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April 17, 2020

Senator Jerry Hill
State Capitol, Room 5035
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Ben Hueso
State Capitol, Room 4035
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Scott Wilk
State Capitol, Room 3063
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 874 (Hill, Hueso, Wilk) Community College Districts: Statewide Baccalaureate Degree Pilot Program

Position: Support if Amended

Dear Senator Hill, Senator Hill, and Senator Wilk:

The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges wishes to express its support for SB 874 (Hill, as of 22 March 2020), if amended to remove the "nonduplication with California State University" provision within the bill. SB874 would remove the pilot designation from the current fifteen community college baccalaureate degree programs as well as expanding that program to authorize additional districts and colleges to apply to the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges for approval of additional baccalaureate degree programs.

Studies over the past several years have identified the need for over one million bachelor's degree holders in California in the coming decade, especially in workforce fields. In 2014, in order to help address this shortfall, the legislature passed and the governor signed SB 850 (Block, 2014), authorizing up to fifteen community college districts to offer baccalaureate degrees provided that they did not duplicate programs already offered in the University of California and the California State University systems. The programs that were created, including programs in allied health, biotechnology, and auto technology among others, have enabled colleges to offer an advanced educational opportunity to students who otherwise might not be able to access a baccalaureate program, including students that cannot travel to achieve their educational goals.

In the last decade, more than twenty states have added baccalaureate degrees to their community college systems, recognizing the need for a more highly educated workforce; indeed, the Public Policy Institute of California found in its 2015 report that to keep up with the demand for a college-educated workforce, California would need to increase the number of bachelor's degrees awarded by 40%.¹ Programs around the country provide greater access and affordability to students while still retaining academic rigor and strong skills building. In the recent Legislative Analyst report, the authors commended the academic rigor of the programs in California and recognized that 83% of their graduates were employed within three months of completing their degrees, with most of those graduates employed in the same field of study as that in which they had completed their baccalaureates. Clearly, these programs are proving to be a valuable asset to the students and the communities they serve.

At its Fall 2019 Plenary Session, the ASCCC passed two resolutions. The first, resolution, 6.01 (F19). asked the delegates to reverse their previously held position opposing baccalaureate degrees in the community college system. The resolution also asked for the term "pilot" to be taken out of the descriptions of these programs going forward. Both sections of the resolution passed.

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The second resolution, 6.02 (F19), asked that the legislature pass legislation to allow for the expansion of the current baccalaureate program, with a particular emphasis given to programs in allied health. The Covid-19 crisis has demonstrated how desperately California needs additional trained allied health personnel; additional baccalaureate programs across the board, including programs which might be duplicative of those offered by CSU, are necessary to ensure that California can meet the demands of their communities and the populations around the state. Nearly 70% of our state's first-responders were trained at the California Community Colleges and we are well equipped to meet that demand for additional work-force training in allied health. For students that are place-bound due to family restrictions or other issues and who live in areas with no local public four-year university, choices often come down to a for-profit or a private institution, neither of which are economically feasible for many students. The inequity in access, particularly for lower income students, along with the fact that programs at the CSU have multi-year waiting lists for acceptance further disenfranchises students seeking to transfer from the community college system. The ASCCC asserts that to meet the needs of all California residents, comply with advancing national expectations for baccalaureate education in allied health, and ensure equitable access free from proprietary institutions, the California Community Colleges should offer baccalaureate education in allied health fields. For this reason, we would respectfully request that the language restricting duplication with the California State University found in the current bill be removed.

For these reasons, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges expresses its willingness and intent to support Senate Bill 874 (Hill, as of 22 March 2020), if the bill is amended to remove the restriction regarding duplication of programs.

Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions.

Respectfully,



John Stankas, President

Cc: Honorable Anthony Rendon, Speaker of the Assembly
Honorable Jose Medina, Chair, Assembly Higher Education Committee
Honorable Toni Atkins, Senate President Pro Tempore
Honorable Connie Leyva, Chair, Senate Education Committee
Lande Ajose, Senior Policy Advisor for Higher Education
Joey Freeman, Chief Deputy Legislative Affairs Secretary for Policy
Chris Ferguson, Department of Finance
Paul Steenhausen, Legislative Analyst's Office
Monica Henestroza, Special Assistant to Assemblymember Rendon
Jeanice Warden, Chief Consultant, Assembly Committee on Higher Education
Megan Baier, Educational Consultant, Senator Atkins
Olgalilia Ramirez, Consultant, Senate Committee on Education
Anita Lee, Consultant, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
Mark Martin, Consultant for the Budget Committee on Higher Education
Tom Epstein, President, California Community Colleges Board of Governors
Eloy Ortiz Oakley, Chancellor, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
Daisy Gonzales, Deputy Chancellor, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
Marty Alvarado, Executive Vice Chancellor, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
David O'Brien, Vice Chancellor of Government Relations, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

<https://www.ppic.org/publication/will-california-run-out-of-college-graduates>