



Testimony before Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee – March 12, 2015

Good afternoon Sen. Bartolomeo, Rep. Willis, and members of the committee.

I am Susan Pease, Dean of the Ammon College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences at Central Connecticut State University (CCSU). I am here to testify today in support of **SB 898, An Act Concerning Professional Doctoral Degree Programs**. With me, in case you have any questions, is Ruth Rollin, coordinator of our Master of Science program in Anesthesia.

CCSU has offered a Master of Science in Biological Sciences with a specialization in Anesthesia since 1982. Over the last five years, the master's program in nurse anesthesia has produced 26-38 graduates each year, making it one of the most productive graduate programs at CCSU. Fifty-one percent of those graduates were Connecticut residents. All of CCSU's anesthesia graduates find employment, and most students in our program make employment commitments prior to graduating. The remaining graduates make employment commitments within a month of graduation. Clearly, the demand for well-prepared nurse anesthetists is very strong and will persist.

We are the only public university in the northeast to provide a program in nurse anesthesia. But, as detailed in our proposal, changes in the national accreditation of nurse anesthetists compel changes in our program offerings. The Council on Accreditation (COA) of Nurse Anesthesia Education recently enacted a new requirement that entry-level nurse anesthetists must hold the doctoral degree by 2025.

Therefore, as of January 1, 2022, students accepted into accredited entry-level nurse anesthesia programs will be required to graduate with doctoral degrees. In the meantime, before 2022, we must immediately begin awarding doctoral degrees to nurse anesthetists in order to ensure a critical number of qualified personnel to serve as faculty and program directors in the profession. The specialization in anesthesia at CCSU would cease to exist if we do not respond to the new accreditation requirements because individuals will have to have a doctoral degree in order to become Board certified to practice as nurse anesthetists. Thus a critically important pipeline for supplying hospitals and healthcare facilities with qualified practitioners would be closed. The healthcare consequences for Connecticut and the region would be dire.

I strongly encourage the committee to support this proposal so that this pipeline remains open, and students continue to have an affordable public option in pursuit of this specialty.

Thank you.

Dr. Susan E. Pease has served as dean of the Carol A. Ammon College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences since 2002. She is responsible for 21 departments representing a range of disciplines in the fine arts, the humanities, the social and behavioral sciences. Her duties include developing and evaluating curriculum, supporting faculty scholarship and outreach, and working with other academic deans on university-wide policy issues as a member of the Academic Affairs Council of Deans.