

Testimony SB 977

Chair Fredricks and Vice-Chair Webber, For the record, I am Mary Morningstar special education professor at Portland State and the Director of the Career and Community Studies program. I would like to thank the Senate Education Committee for sponsoring SB 977.

I thank you not only for the opportunities this bill affords to Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism; but more importantly because of your high expectations 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.

The CCS program is the only fully inclusive postsecondary educational opportunity for students with Intellectual Developmental Disabilities (IDD) in Oregon. Students with IDD who graduated from CCS have transitioned into long-term integrated and competitive employment, reducing long-term state support for their well being.

SB 977 supports the continuation of CCS at Portland State University and establishes a plan for expansion of an individualized model of support within community colleges for students with IDD. SB 977 will continue to prepare youth with IDD for post-graduation pathways to employment that align with career goals and promote independent living and engagement within the community. SB 977 supports equitable access to an inclusive college experience for youth with IDD.

Investment in the CCS program will lead to improvements in Oregon's economy through reduced long-term care for students and families now and in the future.

In partnership with vocational rehabilitation and developmental disability services, the CCS program has led to very positive outcomes for our graduates with an 80% employment rate into competitive integrated employment.

CCS is the only fully inclusive postsecondary education program in Oregon. Our approach uses:

1. Academic inclusion where we partner with teacher licensure programs

at PSU using undergraduate and masters students serving as academic coaches 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. Partnering with the School of Social Work to provide social and emotional advising and wrap around services as well as peer navigation for social engagement to develop social networks.

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

Thank you.

