

Submitter: Fengxian Yuan
On Behalf Of: Career and Community Studies
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB977

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

My name is Yuan Fengxian, and I am one of the 1st graduates that graduated from the Career and Community Studies Program at Portland State University in June of 2020. I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 977, which aims to create college programs for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Oregon. I would like to take a moment to thank the Senate Committee on Education for sponsoring SB 977. The passage of this bill would provide significant opportunities for Oregon youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities, positively impacting their future educational and career outcomes. Before the establishment of the CCS Program at PSU, individuals like myself were excluded from the possibility of pursuing higher education in Oregon due to intellectual and developmental disabilities. The CCS program has allowed me to experience inclusive coursework, independent living, and career development that have led me to competitive, integrated employment.

Additionally, CCS offers invaluable career counseling and job placement support, which has helped me secure employment at Safeway as a part time courtesy clerk. I help customers shop and find things in the store. I organize the markdown basket, collect shopping carts and hand baskets. This program not only prepares me for long-term career success but also fosters my independence and personal growth. It also led me to join a self advocacy group in the Portland metro area. We advocate and go down to Salem and talk to legislators about issues that affect people who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities. The passage of Senate Bill 977 would greatly benefit many students like myself, by expanding access to inclusive college programs across Oregon, including at community colleges. The CCS program at PSU has demonstrated high rates of post-program employment, making it an economically sound investment for the state. I kindly ask you to vote in favor of Senate Bill 977. Doing so will ensure the continuation of the CCS program at PSU and expand inclusive educational opportunities for students throughout Oregon. Thank you for your attention to this important issue, and for your ongoing service to the people of Oregon.

Sincerely,
Yuan Fengxian