



PETER COURTNEY  
President of the Senate

**Senate Committee on Education**  
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Senator Chuck Thomsen, Vice-Chair  
Senator Sara Gelsler  
Senator Mark Hass  
Senator Dallas Heard

*TESTIMONY BY SENATOR PETER COURTNEY  
SB 3 & 4  
JANUARY 28, 2019*

Chair Wagner, Vice Chair Thomsen, members of the Senate Committee on Education, thank you for hearing my testimony today. My name is Peter Courtney. I am a State Senator. I live in NE Salem. I am here to testify in support of SB 3 and 4.

Thank you for having a public hearing on these measures. While they are both stand alone bills, they are connected in their goal: To make higher education more affordable and accessible to students. “Affordable and accessible for all students.”

I’ve been at this a long time, as a legislator, professor and administrator at Western Oregon University. I’ve found that students often get lost in these conversations. I want to make sure we remember who we are doing this for... The students.

SB 3 permits community colleges to offer applied baccalaureate degree programs under specified conditions. The program would need approval from Higher Education Coordinating Commission.

SB 4 permits the VOLUNTARY merger of a community college and public university.

Many colleges and universities in Oregon are working on innovative ways to ensure that students graduate on time and with less debt. I applaud their efforts. SB 3 and 4 are simply two more option to help colleges save money and serve students.

You heard earlier from Mr. Crane the value of an applied baccalaureate degree. 24 states already allow Community Colleges to award bachelor's degrees. The Legislature has been working on this issue since at least 2009. Now is the time to move forward on this idea.

Benefits of SB 3, allowing community colleges to grant Applied Baccalaureates:

- Increase accessibility to advance degrees for students who may not be able to move from home to a 4-year school.
- Help fill needed gaps in local workforces, especially as our current workforce ages.
- Expose community college students to career options they may not have considered.
- Save students money on tuition and room and board.

Benefits of SB 4, college merger:

- Save students and colleges money by combining administrative functions.
- Ensures seamless transition from community college to 4 year institution.
- Increases flexibility for students.
  - Non-major pre-recs at CC, then go to 4 year for major.
- Broadens students' horizons, provides expanded class/program selection.

Our education system has got to change if it is truly going to serve the student. All students should be encouraged to reach their full potential and be supported on whatever path they choose. If they go straight from high school to a 4 year, they should be able to afford it. If they transfer from a community college, they shouldn't lose their credits. If they return to school as adults, they should have evening and weekend classes available. If they choose to take advantage of the more than 300 Career and Technical Education programs offered at community colleges around the State, their choice should be supported, and their contributions valued.

One size does not fit all when it comes to education. If we want to help all students reach their full potential, and allow society to benefit from their potential, then we need to eliminate obstacles and create multiple ways for our students to complete their educational goals. SB 3 and 4 are 2 more pieces to the puzzle.