



KENT CHAMBER
OF ♦ COMMERCE

April 22, 2016

State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
ATTN: Shaunta Hyde, Chair
PO Box 42495
Olympia, WA 98504-2495

Dear Shaunta:

The Kent Chamber of Commerce is writing today out of concern due to the lack of consideration given to the proposal to allow Green River College to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing program (BSN). On April 1st, Green River was notified that objections from the Vice Presidents of Instruction from Highline College, Tacoma Community College, Renton Technical College, and Pierce College had caused concern regarding Green River's proposed training program. We are asking that you review the proposal by Green River College, and allow the College to address any objections to offering a BSN degree.

Nursing is one of the fastest growing fields in the United States. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that in the next 8 years the profession will grow by 16% across the US. In Washington State, the need for registered nurses will increase by 19.6% during the same period. Every year, Washington has a need for 2,230 new registered nurses. According to the Washington Center for Nursing Education Master Plan (2008), Washington hospitals are consistently reporting a 3% shortage in their Registered Nurse (RN) vacancy rates. This urgent shortage of nurses is not being met by the current nursing training programs in our area. The Green River BSN program will produce qualified nurses to help to meet our region's high demand.

As it currently stands, very few of Green River's Practical Nursing students are being admitted into ADN programs at our neighboring colleges. That number decreases again when making the transition from the Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) to the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN). The funnel continues to get smaller, while demand for skilled nurses continues to grow, and students are the ones who are harmed in this process. The RN graduation rate in the state of Washington *must* increase by 400 students each year—for the next fifteen years—to meet employer demand, according to the Health Resources and Services Administration (2014). The current programs offered by Washington's state community and technical colleges cannot fulfill the demand in the market. Denying Green River's request is detrimental to both our students and the future health of Washingtonians.

Many of the students at Green River College attend the college because it is located in their community. For working students, an additional commute to pursue educational goals is difficult, if not impossible. Many students simply do not have the resources to travel to other campuses to continue their education. Requiring students to earn their Associate of Applied Science degree in Practical Nursing, then earn an Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN), and finally their Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), is an expensive route that forces students to jump through many hoops, and can take a prohibitively long time to complete. Green River's BSN proposal provides innovation to an outdated system; innovation that benefits students over inter-agency agreements.

It is for these reasons that we ask you to reconsider Green River College's application to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. We feel confident that you will make your decision based upon what best serves the mission of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), as well as our students.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrea Keikkala', written in a cursive style.

Andrea Keikkala
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