

Minimum Degree Requirements for Tenure in the California Community Colleges

One of the major issues discussed by the Californians, a group comprised of representatives from CCC/CFT, CCA/CTA, CACC, CCCT, ACCCA, CEOs, and the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, involved the baccalaureate degree as a minimum requirement for tenure in the California Community Colleges. Representatives from the Occupational Education Coalition appeared to testify in opposition to the baccalaureate requirement, saying that it would seriously impair the colleges' ability to hire well-qualified vocational instructors, especially in the trade and industrial areas.

In adopting the baccalaureate provision, the Californians agreed to a 5-year implementation date of 1993. That means that faculty members hired in 1993 will have to have a baccalaureate degree to be eligible for tenure within four years of that date. This 5-year implementation date, then, gives the colleges sufficient time to advertise the new requirement so that prospective instructors are fully informed prior to their time of hire. In addition, it provides ample opportunity for those considering teaching at a community college to acquire a bachelor's degree prior to the time of hire.

Two surveys were instrumental in the decision to maintain the baccalaureate as a minimum qualification for tenure. First, Keith Nason, from the CCC/CFT, collected information from seven sample colleges: Columbia, Fullerton, DeAnza, Laney, Los Angeles Trade-Technical, Modesto, and Solano. This sample includes urban, suburban, and rural colleges from different areas of the state. The data included only faculty teaching in occupational areas, and these were divided between trade/industrial classes and other vocational classes for which a bachelor's degree is readily available, such as business, computer science, agriculture, and the health professions. This informal survey of 207 currently employed full-time faculty members reveals the following:

No degree	AA degree	BA degree	MA degree or higher
53=26%	42=20%	49=24%	63=30%

The Californians considered the figures with Los Angeles Trade Technical College removed from the mix. The total number of faculty drops to 115, and the figures shift:

No degree	AA degree	BA degree	MA degree or higher
20=18%	13=12%	32=28%	40=35%

A survey of 274 trade and industrial faculty hired within the last five years, conducted by Ed Bush, an administrator in the Long Beach Community College District revealed the following:

No degree	AA degree	BA degree	MA degree or higher
25=9%	33=12%	89=32.5%	127=46.3%

Clearly the trend has been for increasing numbers of faculty members in the trade and industrial area to come to the community colleges with baccalaureate or higher degrees. Almost 80% of the faculty hired within the last five years have a bachelor's degree or higher at the time of hire. One possible problem area involves the part-time faculty, and members of the Californians agreed that statistics for this group could look significantly different from those for full-time faculty. Since part-time faculty do not, however, acquire tenure, the question of the baccalaureate for them is not relevant.

The Californians debated long and hard the possible merits and drawbacks to this reform issue and did not easily reach the recommendation for a 5-year implementation date of the baccalaureate degree as a minimum qualification for tenure.