



## SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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### NEWS RELEASE

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### **Community colleges could offer four-year degrees under bill**

*SB 3: Allows students more educational opportunities*

SALEM – For thousands of students around the state, community college is the first choice or only way to pursue post-secondary educational opportunities or gain job training.

[Senate Bill 3](#) – which passed 29-0 today on the Senate floor – would expand opportunities for those students by allowing community colleges to offer applied bachelor’s degree programs. Those programs will have to be approved by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. The bill would greatly expand opportunities for students in Oregon’s 17 community colleges – many of which operate in some of the most rural reaches of the state – by allowing them to obtain bachelor’s degrees.

“Applied baccalaureate degrees offered by community colleges can provide a four-year pathway in rural communities where no other pathways exist and in more urban areas where pathways may exist but with limited capacity,” said John Wykoff, Oregon Community College Association Deputy Director, in his written testimony on the bill.

Currently community colleges provide lower-division college, career development, technical, developmental and adult continuing education to more than 270,000 students around the state. Community college students in Oregon can earn associate degrees and occupational certificates, but the institutions are not currently allowed to offer bachelor’s degrees.

“Community colleges are the best way that we level the playing field for all Oregonians,” Sen. Rob Wagner, D-Lake Oswego, said. “They provide important technical education and career

preparation at an affordable cost. Senate Bill 3 will create opportunities for rural students to get four-year degrees in career fields without having to move far away. This is a great bill for community colleges and a great bill for students.”

Nationwide, 24 states allow community colleges to award bachelor’s degrees. Applied bachelor’s degrees often are in applied sciences, business, education and technical fields. Other common areas of study for an applied bachelor’s degree include data analytics, information technology, diesel technology, dental hygiene, advanced manufacturing, sustainable practices, digital marketing and several other applied science and technical fields of study.

Senate Bill 3 now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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