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California Community Colleges Board of Governors

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Testimony Regarding the Community College Baccalaureate Issue

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One of the most forward-looking and significant actions taken this year was the formation by the Board of Governors and Chancellor Brice Harris of the Baccalaureate Degree Study Group, which was charged with exploring the issues involved in the prospect of California's authorizing community colleges to offer bachelor's degrees in selected workforce fields. I was pleased to serve on the Study Group and I look forward to continuing to support this important project in any way that I can.

There are many critical issues facing the California Community Colleges at this time, and it would be tempting to put off considering another issue. However, this particular issue is at the very heart of our purpose: providing accessible, high-quality, and relevant instruction, especially instruction that prepares students for jobs. There are three compelling reasons for addressing this matter now.

First, industry standards have changed and are changing rapidly in a number of fields. Where once the associate degree was the entry point into certain professions, the eligibility floor is moving or, in some cases, has already moved to the baccalaureate level. This is a reality and it is something that our students are confronting now. Let me share some examples.

Until the last few years, the associate degree (ADN) was the entry degree for registered nurses (RNs) in California and nationally. The bachelor's degree (BSN) was largely designed for nurses who advanced to the supervisory level. That has changed. The nursing and medical professions have openly called for hospitals to employ 80% BSN-trained registered nurses by the year 2020. For magnet hospitals, the goal is 100%. ADN nurses are already being passed

over in favor of BSN nurse applicants. A recent article in *The American Nurse*, the official publication of the American Nurses Association, presents the latest statistics on new RN graduate hiring. BSN-prepared graduates are hired twice as often (60% to 30%) as ADN graduates, primarily due to preferential hiring for baccalaureate graduates.

In my remarks this morning, I will also refer to four other fields in which the bachelor's degree is now sought at the entry level: dental hygiene, radiologic technology, health information science/informatics, and automotive technology.

The change in industry eligibility standards, from the associate degree to the bachelor's degree, represents an enormous "climate change" in workforce education, which cannot be ignored. Community colleges, known for being nimble and agile in meeting workforce needs, are now challenged to address this major change in entry-level workforce eligibility.

Second, bachelor's degree programs in public universities in many of these fields either do not have the capacity to enroll and educate the numbers of students who need to pursue bachelor's programs beyond the associate degree level or may not exist at all. For example, in nursing, the 19 BSN programs offered by the California State University campuses and the 2 programs offered by the University of California cannot possibly accommodate the graduates of the more than 70 ADN programs offered by California's community colleges.

For dental hygiene, there are no public universities in California that offer bachelor's degrees in this field. In the field of radiologic technology, there are only two CSU campuses that offer bachelor's degrees. In health information science/informatics, a growing field that will further increase due to the Affordable Care Act, there are only two CSU and one UC bachelor's programs. In automotive technology, there are no bachelor's degrees offered by public universities. The alternative for students who cannot be accommodated in their bachelor's degree goals is to pursue their education at very high-cost, for-profit or non-profit private institutions. Clearly there needs to be a strong effort to provide California with the trained workforce it requires by providing access to public higher education programs. Community colleges could and should be institutions that fill this gap.

Third, the notion of the community college baccalaureate is not new. At the present time, 21 states have taken progressive action and authorized their community colleges to offer baccalaureate programs in selected workforce fields, with a great record of success and a great record of positive impact upon their economies. Here are the states that have made this authorization, as well as the year in which this was done:

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| 1. New York | 1970 |
| 2. West Virginia | 1990 |
| 3. Utah | 1992 |
| 4. Vermont | 1993 |
| 5. Florida | 1997 |
| 6. Nevada | 1998 |

7. Louisiana	2001
8. Hawaii	2003
9. Texas	2003
10. Minnesota	2003
11. New Mexico	2004
12. Indiana	2004
13. Washington	2005
14. Georgia	2005
15. North Dakota	2006
16. Arkansas	2006
17. Oklahoma	2006
18. Wisconsin	2010
19. Illinois	2012
20. Michigan	2012
21. Colorado	2014

The national Community College Baccalaureate Association provides extensive information about the 465 workforce programs that are offered by the 50 community colleges involved. There is also an abundance of information regarding successful funding and staffing strategies, as well as about other program details.

Let me close by saying that this issue is not about changing the community college mission. It is not about turning community colleges into four-year institutions. It is about one thing and one thing only: preparing students for the 21st century workforce in an accessible, affordable, practical, and high quality manner. Given the changes and demands of industry, educational formats that were used fifty to a hundred years ago no longer provide a competitive pathway for our students, as 21 other states have addressed, and as our students are now experiencing when they are turned away from job opportunities or forced to go into debt in pursuit of private educational options.

Thank you for letting me share my thoughts with you and thank you for your willingness to consider a major system leadership issue that has enormous potential for our students and our state. I strongly recommend that you move ahead with steps to develop a baccalaureate option for our community colleges.

I have also attached a report I prepared, which contains additional information.

Thank you.