

NEWS

Illinois Council of Community College Presidents

For Immediate Release:

Presidents' Issue New Report on Granting Baccalaureate Degrees for Various Fields

NORMAL Illinois community college presidents approved a recommendation urging the community college system be allowed to grant four-year baccalaureate degrees for nursing and other applied career areas at their meeting on Friday, January 30.

"This recommendation, which took nearly one year to study and prepare, shows our community colleges can be the place where students can earn the degrees close to home which is important to their families and communities," said Thomas Choice, the president of the Illinois Council of Community College Presidents.

The study recommends community colleges be authorized to grant four-year degrees for applied careers and nursing degrees. Illinois would join 21 other states already offering these four-year degrees. Illinois officials have discussed the concept and experiences for families in other states for several years.

"Our study indicates many employers across the state need a workforce with a higher level of education. Community colleges are uniquely positioned with their strong industry and workforce relationships to provide these programs" said Carl Sandberg College President Lori Sundberg. Sundberg chaired the committee that wrote the report.

The Council will work with the Illinois Community College Trustees Association, the Illinois Community College Board, the Illinois Board of Higher Education and the legislature to ensure the necessary steps to move forward.

Choice, who is president of Kishwaukee College in Malta Illinois, noted the report recommends the addition of these programs be managed without any additional state funding. It is anticipated that the variable tuition program already used by many community colleges for career and technical degrees would be used for these four-year degrees.

The applied baccalaureate degrees would cover fields like automotive, respiratory therapy and dental hygiene among others.

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