



March 20, 2017

HB2540 Letter of Support to the Higher Education and Workforce Committee

Dear Chair Reardon and members of the Higher Education and Workforce Committee:

I'd like to thank Representative Hack for sponsoring this bill and the Committee for hearing HB2540 which allows community colleges to award baccalaureate degrees in Nursing. This bill is an important step in the process of increasing the number of Bachelor's degree Nurses in Oregon. Allowing a community college, such as Chemeketa Community College to offer such a degree would permit Chemeketa to **respond to a workforce need** and provide students **another point of access at an affordable cost**. Chemeketa serves a diverse district that covers the counties of Marion, Polk and Yamhill and a small part of Linn—communities such as Salem, Brooks, Woodburn, McMinnville, Dallas, Monmouth, Independence, Silverton, Stayton, etc.

My interest in creating an opportunity for community colleges to award baccalaureate degrees in Nursing began in 2015. A local community member came to me and said he was researching what it would take to create a bachelor's degree nursing school in Salem in order to address the workforce shortage. After visiting me and others and learning of the complexity of starting a school he decided not to move forward but asked what we could do. I told him I would seek ways to address the local issue. Responding to local workforce needs is one of the primary purposes of a community college. Voters agreed to form our districts to address local workforce needs, and that is what we do. Our boards are elected by their constituents.

Community colleges in other states are awarding bachelor's degrees such as the RN to BSN degree when the local workforce need is not met by the local college or university. (RN to BSN is short for Registered Nurse to Bachelors of Science in Nursing.) Currently, there are 23 states that allow and 18 states that confer the Bachelor degree at the community college level, 10 of which confer the nursing degree including the state of Washington. Other states have found the community college bachelor's option especially helpful in addressing workforce need in rural areas. Washington State reports success with their RN to BSN.

Chemeketa's Health sciences program staff and I spent several months visiting employers to gauge the need or interest for an RN to BSN program offered locally at Chemeketa Salem. We explained that students would take courses in a hybrid model, combining face to face with online learning. We received very positive feedback. Employers said it could assist new graduates as well as those experienced RN's seeking more responsibility; and hoped that a local option would lead to more bachelor's prepared nurses staying in our local communities and reducing turnover. Chemeketa determined that in our district alone we have more than 75 employers that use nurses—there are seven large and small hospitals including the Oregon State hospital., hospice providers, long term care, clinics, corrections, surgery centers, urgent care facilities, etc.

Besides gathering feedback from employers, workforce data and national and local research on the nursing shortage was reviewed. The Institute of Medicine 2010 "Future of Nursing" report recommended a push to increase the number of BSN prepared nurses to 80% by 2020. In their 2015 progress report it was concluded that "Community colleges, associate's degree programs, and baccalaureate completion programs provide important pathways for diverse and disadvantaged students to enter the nursing profession; **these educational pathways need to be maintained and strengthened**".

Information was readily available by googling "Oregon Nursing Shortage". The Oregon Center for Nursing and the Health Resources Services Administration report shortages of nurses into the future of 6000 by 2025 due to retirements

and the health care needs of baby boomers. Additionally, the 2016 “Unhealthy Schools: The Alarming Decline of School Nurses in Oregon” describes the negative impact the shortage of school nurses has on Oregon’s children. I shared my findings with community college presidents, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission and other educational entities. Several presidents from other community colleges report the same need from their local employers. As a side note—my daughter has been a Nurse recruiter at two good sized medical centers in Oregon for eight years. She has shared the ongoing recruiting difficulty they have filling specialty Nursing positions—and at times they have to hire “traveling” nurses to fill positions at a premium cost to the hospital and ultimately to all of us.

Chemeketa and 15 other Oregon community colleges offer a two year associate degree nursing program (ADN) that leads to a licensed Registered Nurse upon passing the national NCLEX exam (which leads to a Registered Nurse designation). Current Oregon options for our students with an ADN degree are 2 schools that offer fully online RN to BSN programs and one school that offer a full time face to face option. All three options are located in Portland. Additionally, there are various fully online options available across the country. This bill would allow a local option.

The goal of HB2540 is to address workforce needs by creating another educational pathway for students to earn their bachelor’s degree in nursing. This bill would allow students the option of completing their bachelor’s coursework at their local community college through face to face and on-line curriculum. It would maintain the connection between the student, their peers and their local community. The student would expand their knowledge and abilities in areas such as hospice, community health, leadership, and performance improvement. The coursework would culminate in the student receiving a bachelor’s degree. Once a student has a bachelor’s degree they can pursue a Master’s degree or Doctoral degree as desired.

Options for students pursuing a Nursing Bachelor’s degree are: (See chart attached at end of this document)


1. Completing a 4 year degree nursing program (BSN)—take NCLEX exam for RN
2. Completing a 2 year degree nursing program (ADN)—take NCLEX exam for RN; and then
 - a. Complete an RN to BSN program 100% on-line; through an Oregon school or out of state school
 - b. Complete an RN to BSN program full time face to face in Portland
 - c. **If HB2540 is passed** another option will be available to the student: Complete an RN to BSN program at their local community college using face to face and on-line methods of teaching.

The students get to choose which program best fits their individual learning style and personal situation. If HB2540 is passed students would have another option for completing their bachelor’s degree.

All pre-licensure nursing programs in Oregon—whether at a two year or four year college, prepare students to sit for their national examination to obtain the RN license to practice. Nursing faculty are required to have a Master’s degree, and some colleges such as Chemeketa are separately accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing. The Oregon State Board of Nursing website shows that community college graduates who take the NCLEX exam have first time pass rates equivalent to the graduates at the four year schools (attached). **Community colleges prepare students to be excellent nurses**—some of you may have met one or more of them.

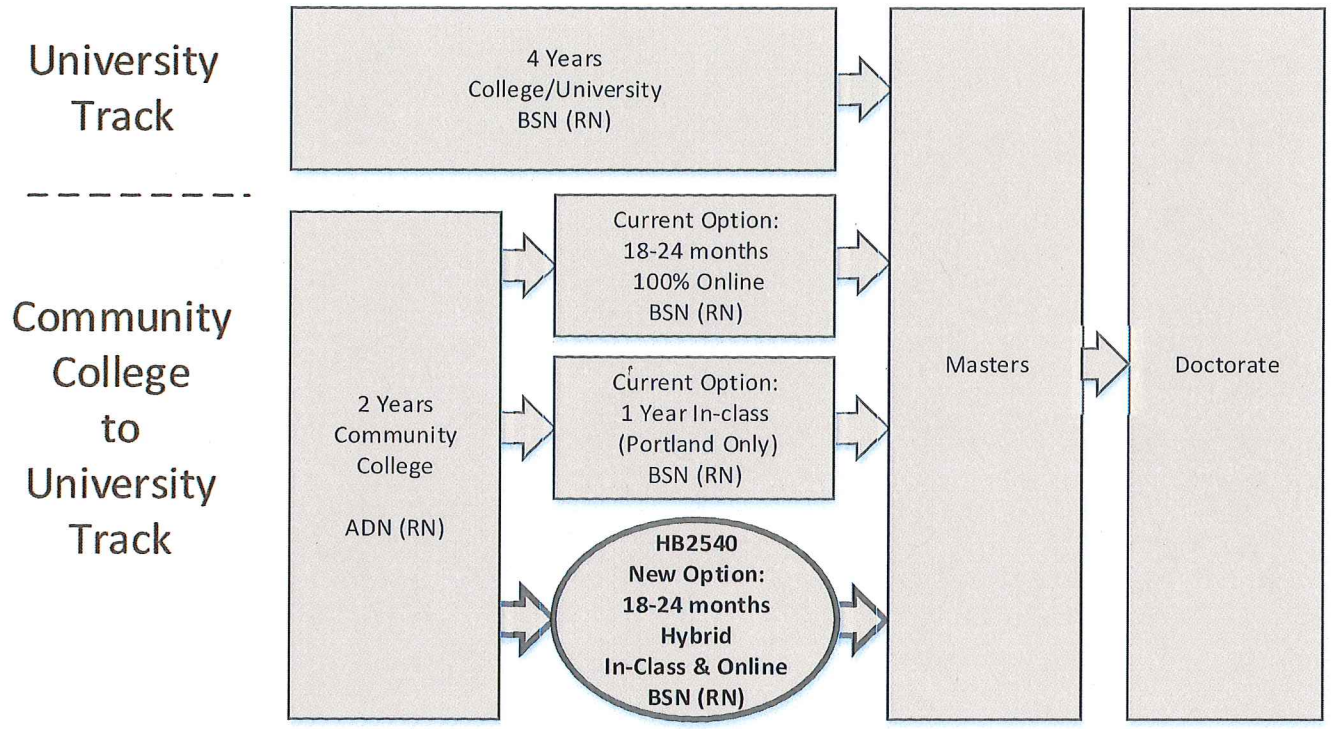
HB2540 allows those excellent nurses to continue their education at their community college and allows us to respond to our local workforce. Community colleges are responsive. Give us a chance to be responsive, to help our students and to serve the workforce needs of our local communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Julie Huckestein, President/CEO

House Bill 2540

Permits community colleges to offer applied baccalaureate degrees in nursing to individuals with specified qualifications.



Oregon State Board of Nursing • Educational Program Pass Rates

Figures reported with percent first-time pass rate/total candidates.

* PN exit option within an associate degree nursing program.

Baccalaureate Program Pass Rates (by percent)

	1/1/12-12/31/12	1/1/13-12/31/13	1/1/14-12/31/14	1/1/15-12/31/15	1/1/16-12/31/16
Concordia—Portland	89.66/29	94.44/36	79.5/39	94.29/35	91.67/36
George Fox University—Newberg	97.14/35	84.62/39	90.2/41	78/50	87.8/41
Linfield—Portland	87.21/172	86.13/238	77.7/188	78.53/191	80.63/191
OHSU-SOU—Ashland	91.67/48	95.74/47	93.3/45	87.5/40	94.12/51
OHSU-OIT—Klamath Falls	95.45/22	75/20	93.6/16	92.31/13	100/11
OHSU-EOU—La Grande	95.24/21	95.45/22	95.2/21	100/20	85/20
OHSU—Monmouth	96.88/32	75.86/29	100/27	93.33/30	83.87/31
OHSU—Portland	93.44/61	93.67/79	93.5/46	100/26	90.91/44
OHSU—Accelerated BSN-Ashland	—	—	—	92.31/13	87.5/24
OHSU—Accelerated BSN-Portland	97.37/76	93.33/75	96.9/96	98.97/97	96.05/76
University of Portland	96.26/187	82.32/181	89.1/184	81.28/203	83.25/191
Walla Walla—Portland + Reporting period Oct. 1-Sept. 30	+ 96.61/59	89.23/65	89.7/58	93.55/62	89.66/58

Associate Degree Program Pass Rates (by percent)

	1/1/12-12/31/12	1/1/13-12/31/13	1/1/14-12/31/14	1/1/15-12/31/15	1/1/16-12/31/16
Blue Mtn. CC—Pendleton	94.44/18	100/15	84.6/13	90/10	94.12/17
Breckinridge at ITT—Portland	100/14	88.06/67	85/87	73.75/80	65/80
Central Oregon CC—Bend	93.62/47	89.13/46	89.6/48	97.5/40	97.78/45
Chemeketa CC—Salem	97.22/36	94.74/38	97.6/41	95.24/42	97.5/40
Clackamas CC—Oregon City	91.43/35	84.21/38	91.1/34	92.11/38	100/31
Clatsop CC—Astoria	100/13	100/12	94.1/17	100/15	87.5/16
Columbia Gorge CC—The Dalles	100/19	90/20	100/17	93.75/16	83.33/18
Klamath Falls CC—Klamath Falls	—	—	—	—	62.5/8
Lane CC—Eugene	97.53/81	92.54/67	85.7/77	92.06/63	98.51/67
Linn Benton CC—Albany	95.45/44	97.73/44	100/43	97.87/47	93.18/44
Mt. Hood CC—Gresham	95.08/61	91.3/69	93/71	91.18/68	84/75
OR Coast CC—Newport	94.44/18	88.24/17	94.1/17	88.89/18	94.74/19
PCC—Portland	97.30/37	98.11/53	94.8/58	97.3/74	95.16/62
Rogue CC—Grants Pass	100/31	91.18/34	86.8/38	89.29/28	100/31
SWOCC—Coos Bay	100/26	80/20	100/27	90.48/21	86.21/29
Sumner College—Portland	—	—	—	86.96/23	86.36/44
Treasure Valley CC—Ontario	100/19	85/20	72.2/18	73.68/19	87.5/16
Umpqua CC—Roseburg	88.14/59	86.49/37	84/50	85.37/41	74.29/35