014 meeting with stakeholder groups to educate them on our efforts and we also spoke to leaders from other community colleges throughout the US and employers to get additional input.

Currently, noncredit divisions are required to conduct an adverse impact review for any current occupational preparatory classes and go through the state approval process. This state approval requirement will remain in place if the opportunity to offer non-credit certificates to students is allowed legislatively.

In an informal survey, conducted by the Oregon Association of Community and Continuing Education, the noncredit divisions in Oregon's Community Colleges are not planning on developing any new noncredit training certificate courses but would like to be able to award a certificate instead of a recognition award or award of completion. The current wording is not understood by business and industry as to denote any significant skill attainment. For business and industry, the term "recognition award" does not have the same meaning as the term certificate. Students may complete a short-term training to obtain an advanced skill set or to meet requirements for an industry-recognized credential, and then utilize the experience as "credit for prior learning" toward a degree or certificate. A noncredit training certificate will help students reach their educational goals in both the short-term and long-term scenarios.

For an example of how this would be implemented; Lane Community College offers a Medical Receptionist class which is a 60 hour class teaches entry level skills to work the front desk in a medical office. The Student successfully completing this class may use these hours toward a Medical Office Assistant two year Associate Degree and MOA Certification. They will be gaining valuable work experience while completing their associate's degree by working the front desk of the medical office. Or, the Student may decide to complete the noncredit Phlebotomy course which will give them stackable credentials with two noncredit training certificates.

Further, these certificates would not only help our students become more marketable as they look for new jobs or move up in their career field but it would also help meet the Middle 40 of the 40-40-20 goal of having 40 percent earn an associate degree or post-secondary certificates and degrees.

Thank you for time and consideration. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.