

Submitter: Adam Arms
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB572

Written Testimony of Adam Arms in support of SB 572 (2023)

Relating to post-secondary education for individuals with disabilities; declaring an emergency

Two and a half years ago, Erik – my best friend from college – died unexpectedly.

I met Erik when we were 18. We were first-year college-dorm roommates in 1989-1990 at UC Davis. We came to college from different backgrounds, with different hobbies, musical tastes, and educational interests. During that first year, and the three years that followed, Erik and I were lucky enough to go through traditional college experiences together. We engaged in dorm pranks, made friends, went to parties, worked on-campus jobs, attended sporting events, dropped classes, slept through classes, scheduled classes so we'd have three-day weekends, went out to pizza, did all-nighters to study and complete papers, went to movies. With our dorm resident-advisor Joe, hiked in Yosemite. We argued, fought, laughed.

When Erik died, it made me think of my college years. And looking back, what stands out in my mind just as much as the things I learned and new ways of thinking that I was exposed to, are those experiences I had with Erik and with other friends. I don't remember many of the facts I learned, but I remember the all-nighters, the library study-sessions, and the challenge and joy of learning. I don't necessarily remember my grades from every class, but I have fond memories of, and learned valuable life lessons from, specific adventures, misadventures, and relationships. There was something special about being with a group of young adults in a vibrant environment focused on learning and growth. It is an experience that I believe should be open to anyone who is interested in it.

My daughter is one who has always been interested in going to college and having a "college experience." She has a cognitive disability and, were it not for Portland State's Career and Community Studies Program, would not have been able to go to college. She is a first-year student at Portland State and works part-time. She is rightly proud of the work she is doing. She studies hard, communicates with her professor (honestly, something I rarely took the initiative to do in college), and commutes by bus and MAX to attend every class. She spends time with acquaintances from class, grabbing food, chatting about the course. She is growing. She is glowing. She is learning and expanding her mind. She is "adulting." She is absolutely thriving.

I can't express in words how thankful I am for Portland State's Career and

Community Studies Program and for the opportunities it is providing my daughter and others like her who want to experience college. College certainly isn't for everyone – but for those who desperately want to experience it and challenge themselves, the door to college should be held wide open.

Thank you for considering my written testimony.