St. Charles
HEALTH SYSTEM

2500 NE Neff Road
Bend, Oregon 97701
541.382.4321
www.stcharleshealthcare.org

October 4, 2017

Kara A. Witzke, PH.D.
Assistant Dean
OSU Cascades
1500 Chandler Ave.
Bend, OR 97702

Dear Ms. Witzke and other interested parties,

St Charles Health System is committed to being an active partner in advancing opportunities to support the development of professional nurses in our region. Recognizing the current and future increases in the national shortage of nurses, St Charles nursing leadership understands the growing need in Central Oregon for bachelor's trained nurses in our healthcare workforce. St. Charles is committed to being an active partner in support of an RN to BSN program in partnership with OSU-Cascades. The St. Charles Vision is "to create America's heathiest community together" and we believe that by supporting this program, together St. Charles and OSU-Cascades will help to bridge the gap of need in our region for fully trained and professional nursing staff.

The limitations of living in a more rural setting lends perfectly to the options of online learning partnered with clinical rotations. The past success of the AHEC grant program to develop entry level RNs in rural communities also speaks to the community need and number of individual's ability to advance into a stable and satisfying health care career when the roadblocks of access and costs are removed.

The efficacy of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) recommendations for increasing the number of BSNs in the nursing workforce is demonstrated in the literature and the improvement in patient outcomes. In response to the IOM report, St Charles Health System has been committed to moving requirements for entry level nursing roles to the level of a bachelor's degree. We also actively encourage and support our current nursing workforce to advance their education to become BSNs. This has given marginal success in moving from 40% entry level BSN to approximately 50% of our current workforce being prepared as BSNs. This trend does not elevate our professional nursing workforce to meet the projected 2020 IOM goals. The continued challenge is the access to affordable programs in the Central Oregon Region.

As a part of the Higher Education Coordinating Committee, (HECC) St. Charles fully supports the OSU-Cascade proposed program to improve human health and wellness in Central Oregon. As

the Nurse Executive for St Charles I am writing this letter on behalf of our entire health system to demonstrate our specific support for the proposed Oregon State University's New Undergraduate Degree Program Proposal: RN to BSN Nursing Degree to advance and sustain our professional nursing workforce.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Pamela Steinke

Pamela Steinke MSN, RN CENP, CPHQ, FACHE
Chief Nurse Executive/VP Quality Management