

https://santamariatimes.com/opinion/columnists/hancock-s-bachelor-s-degree-nears-the-finish-line-kevin-g-walthers/article_09e08b26-9880-11ef-9107-37406b5e1917.html

Your Community College

Hancock’s bachelor’s degree nears the finish line | Kevin G. Walthers

Nov 2, 2024



Kevin Walthers
Contributed

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Last month, Allan Hancock College announced that the California Community College system granted provisional approval for our proposed Bachelor of Science Degree in Applied Professional Studies.

This announcement set off a wave of excitement throughout our community. From local social media groups to the news media, to our own faculty, staff, and students, the positive energy was palpable.

Since then, conversations about the proposed bachelor's degree have continued in full force. Whether at EconAlliance meetings, Chamber of Commerce events, the Mexican Ladies Social Club's Black and White Ball, the grocery store, the golf course, or even World Series watch parties — everyone is buzzing about the prospect of an affordable, accessible bachelor's degree.

ADVERTISING



Two 'Strong Buy' Stock Ideas — Delivered Monthly

[Explore Now](#)

Seeking Alpha - Sponsored

This has been a community vision for decades, and now it's closer than ever to becoming a reality.

Though we're thrilled, there are still a few hurdles ahead before we launch. Many of my past Santa Maria Times columns have discussed the bureaucratic steps we've already cleared; we now face just a few more to move from provisional approval to full implementation.

Provisional approval means that Hancock's accrediting agency found our program meets the California Community College Board of Governors (BOG) standards for program quality. The next step is an intersegmental review to assess potential duplication with programs at California State University (CSU) campuses across the state.

This process ensures that our program isn't duplicating offerings already available within the CSU system.

Our team of faculty, staff, and administrators worked diligently to avoid duplication. They meticulously compared the Hancock program design with individual courses offered across CSU and UC campuses, as well as nonprofit universities.

The resulting 317-page analysis proves not only that our program fills a unique local need, but that no viable alternative exists elsewhere in the state.

If one or more CSU campuses raise objections, a third-party consultant will conduct a review to assess the duplication concern. After this review, representatives from the California Community College system and the CSU will provide a final report to the BOG for final action.

Encouragingly, we're starting to see momentum within the CSU system. Recently, CSU Chancellor Mildred Garcia told the Los Angeles Times that families expect college to deliver both a career and a measurable return on investment (ROI).

Recent research by the College Futures Foundation and analyst Michael Itzkowitz confirms the substantial ROI for Hancock graduates; in many fields, students can recoup the cost of attendance in just a few weeks of work within their field of study.

In our region, cost remains the most significant barrier to a bachelor’s degree. Even with financial aid, the price can be extraordinarily high for families. Hancock’s proposed degree offers students a direct, affordable pathway to careers in fields like office management, sales, human resources, and purchasing.

Our graduates will be equipped to enter or advance within the operational side of any organization, making immediate contributions and elevating their families’ incomes with a positive ROI in very little time.

We’re excited for what lies ahead and deeply grateful for the overwhelming support from every corner of our community. The dedication and hard work that brought us to this point are just the latest example of how the faculty, staff, and administration at Allan Hancock College are committed to “Changing the Odds” for northern Santa Barbara County!

Kevin G. Walthers, Ph.D., is the superintendent/president of Allan Hancock College.

Tags

Opinion

Commentary

Kevin Walthers

Student Debt

Allan Hancock College

Ahc

Hancock

Guest Commentary

Bachelor's Degree

Education

Cognition

Branches Of Science

Santa Maria, California

Health Care

Health

Public Services

Assistance

California State University

California Community Colleges

Return On Investment

Economy