



PRESS RELEASE

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Twelve California Community Colleges receive final approval from Board of Governors to offer bachelor's degrees

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The California Community Colleges Board of Governors gave final approval on Monday for 12 community colleges to participate in a landmark pilot program that allows them to offer bachelor's degrees in fields such as respiratory therapy, dental hygiene and aerospace manufacturing technology.

“This is an appropriate expansion of our mission designed to meet the needs of an economy that is requiring more workers with four-year degrees,” said Geoffrey L. Baum, president of the Board of Governors. “We have consulted closely with the leadership of the California State University system throughout this process and are pleased to approve these innovative pilot programs that will provide students with affordable degree options in fields that have demonstrated job growth.”

Initial approval was granted in January, pending additional evaluation of the proposals by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and further consultation with California State University and the University of California.

The bachelor's degree programs receiving final approval are:

- Airframe manufacturing technology, Antelope Valley College
- Industrial automation, Bakersfield College
- Mortuary science, Cypress College
- Equine industry, Feather River College
- Dental hygiene (2), Foothill College and West Los Angeles College
- Bio-manufacturing, Mira Costa College
- Respiratory care (2), Modesto Junior College and Skyline College
- Health information management, Mesa College
- Occupational studies, Santa Ana College
- Health information management, Shasta College

“After undergoing additional review by our office, these bachelor’s degree programs are set to gear up and enroll students who are looking for affordable options to earn four-year degrees. We’re excited to expand higher education opportunities in our system and help fuel California’s economy,” said Chancellor Brice W. Harris.

Bachelor’s degree proposals in interaction design at Santa Monica College and automotive technology at Rio Hondo College received initial approval but will require further conversations related to duplication with the California State University before final consideration later this spring. A bachelor’s degree program in emergency services and allied health systems was approved in January but has since been withdrawn by Crafton Hills Community College.

The board action is in response to legislation sponsored by Sen. Marty Block (D-San Diego) and signed by the governor last year that allows up to 15 districts to establish a pilot baccalaureate degree program at one of their colleges in a field of study not offered by the California State University or University of California. Lower-division coursework would cost \$46 per unit and upper-division coursework would cost an additional \$84 per unit under the new program, with an estimated total cost of about \$10,000 to obtain a bachelor’s degree.

The college districts selected for the pilot program were chosen from 34 applications. A team comprised of Chancellor’s Office staff, a member of the business and workforce community, and community college administrators, faculty and staff from districts that did not apply to host a program reviewed the applications.

Considerations for selecting a district included geographic distribution of the pilot programs, diversity of pilot programs, ability of the district to establish a rigorous program in their proposed field and that the proposed program will meet an unaddressed local or statewide workforce need.

Under the law the four-year degree programs must be up and running by at least the 2017-18 academic year, however, districts may start their programs by the fall 2015 semester. Districts must also seek approval from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges to start a program.

The legislation sunsets after the 2022-23 school year, after which the Legislature and governor may renew it pending two Legislative Analyst’s Office reviews of the pilot program- one in 2018 and another in 2022.

The law was enacted to assist the state in meeting the need for individuals in high demand technical disciplines which are increasingly requiring baccalaureate degrees and to increase college participation rates and improve workforce training opportunities for local residents who are unable to relocate because of family or work commitments.

The California Community Colleges is the largest system of higher education in the nation composed of 72 districts and 112 colleges serving 2.1 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills education and prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions. The Chancellor’s Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. For more information about the community colleges, please visit <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/>, <https://www.facebook.com/CACommColleges>, or <https://twitter.com/CalCommColleges>.

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