

August 29, 2026

The Honorable Christopher Cabaldon
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 7320
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: Senate Bill 960 (Cabaldon)
As Amended August 27, 2026
Position: OPPOSE

Dear Senator Cabaldon,

On behalf of the California Community Colleges, I am writing to respectfully oppose SB 960. We do not arrive at this position lightly.

The original proposal sought to address two challenges we have experienced under the existing community college baccalaureate framework. First, four-year universities outside the geographic service area of a community college district have been able to raise duplication objections. Second, even when a four-year universities program exists in a region, there are circumstances in which that program does not have sufficient capacity to meet student and workforce demand. Those are real issues, and we appreciate you for taking this on.

However, with the additional provisions incorporated on August 27th in an effort to reach an agreement with all parties, the framework has shifted significantly from that original intent. While we support the shift toward limiting duplication objections from four-year universities to programs within a community college district's local service area, the current version of the bill simultaneously creates new eligibility tiers, program caps, online program restrictions, external workforce and capacity reviews, and a five-year prohibition on submitting similar programs for re-consideration.

Our preliminary analysis, based on the limited data that has been provided, suggests that these new requirements and restrictions could leave California with a community college baccalaureate framework that creates more barriers than the one we have today. The communities with the greatest need for expanded access to affordable bachelor's degrees should not become the communities with the fewest options for creating them.

The five-tier eligibility structure is not necessary to accomplish the original goal of the bill – expanding access to affordable bachelor's degrees in communities where students do not have enough options and where employers need more workers with bachelor's-level skills.

The tier system would make a district's eligibility depend partly on how its performance compares with every other district in the state. A district could improve its own student outcomes and still remain in the same tier, or even see its eligibility change simply because the statewide average changed.

This could be particularly harmful to rural, single-college, and historically underserved communities. A college could have a clear workforce need, students who need a local and

affordable bachelor's degree option, and the capacity to offer a strong program, but still be limited because of where its district falls in the statewide ranking.

We recognize the considerable work that has gone into this, and we appreciate your continued commitment to expanding baccalaureate access, finding common ground, and serving the students of California as best as possible. But at this stage, the cumulative effect of the recent amendments moves us too far from the original objective. California should be making it easier, not harder, for community colleges to respond when there is a demonstrated workforce need, insufficient public baccalaureate capacity, and students who lack realistic access to a bachelor's degree.

For these reasons, the California Community Colleges must respectfully oppose SB 960 in its current form.

We remain committed to working with the Legislature, Administration, CSU, UC, and other partners to further refine a framework that preserves the important progress made under the existing community college baccalaureate authority while addressing the access and duplication issues these bills were intended to resolve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sonya Christian". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sonya Christian
Chancellor

cc: Assemblymember David Alvarez
Andrew Medina, Policy Consultant, Senate President Pro Tempore Monique Limón
Monica Henestroza, Legislative Director, Speaker of the Assembly Robert Rivas
Olgalilia Ramirez, Chief Consultant, Senate Education Committee
Kevin Powers, Principal Consultant, Assembly Higher Education Committee
Nichole Murillo, Deputy Legislative Affairs Secretary, Office of Gavin Newsom