

March 12, 2013

Dear Senator Todd:

Thank you so much for the opportunity to offer my thoughts about Senate Bill 13-165, "Concerning Authorizing a Limited Number of Baccalaureate Degrees that May Be Offered in the Community College System." I enthusiastically support the passage of this very important piece of legislation.

Having served as president of the Community College of Aurora and Lamar Community College, as well as Arapahoe Community College, I have had the opportunity to talk to countless students, many of whom have not taken a "typical" educational pathway. For many of these students, younger and often less so, Career and Technical Education (CTE) is their gateway to economic self-sufficiency. They complete their certificates and degrees, enter the workforce, and then want to further their credentials for workforce advancement. Currently, their only option is to "start over" on their educational journeys, wasting their time and resources and the resources of the public.

SB 13-165 will permit colleges in the Colorado Community College System to offer a limited number of baccalaureate degrees in career and technical fields. The possible degrees will not duplicate degrees in other institutions of higher education. They will, however, provide the opportunity for CTE graduates to advance in their careers.

The following are key points about this legislation:

- The proposed degrees are not in the liberal arts and sciences.
- The CTE graduates from associate degree programs do not have reasonable options for applying their previous college coursework to further education. Their degrees are not transferable to our four-year public colleges and universities.
- CTE graduates are important members of our workforce, who need the opportunity to advance in their fields.
- Proposed programs will undergo a rigorous approval process by the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education, Colorado Commission on Higher Education, and Higher Learning Commission (accrediting body), assuring quality and nonduplication.
- Students in rural Colorado have an even greater need for seamless, reasonable access to career preparation.
- Community colleges often have the talent and equipment to increase offerings and provide further preparation, building upon current capacities.

SB 13-165 is consistent with our collective goal to increase college attainment and improve the skills of our Colorado workforce. Thank you for your efforts to support our future.

Sincerely,



Linda S. Bowman, Ph.D.