



COLORADO COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE SYSTEM

**SB 13-165: CONCERNING AUTHORIZING A LIMITED NUMBER OF BACCALAUREATE DEGREES  
THAT MAY BE OFFERED IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM.  
SENATOR NANCY TODD AND REPRESENTATIVE JIM WILSON**

The Colorado Community College System (CCCS) is Colorado's largest higher education provider with 13 colleges throughout the state serving more than 163,000 students annually. The CCCS is designed to provide accessible, affordable, high quality, postsecondary educational programs that ultimately provide a well-qualified Colorado workforce.

CCCS institutions should play a vital role in the state's effort to expand Coloradan's access to post-secondary education and increase baccalaureate degree production by offering a limited number of high-demand baccalaureate degrees. The legislation allows the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education to seek approval from the Colorado Commission on Higher Education for up to 10 baccalaureate degrees that may be offered at multiple CCCS colleges throughout Colorado.

***Why Offer A Limited Number of Baccalaureate Degrees at Colorado Community Colleges?***

- **Improved Access to the Baccalaureate Degree:** The limited number of baccalaureate degree programs offered by Colorado Community Colleges will increase educational opportunities for place-bound students, particularly in the State's rural areas where there is no access to four-year institutions. Colorado has one of the largest gaps in educational attainment in rural versus urban areas.
- **Ability to Meet Local Workforce Demands:** Colorado Community Colleges have always collaborated with local employers to develop degree and certificate programs that respond to specific local workforce needs. Offering specific baccalaureate degrees in high-demand fields not currently offered in the state or region is important in meeting local economic development needs.
- **Expertise in Applied and Technical Degrees:** Traditionally, applied associate degrees offered by community colleges have been the industry standard for employment in technical industry clusters. Some high-skill careers are increasingly requiring a baccalaureate for job entry or promotion. The community college faculty members have the expertise and industry specific knowledge to design and implement very specific applied baccalaureate degrees.
- **Closing The Achievement Gap:** For first generation and underserved students the opportunity to continue their academic pathway in a familiar community and college setting makes it more likely that the students will persist in college and earn a 4-year degree. CCCS serves 52% of the state's minority students.
- **Responsive to State Interests:** Community College baccalaureate degrees will respond to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education's master plan goals to increase the attainment of high quality post-secondary credentials across the academic disciplines and throughout Colorado by at least 1,000 new certificates and degrees each year to meet anticipated workforce demands and to enhance access to, and through, post-secondary education to ensure that the system reflects the changing demographics of the state while reducing attainment gaps among students from underserved communities.

***How Will Quality Assurance Be Guaranteed?***

- Colorado colleges and universities fall under the governance of The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA). Any baccalaureate degree program proposed by a community college within CCCS would require the approval of this accrediting body. The accreditation process requires submittal of a comprehensive written analysis, site visit and peer review.
- All CCCS college baccalaureate degrees must be approved to the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education and the Commission on Higher Education following criteria outlined in the proposed legislation.



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- Colorado Community Colleges have five primary roles in Colorado's education system:
  - Technical Education, Career (formerly Vocational) Education, Workforce Development Education, Remedial Education and Transfer programs.
  - SB 13-165 allows Community Colleges to offer up to **10 degree programs** in only Technical, Career (Vocational) and Workforce Development areas
- The Colorado Community College system offers affordable degrees for in-demand workforce and career areas. SB 13-165 addresses the demand for technical programs not offered by four-year institutions.
- SB 13-165 includes criteria designed to ensure efficient use of resources without overlap with other institutions. The criteria that the community colleges must utilize to gain approval from the Colorado Commission on Higher Education include:
  - Demonstrated workforce and student demand,
  - Compliance with relevant accreditation standards,
  - A showing that the proposed program is cost-effective,
  - That the programs is sufficiently distinguishable from a degree program offered by a four year institution in the community college's geographic service territory or had been previously offered successfully in conjunction with a four year institution (2+2 program).
- 21 states have adopted similar programs, including Colorado (Colorado Mountain College, SB 10-101), Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin.
- Since 2005, 9 bills have been proposed and adopted by the Colorado General Assembly changing either the names or the role and mission of Colorado's state institutions of higher education.

Bill Number	Summary	House Votes	Senate Votes
12-1080	Adams State College to Adams State University	57-5	33-1
12-148	Metro State College to Metro State University	56-6	33-1
12-1331	Western State College to Western State University	60-4	32-3
11-265	Mesa State to Colorado Mesa University	60-3	33-1
12-1324	Colorado Mesa University from "moderately selective" to "selective"	61-0	35-0
05-194	Ft. Lewis selectivity change from "moderately selective" to "selective"	65-0	33-0
10-101	Allows Colorado Mtn. College to offer Baccalaureate degree	55-9	33-1
11-204	Allowed CSU-Pueblo to offer a limited number of graduate degrees; made CU system "specialized graduate research institution"	63-0	35-0
12-1155	Broadens authority for CCHE to establish policies for admission standards and remedial education	61-0	35-0

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