

**Letter to Chancellor Brice Harris and Members of the Board of Governors
from California Community College Nursing Programs
in support of Community Colleges offering a Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing**

December 20, 2013

Chancellor Brice Harris
California Community College Board of Governors
Sacramento, CA

Dear Chancellor and Members of the CCC Board of Governors,

As Deans and Directors of the California Community College Associate Degree Nursing Programs, we want to express our appreciation for your willingness to examine the possibility of allowing California Community Colleges to award the baccalaureate degree in a few, urgently needed areas, such as nursing. We are hopeful that the task force you convened to study the issue has encouraged you to move forward with legislation to make this change to the California Education Master Plan.

Since the Institute of Medicine report on the Future of Nursing recommended that 80% of the RN workforce be baccalaureate prepared, many, in fact, most, hospitals and other employers require or prefer their Registered Nurses (RNs) to have a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing (BSN). In California, the majority of Registered Nurses are educated at the Community Colleges. The California State Universities do not have the capacity to educate the RN workforce needed to meet the healthcare needs of California citizens. ADN graduates who want to be competitive in the job market are being forced to seek baccalaureate degrees at costly, for-profit institutions, leaving our previously affordably educated graduates deeply in debt.

Because of these workforce needs, 22 states now allow their community colleges to confer baccalaureate degrees, many of these are in Nursing, where the need is urgent. The nursing shortage predicted for the very near future will become even more serious if we don't help our community colleges keep up with the workforce needs of their communities. Many of California's community colleges are interested in meeting the workforce needs of their community and are willing to do what needs to be done to offer the Baccalaureate degree in those few select areas. The RN to BSN program is primarily theoretical, with very limited clinical content. For community colleges, the "ramp-up" to offer the BSN would not be difficult or costly, as community colleges already bear the high cost of the first two years of primarily clinical courses.

We urge the California Community Colleges Chancellor and Board of Governors to take immediate action, based on these facts and the work of the Baccalaureate Degree Study Group, to authorize community colleges to develop and implement BSN programs. This is a matter of urgency that cannot wait.

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