

# Brown approves community college bachelor's degrees

By Alexei Koseff, Sacramento Bee

In what could portend a monumental shift in public higher education in California, Gov. Jerry Brown signed a bill Sunday that will allow up to 15 community colleges to launch bachelor's degrees programs in vocational fields.

While 21 other states offer community college baccalaureates, California's colleges have traditionally been the domain of transfer students and career technical education, granting two-year associate degrees, as established more than fifty years ago in the Master Plan for Higher Education. Senate Bill 850 will allow colleges to experiment with four-year degrees. The pilot program is set to begin no later than the 2017-18 academic year and end in 2024.

In recent years, advocates have argued that growing industry demand for more educated workers in fields such as dental hygiene and automotive technology could be met by expanding existing programs at community colleges.

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