

Dear Chairman Dembrow and members of the committee,

I am writing to address the possible merger of community colleges and public universities addressed in SB 1. As someone who taught in the Alaska Community College system, the Alaska University System and at Portland Community College, I see the value of a seamless link between community college and university systems. However, as I witnessed the losses that occurred when Alaska merged their two systems, I have concerns about this initiative.

The first concern is cost. While this may be addressed in many ways, at this time it costs \$437 in tuition and basic fees to take a three credit course at PCC and \$810 to take three credits at Portland State University. In Alaska, we saw the cost of courses available to community members become high enough to exclude many from taking an occasional course to enhance skills. This must be addressed as part of any merger.

My second concern is mission. An important goal of community college is life-long learning. I have taught courses at community college that teach parenting skills and provide support to parents. I have taught courses on how to cope with stress and tension in life. These are courses that fit with the "community" part of the the community college's mission. I have also taught on-site courses to preschool teachers on child development that let them progress, course by course, to an AA degree. All of these formats are much more difficult within a university system. I found that many of these courses disappeared when Alaska merged their two systems.

i assume the outcome of this proposed merger will not be like Alaska, which basically eliminated community college and replaced it with the first two years of the university system in communities without a university. However, I am worried that we need to look closely at what we may lose if we move forward on this path and urge you to consider what the resulting systems will look like if mergers are pursued.

Thank you for your attention,

Carol Greenough, Ph.D.