



February 27, 2023

Senate Higher Education Committee  
Oregon State Capitol

To Chair Dembrow and Members of the Senate Higher Education Committee:

As the Vice President of Academic Affairs at Oregon Coast Community College, I would like to express our full support of SB523 concerning the offering of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) by community colleges.

Just as not all students take the same pathway to College, not all nurses take the same pathway to achieving a BSN. With the national shortage in nurses, and with many organizations requiring a higher level of credentialing, undeserved rural communities deserve the opportunity to have highly skilled nurses. Rural nurses deserve the opportunity to obtain an affordable BSN. Additionally, in rural coastal communities (like Lincoln County) with extremely high costs of living, particularly when it comes to housing, higher credentials lead to higher wages, which allow rural communities to retain their nursing workforce. A stable, well-trained nursing workforce leads to higher quality health care.

If a student steps out of their educational pathway for even a short period of time, they must overcome the inertia of life's challenges in order to reenter an educational program. RN's who enter the workforce without simultaneously entering a BSN program are less likely to continue their education, particularly when that involves applying to a different institution. This is true even when that education is available through remote learning (which is often at a significantly higher cost). For low-income students or students from communities of color, the opportunity to pursue an affordable program with familiar faculty and wraparound supports significantly increases the likelihood of completing a 4-year degree.

Community colleges will provide an additional, and needed, mechanism to expand the quantity, quality, and diversity of the nursing workforce. At its heart this is both a community healthcare issue AND an equity issue. I urge you to support SB 523.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dan Lara", is written over a blue horizontal line.

Dan Lara  
Vice President of Academic Affairs  
Oregon Coast Community College

**SOUTH COUNTY CENTER**  
3120 Crestline Drive  
Waldport, Oregon 97394  
541-563-4502

**CENTRAL COUNTY CAMPUS**  
400 SE College Way  
Newport, Oregon 97366  
541-265-2283

**NORTH COUNTY CENTER**  
3788 SE High School Drive  
Lincoln City, Oregon 97367  
541-994-4166