



**Testimony of Goodwin College in Support of H.B. 5071 – An Act  
Requiring Connecticut To Participate In The State Authorization  
Reciprocity Agreement Regarding Distance Learning Programs**

**The Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee  
Meeting – Thursday, February 18, 2016**

Goodwin College, with over 3500 students, is a four-year, private, non-profit institution of higher education located in East Hartford Connecticut. Over 97% of Goodwin Students are Connecticut residents who come from 136 of the state's 169 cities and towns.

Goodwin College supports H.B. 5071 which will allow Connecticut's institutions of higher education to participate in a voluntary state authorization reciprocity agreement (SARA).

Goodwin College serves a diverse student population whose average age is 29 years old. This student demographic is likely to already be members of the work force while concurrently attending college. The Goodwin Online Services Studies Department has created numerous online courses to serve this population. Of note, included in these offerings, is a course that allows a current Registered Nurse (RN) the ability to earn a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing (BSN) completely on-line.

Distance Learning makes it possible for students almost everywhere to earn college credits while balancing work, family and other responsibilities. However, the inconsistent regulations created by each

state make it very difficult to expand on-line education programs to students who reside outside of the state.

Almost every state regulates these types of distance learning programs differently. Each state, for example, has its own definition what it means to have a physical presence, as well as its own application process and fees. Some even require approval of multiple governing entities.

Goodwin College has received online course authorization or an exemption in several states. However without Connecticut's SARA participation, the procedure to do so proves to be both burdensome and inefficient.

The State of Connecticut's adoption of SARA would allow Goodwin as well as other Connecticut institutions of higher learning to more easily offer our on-line programs to a wider audience while still maintaining program integrity.

It is fair to assume that if Connecticut adopts SARA and its colleges and universities expand their online learning programs that these schools would need to hire additional faculty to administer such programs.

Connecticut is one of only a handful of states that is not currently a SARA state or working to become a SARA member state.

Goodwin College is eager to begin the process of becoming a SARA approved school and accordingly encourages the Planning and Development Committee to support HB 5071.

**Gary Minor**

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