**Bill would bring more 4-year degrees to community colleges**

State Sen. Jerry Hill show last year during a Senate hearing held at City College. (San Diego Community College District)

The number of California [community colleges](http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/topic/education/community-colleges/california-community-colleges-OREDU00830-topic.html) that offer four-year degrees could double under a bill that was introduced last week by state Sen. [Jerry Hill](http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/topic/politics-government/government/jerry-hill-PEPLT00008581-topic.html), D-San Mateo.

Senate Bill 769 would allow 15 more community colleges to offer four-year baccalaureate degrees, bringing the number of California schools in the pilot program to 30.

The bill follows SB 850, which in 2014 established a pilot program that allowed Mesa College in the San Diego Community College District to offer a degree in health information management and MiraCosta Costa in [Oceanside](http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/topic/san-diego-county/oceanside-SDCT0012-topic.html) to offer a degree in biomanufacturing.

That bill was set to sunset in 2023 and prohibited community colleges from offering any program already offered by California State University schools.

SB 769 would lift the sunset clause and allow community colleges more than 100 miles away from any CSU campus to offer any course also offered by the four-year university system.

San Diego County has two CSU campuses — CSU San Marcos and San Diego Diego University — so restrictions on any new local degree programs still would apply.

San Diego Community College District Chancellor Constance Carroll said that while she doesn’t expect schools in her district to seek a new degree program, she was happy to see the new bill would lift the sunset.

“In practical terms, that was a very tight deadline, and it was working against the program in the future,” she said, explaining that some prospective students have been hesitant to enroll for fear they may not be able to earn their degrees before the program ends.

Carroll said the new bill would be especially beneficial for students in rural areas, far from CSU campuses.

“In the end, it’s about student opportunities, the economy and workforce needs,” she said.

In announcing the bill, Hill said “California urgently needs more graduates with four-year degrees to the meet the state’s workforce demands. This bill increases the opportunities for more students to earn the four-year degrees that lead to the jobs that fuel California’s economy.”

If passed and signed into law, new community colleges in the program could begin offering four-year degrees by the fall of  2018.

The Legislative Analyst’s Office is scheduled to conduct a preliminary review of the pilot program in 2018 and then again in 2022.

Carroll chaired the statewide campaign in support of SB 850 and is co-chairing a similar effort on behalf of the new bill along with Judy Miner, chancellor of the Foothill-De Anza Community College District.

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