

### C-1.3 General Public Comment Closing Remarks from President

#### Background Information for Tool

*The Public Comment Period required in Ohio is a 10-day period during which others can state their case for support or concerns with new program proposals. BSNs at CCs became a highly sensitive issue. There were multiple comments over the 10-day period from former students, university and community college leaders, doctors, hospital CEOs and CNOs. As you may imagine, there were very positive and negative comments. The President's closing remarks were an attempt to show empathy for those with concerns, yet demonstrate strength in our approach to meet the needs of the health care industry and the diverse population of students that we serve – all designed to open doors of opportunities for equitable access. The Chancellor approved the three CCs' BSN proposals to be posted on the ODHE website for public comment. Just like the general response to those who commented, the response from the President was provided so as not to be confrontational, but rather understanding, supportive, and educational in nature.*

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As the Rhodes State College President, I want to thank everyone for taking the time to submit your comments regarding BSNs offered at Ohio Community Colleges. I know that there are many opinions across all individuals who have responded. Many of those are based on an individual's experience, where you work or what you have heard. Let me first share a clarifying fact. After our conversation with the Chancellor at the Ohio Department of Higher Education, Rhodes State went back to edit its original proposal to further clarify and address questions that were the focus of many four-year colleges and universities. Facts were updated and restated and are included in the revised March proposal.

What I do want to focus on, however, is that as we work together and support each other, Ohio's higher education institutions does a great job in helping the communities in which we live, learn, work, and often get sick and need health care support. Robert Ingersoll once said, "We rise by lifting others." I have read and watched throughout this process with a heart of kindness toward all - students with diverse needs, the health care industry, administrators, legislators, trustees, nurses, instructors, and doctors. I can say, that as President of Rhodes State College, the values of our institution are near and dear to my heart. Those values heavily considered, throughout our BSN proposal preparation, include:

1. **Equity:** Committing to programs, services, policies and practices which support the successful entry and participation of diverse populations.
2. **Quality:** Providing excellence in programs and services that exceeds expectations.

**3. Innovation:** Responding with agility, urgency, and design, bringing value to our internal and external communities.

**4. Passion:** Expressing an enthusiastic and caring "fire" that brings meaning to our work and makes a positive difference in the lives of others.

We acknowledge that there are many wonderful institutions of higher education in Ohio. That is a fact. But, most of us also know that not all institutions meet the needs of every student profile. Thus we want to provide an equitable opportunity that supports students normally not admitted into selective four-year programs. We have worked with our local health care providers to identify their needs as employers and discussed your concerns regarding clinical capacity and laid out an innovative approach to that concern. The BSN opportunity was provided by the State, as it has been in other states and we were already preparing an innovative and unique approach to both the RN to BSN and the Pre-licensure BSN.

Rhodes State has researched, planned, and collaborated with a sincere and transparent desire to be a partner in helping to add BSNs to this region - along with the excellent universities in the area. The agreements we have with several private universities will be maintained - one of which has their university students (who live on the university campus) take our ADN classes and then finish their BSN at the university, where they live, learn, and engage on that university campus.

There is indeed a need in this region, we have the qualified faculty, facilities, technology and the support of our local health care partners. I just spoke with a prominent hospital this morning who again stated, "We have plenty of clinical sites and will ensure that students from all institutions can be served." I strongly believe that working together we can address the needs in our local health care industry and communities, while providing the diverse student populations that we all serve an opportunity that they have not had for a variety of reasons. So, with a heart of kindness, again I quote, "We rise by lifting others."