



WAYNE STATE
Office of the President

September 28, 2020

The Honorable Mike Shirkey
Senate Majority Leader
Michigan Senate
Lansing, MI

Dear Majority Leader Shirkey,

On behalf of our students, faculty, and leaders, Wayne State University would like to express our deep concern about and opposition to Senate Bill 1055 (Nesbitt). SB 1055 would allow community colleges to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree (BSN), while at the same time allow for the closure of existing Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) programs for “lack of demand.” We are concerned this legislation could lead to duplication of the current BSN programs offered throughout the state, decrease access for nursing students, and limit an essential pathway to achieving academic progression in the nursing profession.

Nursing programs’ capacity is controlled by the availability of faculty, clinical placement opportunities, and funding. We believe allowing a community college to offer a BSN program would have the unintended outcome of worsening the state’s current nursing faculty shortage, decreasing access to associate degree nursing programs, magnifying existing barriers like limited clinical sites, and increasing the overall cost of nursing education for students and taxpayers alike.

We are doing our part to help address the looming nurse faculty shortage, and encourage open dialogue on how to continue to invest in existing infrastructure and collaborative programming. WSU currently has one of the highest enrollments in the federally funded Nurse Faculty Loan Program, which creates a path to addressing the faculty shortage and allows eligible students who take on a faculty position to seek loan forgiveness. In addition, our BSN graduates continue to surpass the national average for first-time pass rate on the national nursing licensure exam, and over 70% of our graduates choose to stay in Michigan to work and live.

When it comes to community partnerships, Wayne State University has a long history of developing and fostering opportunities for students with community colleges. This includes robust articulation and transfer agreements that support the needs of students, allowing for a seamless transition to a four-year degree. Our strong relationships with community colleges include Wayne County Community College District (WCCCD), Oakland Community College (OCC), Schoolcraft College, Jackson College, Mid-Michigan College, Mott Community College, St. Clair County Community College, Washtenaw Community College, St. Clair College-Windsor, Macomb Community College, and many others across numerous educational fields.



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WSU has and continues to develop new articulation agreements and pathways to facilitate and streamline students' transition to completion of a Wayne State degree. We are always seeking to increase programs offered through articulation agreements, refining agreements to ensure they serve our students' needs and expanding access for students both on and off our campus. For example, in addition to an articulation agreement with WCCD for the Mortuary Science Program, we are in the process of finalizing one articulation for social work and one for engineering technology – welding. Further, both Wayne State University and WCCCD are a part of the Michigan Transfer Pathways initiative, which allows students to benefit from the pathways for business, criminal justice, and psychology. Finally, Wayne State University and WCCCD have a reverse transfer agreement, which allows students who have transferred prior to completing their associate's degree to transfer the credits they earn at WSU back to WCCCD and apply them towards the completion of their degree from WCCCD.

These are only a few examples of ways in which Wayne State and our community college partners collaborate to maximize opportunity for students and move us closer to our statewide goal of reaching 60% post-secondary degrees, certificates, or credentials by 2030.

We strongly oppose Senate Bill 1055, and alternatively invite this opportunity to discuss instead ways for enhanced partnerships and collaborative agreements to take the lead when it comes to creating pathways to student success.

Thank you for considering our position, and should you have questions or comments, please reach out to Vice President of Government and Community Affairs Patrick O. Lindsey at Patrick.Lindsey@wayne.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Roy Wilson'.

M. Roy Wilson
President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ramona Benkert'.

Ramona Benkert, PhD, ANP-BC, FAANP
Interim Dean and Associate Professor
College of Nursing