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**AB-664 Community colleges: baccalaureate degree program: Southwestern Community College District.**  
(2025-2026)

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CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2025–2026 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**NO. 664**

Introduced by Assembly Member Alvarez

February 14, 2025

An act relating to community colleges.

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

AB 664, as introduced, Alvarez. Community colleges: baccalaureate degree program: Southwestern Community College District.

Existing law establishes the California Community Colleges, under the administration of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, as one of the segments of public postsecondary education in this state. Existing law establishes community college districts throughout the state and authorizes them to provide instruction at the campuses they operate. Existing law authorizes the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, in consultation with the California State University and the University of California, to authorize the establishment of district baccalaureate degree programs, as provided.

This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact subsequent legislation that would expand access to workforce-aligned baccalaureate degree programs in underserved, college desert areas like South San Diego County by authorizing Southwestern Community College District to offer a limited number of baccalaureate degrees, as provided.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: no Local Program: no

**THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:**

**SECTION 1.** The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) The City of Chula Vista is the largest city in California with a population exceeding 200,000 that does not have a public university offering baccalaureate degree programs. This gap has created a barrier to higher education access for the 585,000 residents of South San Diego County, where Southwestern Community College District (SWC) is the sole public postsecondary educational institution.

(b) Labor market analyses conducted by the San Diego Regional Policy and Innovation Center and the University Now Initiative have identified 147 priority occupations critical to regional economic growth. These occupations require baccalaureate degrees in

fields such as business, health care, technology, and the arts, which are in high demand and largely unmet by existing public postsecondary educational institution offerings in the area.

(c) Workforce projections for South San Diego County anticipate the creation of over 25,000 jobs by 2033, with the majority of these requiring baccalaureate degrees. Expanding access to baccalaureate degrees at SWC will directly address regional labor shortages while supporting educational equity.

(d) The binational nature of the region, which includes substantial cross-border commuting for work and education, underscores the need for accessible, bilingual, and bicultural degree programs tailored to meet the unique demands of the California-Mexico border area.

(e) Community colleges have demonstrated the capacity to offer high-quality baccalaureate degree programs that align with workforce demands, as evidenced by the success of the California Community Colleges Baccalaureate Degree Program.

**SEC. 2.** It is the intent of the Legislature to enact subsequent legislation that would expand access to workforce-aligned baccalaureate degree programs in underserved, college desert areas like South San Diego County by authorizing Southwestern Community College District to offer a limited number of baccalaureate degrees. It is the further intent of the Legislature that these programs do all of the following:

(a) Address critical unmet workforce needs as identified by the San Diego Regional Policy and Innovation Center and University Now Initiative research, focusing on areas where current academic offerings are insufficient or unavailable to meet regional labor market demands.

(b) Not compete with existing programs offered by public postsecondary educational institutions in the region whenever possible, while allowing for the development of programs that address unmet workforce demand when regional labor market data demonstrates that existing regional offerings are insufficient to meet the region's workforce needs.

(c) Require collaboration with regional public postsecondary educational institutions on the development of programs to ensure they effectively address workforce demand gaps and minimize unnecessary regional competition.