

## **FACCC Statement on Baccalaureate Degree Programs**

The California Community Colleges Baccalaureate Degree Pilot Program was created by SB 850 (Block) in 2014. At the time that SB 850 was considered and passed, several faculty organizations within the California Community Colleges system opposed the bill and the creation of the CCC baccalaureate degrees, including the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (FACCC), the Community College Association branch of the California Teachers Association (CCA/CTA), and the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC).

In fall of 2019, the Academic Senate reversed its opposition to the baccalaureate degrees, especially with regard to allied health programs. Nevertheless, many community college faculty continue to express concerns about expanding the mission of the California Community Colleges. Several new bills dealing with community college baccalaureate degrees are currently under consideration by the legislature. One of these bills would extend the existing sunset date for the pilot programs, one would eliminate the sunset altogether, one would eliminate the pilot program status, and others are spot bills.

Like the development of all new programs, baccalaureate degrees are an academic and professional matter that falls under the purview of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. CCC Board of Governors Standing Order 332 (c) states, "Throughout the Consultation Process, the advice and judgment of the Academic Senate will be primarily relied upon whenever the policy involves an academic and professional matter." FACCC continues to collaborate with the ASCCC to ensure that any discussions of baccalaureate degree programs rely primarily upon the faculty voice represented by the Academic Senate.

**FACCC acknowledges the following issues that may lead some policy voices and other organizations to entertain or encourage further exploration and development of community college baccalaureate degrees:**

- Some significant high-demand needs of the state are not being fully served by the University of California and California State University systems, especially in fields such as allied health.
- Some areas of the state are in need of four-year degree options locally, either because the local University of California or California State University are highly impacted in terms of capacity or because public universities are too far removed geographically from the region.

- With appropriate planning, community college baccalaureate degree programs could provide viable public alternatives that would help to alleviate exorbitant student debt from private institutions.

**However, FACCC also maintains the following concerns that should be addressed in any further consideration of expanding or continuing community college baccalaureate degree programs:**

- Many faculty question whether the community college system has the fiscal resources to support development of new baccalaureate degree programs that would siphon funds from existing and already underfunded programs.
  - Baccalaureate degree programs would in many cases require additional equipment, facilities, and staff. Resources would be needed to support such programs, and to date none of the bills involving baccalaureate degrees has provided additional resources.
  - The California Community Colleges system has long been and remains grossly underfunded. Under the Student Centered Funding Formula instituted in 2018, numerous colleges are already operating under a hold harmless provision. Community colleges in California are already stretched to their budgetary limits.
- The development of baccalaureate degrees constitutes a significant expansion of the mission of the California Community Colleges as outlined in California Education Code §66010.4. This expansion has come without additional resources or support and without proper involvement of all system constituencies in the process of evaluating such expansion.
- Current per student funding for community college baccalaureate degree programs has not matched the level of funding provided to the California State University system. Thus, community colleges are being asked to perform the same function as the CSU system with fewer resources, which is an untenable situation in terms of both academic quality and equity.
- Previous and currently proposed legislation provide no mechanisms to ensure that districts do not inappropriately impact programs that serve existing needs in an effort to chase after new baccalaureate programs that may be more glamorous or newsworthy but less essential to the community and less in line with the colleges' primary mission.
- Each proposed baccalaureate degree program should be required to demonstrate community and regional need in order to ensure that colleges are not creating niche programs but are basing program creation on realistic cost-to-benefit expectations. While market demand was an aspect of the application process for

the initial baccalaureate degree pilot program, one may easily question the true value of several of the programs that were included in the pilot.

- SB 850 (Block, 2104) prohibited the duplication of programs offered by the University of California and California State University systems, but the definition of duplication was vague and has allowed the universities to exercise veto power over proposed community college baccalaureate programs, thus inhibiting the ability for these programs to properly serve the needs of the state and of local communities. A formal definition of duplication that would allow for greater flexibility in serving regional needs would make the baccalaureate degrees more effective and vital.