

KLAMATH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Klamath Community College provides accessible, quality education and services in response to the diverse needs of the student, business, and community. The College supports student success in workforce training, academic transfer, foundational skills development, and community education.

TO: Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Suzanne Weber, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education

FROM: Allison Sansom, Dean of Nursing - Klamath Community College

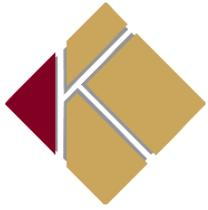
Date: March 1st, 2023

RE: Support for SB 523

Dear Legislators:

Thank you for taking the time to review my written testimony. I currently serve as a Dean of Nursing. I am writing in support of SB 523 for the following reasons:

- Twelve other states have allowed community colleges to offer the BSN degree when they passed legislation allowing applied bachelor's degrees at this level. The four-year institutions in those states supported this decision. There is no available evidence this created the issues those in opposition have described.
- A RN to BSN degree does not require clinical time, alleviating the concern of those in opposition for crowding our clinical settings. In fact, the clinical agencies in our area are in support of allowing community colleges to offer the RN to BSN. If clinical hours are in the RN to BSN curriculum design, the majority of those hours are conducted outside the acute care settings – the settings those in opposition are referring to.
- Allowing students more opportunities to achieve the BSN actually **CREATES a pipeline for more nurse educators** and advance practice nurses, rather than creating a shortage. To disallow this SB on those grounds, is a very short-sighted approach in an effort to enhance/support our nurse faculty numbers.
- The community colleges in support of this bill have formed a shared resources model, reducing the number of nurse educators each program would need to offer the RN to BSN degree. **We anticipate that each school would need faculty to instruct only one or two additional courses.**
- In 2010, the Institute of Medicine in their Future of Nursing Education report called for 80% of nurses to be educated at the BSN level or higher so that nurses are eligible to practice at the top of their scope and move on to masters programs to become nurse educators or advance practice nurses in order to educate more nursing students and meet our nation's healthcare needs. Despite the unique and innovative OCNE program that has been established in Oregon and other four-year nursing programs, only 62% of nurses have a bachelor's degree or higher in the state. **The current model is not working to**



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bring us to 80%. Only 16.5% of my former graduates have gone on to get their BSN since 2015, all of which, except one, went to out of state institutions.

- After completing a RN to BSN degree, these nurses are eligible to be approved as nurse educator-associates by the Oregon State Board of Nursing, **ADDING** to the nurse educator- associate pool to enhance the nurse faculty numbers at colleges in Oregon further **allowing for expansion of our nursing programs to meet the current nurse shortage.**
- The study mentioned in several testimonies in opposition does not state an opposition to community colleges offering a RN to BSN degree, it simply provides for a different approach, currently not desired by some community colleges or our students.
- Allowing a community college, the opportunity to offer a RN to BSN degree will provide for better sustainability for associate degree nursing programs due to the lack of clinical requirements and the mandated 1:8 instructor to student clinical ratios in the RN to BSN degree programs. The two years of ADN nursing programs drain their college's financial resources. Adding the opportunity to offer the RN to BSN degree will provide for much needed tuition revenue to help balance the negative cost margin created during the ADN program.
- Community college nursing programs in Oregon are offered in institutions that are regionally accredited by Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, and our programs are rigorously evaluated and approved by the Oregon State Board of Nursing, the same as the four-year colleges and universities who offer traditional BSN degrees. Although not required by statute, those of us who desire to offer a RN to BSN degree have determined that we will seek voluntary, national accreditation by one of three accrediting bodies unique to nursing, ACEN, CCNA, or CNEA.

I urge you, for the betterment of our nursing profession and the sake of the health of our state and nation, please do not be dissuaded by false concerns, and support this bill. It is the right thing to do.

In common caring,

Allison Sansom, MSN, RN

Dean of Nursing, Health and Science