

Testimony SB 572

I am Mary Morningstar professor at Portland State in the department of special education and the Director of the career and community study program. I would like to thank Senator Gelser Blouin, who is the sponsor of this bill and Representative Ruiz, who served as the cosponsor.

I thank them not only for the opportunities this bill will afford to Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism, but more importantly because of their high expectation that all young adults are capable of living and working and experiencing inclusive postsecondary education.

I have provided several documents to support this testimony, and given limited time will not go into detail regarding the nuances of our program.

The Career Community Studies program is authorized by the Higher Education Act as a comprehensive transition program.

We've been developing and testing our model since 2016 and believe we have a proof of concept that can now be replicated to other postsecondary settings including community colleges. In doing so Oregon can expand this model to young adults who are denied access to inclusive postsecondary settings leading to employment in chosen career pathway.

In partnership with vocational rehabilitation and developmental disability services, the CCS program has led to very positive outcomes for our graduates with an 81% employment rate into competitive integrated employment (and that includes 2 cohorts who graduated during COVIDS).

CCS is identified as one of a handful of programs across the US that are considered fully inclusive because of our approach using three pillars of support:

- 1) academic inclusion where we partner with two dual licensure programs at PSU and faculty teaching courses to modify the academic curriculum for student engagement;
- 2) career development & employment in which we partner with both clinical rehabilitation counseling program to provide career counseling, and Trellis, Inc., a community employment agency providing the array of employment services through vocational rehabilitation, and Oregon developmental disability services.

3) we partner with with the undergraduate special education program to provide peer navigation for social engagement and to develop a social network.

Our approach is to wrap supports around the students, through person-centered planning, weekly advising and executive functioning coaching.

I'd like to introduce two of our current student, Carson Mitchell and Elijah Ogolio as well as Harry and Rachel Esteves. Rachel was a graduating alumnus from our first cohort of students.

Thank you.