

Date of Hearing: January 22, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 664 (Alvarez) – As Amended January 5, 2026

Policy Committee: Higher Education

Vote: 9 - 1

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill allows the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges to authorize the Southwestern Community College District (SCCD) to offer up to four workforce-aligned baccalaureate degree programs as a pilot program, requiring interim and final reports by the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), through January 1, 2035.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) One-time Proposition 98 General Fund costs of an unknown but potentially significant amount, likely ranging from high tens of thousands to low hundreds of thousands of dollars, according to the Chancellor's Office, for the SCCD to implement up to four new workforce-aligned baccalaureate degree programs.
- 2) One-time General Fund costs of up to \$33,000 for the Chancellor's Office to develop an application for the pilot, issue guidance, and provide technical assistance.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author's office, the south San Diego County and Chula Vista area continues "to see bachelor's-level workforce shortages that existing public university capacity alone cannot meet." Under existing law, community college districts (CCDs) may apply with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) to authorize new baccalaureate degrees (up to 30 total per year across the state) to meet local workforce needs so long as they are deemed non-duplicative of existing programs at the California State University (CSU) or University of California (UC).

Proponents of this bill, such as the SCCD, argue that it does not revise or expand existing community college baccalaureate authority, but instead "reflects a measured, time-limited approach that aligns with the State's existing emphasis on collaboration, coordination, and workforce responsiveness." However, both the CSU Chancellor's Office and UC Office of the President, in opposition, state this bill allows SCCD to circumvent the existing process for community college districts to establish baccalaureate degrees and sets a precedent for more districts to do the same, potentially leading to degree duplication. Notably, while the bill authorizes SCCD to establish up to four baccalaureate degrees, it does not specify the areas of study for these degrees.

- 2) **Background.** In 2014 the Legislature authorized the California Community Colleges Board of Governors, in consultation with the CSU and UC, to establish a baccalaureate degree pilot program. The pilot program allowed up to 15 participating CCDs to offer one baccalaureate degree program each to meet local workforce needs provided it was not duplicating a baccalaureate degree program already offered by the CSU or the UC. The LAO conducted interim and final evaluations of the pilot program.

In 2021, the Legislature permanently approved the original pilot programs and allowed authorization for as many as 30 new baccalaureate degrees per year statewide. As of publication of this analysis there are a total of 47 approved programs across 38 community colleges. Most participating campuses currently offer one program. Current law continues to prohibit any of the CCC baccalaureate degree programs to duplicate any program offered by the CSU or UC, except with regard to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree programs offered by the CCC.

- 3) **Related Legislation.** AB 1400 (Soria), of the current legislative session, would have required the CCCCCO to develop a BSN Pilot Program. The bill would have limited the pilot program to 10 CCDs statewide and would have required the CCCCCO to identify and select eligible CCDs based on specified criteria. The Governor vetoed the bill.
- 4) **Prior Legislation.** AB 927 (Medina and Choi), Chapter 565, Statutes of 2021, permanently authorized the offering of baccalaureate degree programs at CCCs.

SB 850 (Block), Chapter 747, Statutes of 2014, established a baccalaureate degree pilot program. The program allowed up to 15 participating community college districts to offer one baccalaureate degree program each to meet local workforce needs as long as they did not duplicate a baccalaureate degree program already offered by the CSU or the UC.

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