



COLORADO COMMUNITY
COLLEGE SYSTEM

Dr. Nancy J. McCallin, President

February 22, 2013

Dear Members of the Colorado General Assembly:

The Colorado Community College System is the largest higher education provider in the state of Colorado, serving more than 163,000 students of diverse background at thirteen colleges throughout the state. Each year, system staff meets with the presidents of the colleges to set our legislative agenda for the upcoming session. This year our college presidents and the system president decided it was critical to initiate legislation allowing our community colleges to offer a limited number of four-year baccalaureate degrees, up to ten.

This letter is to ask for your support for Senate Bill 13-165, "Concerning Authorizing a Limited Number of Baccalaureate Degrees that May Be Offered in the Community College System." The bill's sponsors are Senator Nancy Todd and Representative Jim Wilson. We believe that this bill would greatly benefit students throughout the state and assist businesses in workforce development needs.

There are many reasons we believe this bill is necessary. First, Senate Bill 13-165 is intended to provide affordable access to a four-year degree in a career, technical, or workforce field for students who are unable to leave home, usually because of family and/or work commitments. This is especially true for our students in rural communities.

Second, one of the primary goals in the Colorado Commission on Higher Education's master plan is to increase post-secondary educational attainment. This bill provides additional, flexible pathways for Coloradans to complete their degrees.

Third, the bill specifically states that we would develop programs that are sufficiently distinguishable from degree programs offered by a four-year institution, such as dental hygiene, and programs that are restricted to the career and technical fields or in the workforce development area. It is not our intention to compete with other institutions of higher education in the liberal arts fields.

We also believe that the program approval process by the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, and the accrediting agencies puts in place the proper review of the plans to prevent any unnecessary duplication of programs. The requirements found in Senate Bill 13-165, unlike those found in current statutory degree program authorization, ensure that these technical-focused degrees are in demand in both the workforce and the student body, while being cost effective. The college would then present the plan to our governing board and the Commission for final approval.

Twenty-one other states have implemented this or a similar policy for their higher education systems with great success for the students. In 2010, Colorado Mountain College passed legislation allowing it to offer up to five baccalaureate degrees in its service area. This bill is similar, but has many more restrictions.

In summary, we ask that you support Senate Bill 13-165 because of the benefits it would provide to our current and future students. The bill addresses two of our critical statutory missions: workforce development and access. It also provides students another option to earn a high quality and affordable higher education degree.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Dr. Nancy J. McCallin
President
Colorado Community College System



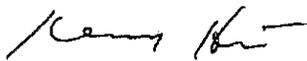
Dr. Diana Doyle
President
Arapahoe Community College



Alton Scales
President
Community College of Aurora



Andy Dorsey
President
Front Range Community College



Dr. Kerry Hart
President
Morgan Community College



Russell George
President
Colorado Northwestern Community
College



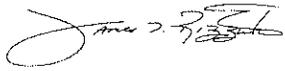
Cliff Richardson
Interim President
Community College of Denver



John Marrin
President
Lamar Community College



Jay Lee
President
Northeastern Junior College



Jim Rizzuto
President
Otero Junior College



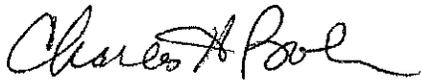
Dr. Lance Bolton
President
Pikes Peak Community College



Patty Erjavec
President
Pueblo Community College



Dr. Michele Haney
President
Red Rocks Community College



Dr. Chuck Bohlen
Interim President
Trinidad State Junior College