



# Top 10 Reasons to Champion Community College Bachelor's Degrees



Bachelor's Degree Programs close equity gaps, address workforce demands and lead to better wages and social mobility for Californians.

## 1 They help advance the State's vision for higher education.

The *Roadmap for the Future*, enacted in 2022, proposes a bold goal of **70% of adults having a college degree or certificate by 2030**. To achieve this goal, California must continue to expand workforce-focused baccalaureate programs in our community college system.

## 2 They are affordable and help keep students out of debt.

Students can earn a four-year degree for a total of just \$10,560– less than half the tuition at even the most affordable public universities. Students will graduate with less debt and will draw down less in state financial aid dollars. In fact, **72% of students reported taking out no student loan debt to finance their education**.

## 3 They graduate students into high-paying, high-skill jobs.

According to the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office, students\* in California Community Colleges baccalaureate programs reported that their income **increased by an average of \$28,000 annually** after graduating; **nearly 98% of graduates\* reported that they were employed in their field of study** after graduation.

## 4 They are unique, and do not duplicate or compete with California's four-year universities.

These are applied, workforce-oriented baccalaureate programs that focus on local and regional workforce needs. Colleges that seek to establish a program must consult with four-year universities to ensure that their proposed program is not duplicative.

## 5 They are helping California address the effects of climate change.

Climate change driven Wildfires, have become an unfortunate fact of life in California. In rural Plumas County, a more than two-hour drive from the nearest public four-year university campus, a new program in Ecosystem Restoration and Applied Fire will ensure that students in this underserved community have an opportunity to be on the front lines of wildfire prevention and suppression.

## 6 They are training the next generation to address California's top issues.

San Diego City College is establishing a Bachelor of Science in Cyber Defense and Analysis, which could not be more relevant at a time of growing cybersecurity threats, including hacking and the threat of global cyber warfare. Bakersfield College is pursuing a program in Police Science, following recent legislation designed to reduce implicit bias and systemic racism in policing.

## 7 They have strong support from elected policymakers.

Senate Bill 850 (Block, 2014), which established a pilot program of 15 community college baccalaureate degree programs, passed the Legislature *unanimously* and was signed by Gov. Jerry Brown; Assembly Bill 927 (Medina, 2021), which removed the pilot status and authorized community colleges to expand baccalaureate programs, also passed the Legislature *unanimously* before being signed into law by Gov. Gavin Newsom.

## 8 They reduce equity gaps.

**63% of students in the pilot cohort were students of color, and 75% belonged to one or more underrepresented groups** – they were a first-generation college student, received federal financial aid, reported struggling financially or experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity, indicated a disability, or were a military veteran. A majority\* reported that they would not have pursued a bachelor's degree at all if not for the opportunity provided by their local community college, which oftentimes is the closest option, as many communities cannot afford to move to attend a four-year institution.



## 9 They keep California competitive amidst a growing national trend of community colleges offering bachelor's degrees.

California is one of 25 states that authorize community colleges to offer baccalaureate programs; several of the largest states, including Florida, Ohio, and Texas, have authorized their entire community college system to offer these unique programs. California cannot fall behind the rest of the nation and risk more high-wage, skilled jobs and industries moving out of state.

## 10 They help keep college graduates in California.

At a time when California's population growth has slowed, community college baccalaureate programs help graduates remain in California and employed in their field of study. An astonishing **95% of graduates have remained in California** after receiving a community college baccalaureate degree.

**BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROGRAMS AT CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES MEET DEMAND, ADDRESS INEQUITIES AND HELP CREATE A MORE ROBUST ECONOMY.**