

Submitter: Andrew Berman
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB977
Your Name: Andrew Berman
Address: Portland, Oregon

DATE, March 2nd, 2025

Dear Chair Senator Frederick, Vice-Chair Senator Weber, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education:

My name is Andrew Berman and I am a Student Advisor in the Career and Community Studies Program at PSU. I am writing to you in support of Senate Bill 977 to create college programs for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

I want to thank the Senate Committee on Education for sponsoring SB 977. The Senate Committee on Education has an opportunity to change the lives of many Oregon youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities by passing this bill.

Until Portland State University created the Career and Community Studies Program, potential students did not have an opportunity to enroll in postsecondary education and experience inclusive social engagement and independent living in the state of Oregon because of their intellectual and developmental disabilities. All of which lead to competitive integrated employment.

When students left special education, they shared that they faced many “no’s” from others who did not think it was possible to attend a postsecondary program like CCS. This program redefines this harmful narrative and creates meaning for students to successfully navigate their futures.

The CCS program is a game changer for students because it provides the support needed for inclusion in coursework at PSU. This support is provided in a variety of ways, including academic coaching and by modifying syllabi to individually support student academic needs and goals. The CCS program helps students succeed in their classes.

The CCS program also helps students with career development and employment, leading to a career pathway in areas of their interest. Students work while going to school and receive career counseling to help them achieve employment goals. Currently students work in an array of career fields including but not limited to serving the wider Portland metro community.

The CCS program also supports students in meeting their social needs and goals. Current research has discovered that individuals with disabilities are twice as likely to experience social isolation and loneliness than other populations. Students are provided opportunities for meaningful socialization both within the program as well as on campus.

This bill is a huge step towards something that would help other potential students with intellectual and developmental disabilities lead fully productive and inclusive adult lives. CCS has very high rates of post-program employment and this makes it a good economic investment for Oregon.

I am asking you to vote yes on Senate Bill 977 which will significantly change lives by sustaining PSU's CCS program AND expanding inclusive college options at community colleges across Oregon.

Thank you for your time and service to the people of Oregon.

Sincerely,

Andrew Berman
Student Advisor
Career and Community Studies