

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

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Vicki Reitenauer
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13 March 2023

Dear Chair Dembrow and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

I am honored to write this letter in support of Senate Bill 572. I am grateful to Senator Blouin for sponsoring and Representative Ruiz for co-sponsoring the bill.

It has been a distinct privilege and a highlight of my career as a faculty member at Portland State University to serve as the faculty support coordinator for the Career and Community Studies (CCS) Program (formerly Think College Inclusion Oregon). In this role, I have worked closely with instructors in whose classes CCS students were enrolled to create fully inclusive spaces in which all learners could belong, learn, and thrive. I frequently visited the classrooms in which the promise of inclusive education was in full flourish, spaces in which every student was welcomed and supported. I witnessed vibrant conversations in which students with and without intellectual disabilities discussed course readings, presented individual projects, and worked in diverse groups in a variety of ways. Repeatedly, I saw students with intellectual disabilities contribute perspectives and insights their peers without intellectual disabilities had never considered, and I heard from those peers how much their own learning was enhanced by their interactions with their colleagues earning CCS credit.

What I have observed from the start of the CCS program at PSU *is* the promise of inclusive education – and that promise has been long overdue in our world. Simply put, our classrooms, in both university and community college settings, are made richer when we expand opportunity for those with intellectual disabilities to pursue their academic and career aspirations and, in so doing, foster transformative learning for *all* students. We have seen the incredible results of making good on this promise at PSU, and expanding the context for inclusive learning communities to the community college level means, importantly, greater access to profound learning for both students with and without intellectual disabilities. Those students who choose to pursue a four-year degree following their community college experience will arrive that much more able to learn with and from individuals across difference, to the benefit of us all and the communities of which we are a part.

Senate Bill 572 will make this possible. I ask the members of the Senate Education Committee to vote *yes* on the bill.

With gratitude for your service to the people of Oregon,

A handwritten signature in brown ink, appearing to read "V. Reitenauer".

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