

Cordelia Robinson Rosenberg PhD; R.N. Testimony in support of SB 16-196
Inclusive Higher Education for Colorado Students with Intellectual and Developmental
Disabilities.

I have asked that my testimony in support of SB 16-196 be read as I am not able to be there in person today.

My name is Cordelia Robinson Rosenberg and I am Professor of Pediatrics and Psychiatry at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. For 22 years, ending in June 2015, I was Director of JFK Partners, a School of Medicine program that includes federal funding for education, research and service regarding individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. If SB 16-196 passes, \$25,000 is allocated to the Board of Regents for the JFK/SOM program to conduct an evaluation of the Inclusive Higher Education program for Colorado students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

While I will direct this evaluation my reasons for supporting SB 16-196 are much broader. I believe it is in all of our interests for these students to have opportunities in Colorado to continue their learning. The benefits of having these opportunities in terms of employment and overall development have been well documented through the Think College program at the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts.

Other states have been providing inclusive higher education opportunities for their students with intellectual disabilities for a number of years. At professional meetings I have heard colleagues, both professionals and parents, speak to the benefits they have seen from these programs. The benefits are not just to the student with intellectual disabilities who are taking courses and having the unique social experiences of college life. The benefits come to their fellow students who learn from these classmates just as they learn from them. Benefits also come to faculty who comment that they become better teachers. In summary the consensus is very much in favor of the benefits of this type of program.

For this program to be successful it requires careful preparation and attention to details. We have benefited from the guidance from other school's experience. I applaud my colleagues at Arapahoe Community College, University of Colorado Colorado Springs and University of Northern Colorado for their commitment to doing this work. I think we all benefit the more this program grows. We will benefit as the students are able to become fully engaged in their communities of both work and play. I urge you to pass SB 16-196.

Thank you and again my regrets for not being there in person.