

# **Advocacy Tool Kit: Bachelor's Degrees at the Community College**

# Community College Baccalaureate Project

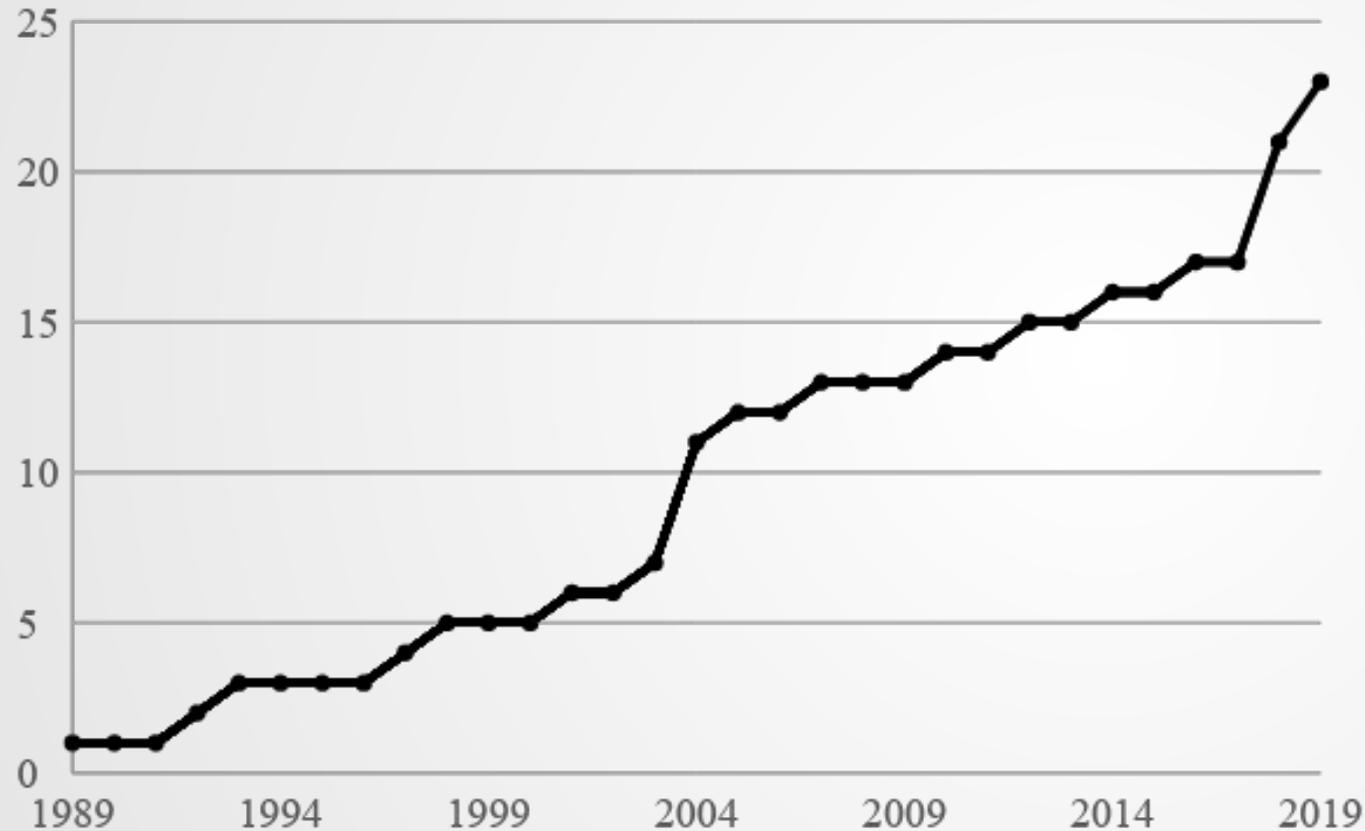
Since May 2018, the [Center on Education & Skills](#) at New America and the [Community College Research Initiatives](#) at the University of Washington have partnered to grow the knowledge base on community college bachelor's degrees, explore the state policy role in these programs, and provide technical assistance and strategy tools for colleges and states. We are grateful to Lumina Foundation and the Joyce Foundation for their generous support of this work.

# How to use this kit

Many state policymakers and stakeholders lack an understanding of how bachelor's degrees offered at community colleges can help meet attainment goals. This kit is meant to provide advocates with guidance for communicating the importance of the community college baccalaureate to stakeholders. Edit it to fit your state's context.



# Adoption over time



- Steady pace
- 31-year period
- Almost 1 state has been added per year
- Outliers: 2004 and 2018. 4 states in each year

# Why now?

- We need accessible pathways to degrees now more than ever.
- From 2008 to 2013, [millions](#) of Americans without a college degree lost jobs that never came back. Still more emerged in jobs that were unstable, low-wage, and without benefits that are needed in the COVID-19 crisis.
- Racially minoritized and low-income populations are especially vulnerable to falling through cracks in the emerging, post-recession workforce.
- This reality increases the urgency to expand access to the bachelor's degree through community colleges.

# Tell students' stories



Monica Shoemaker, a bachelor's degree student at Lake Washington Institute of Technology, found that the staff gave her the "kind of support people feel in a family. That's why it feels like home to me." And she said, "The head of my program wanted me to consider a bachelor's degree, and now I knew I could do it."

Read more of Monica's story [here](#).

# Tell students' stories

Jose Thompson graduated from Miami Dade College with a BS in Biotechnology and earned his Doctor of Pharmacy degree at Palm Beach Atlantic University. The professors who taught Jose offered support through his applied research experience. He says, "They all had a big impact on me continuing on and passing all of my classes."

Read more of Jose's story [here](#).

# Why bachelor's degrees at the community college? 5 ways to make the case.



Filling the gaps in transfer



Improving equity and access to bachelor's degrees



Serving different students than public universities, expanding access



Saving students money & providing community



Meeting employer demand



## Filling gaps in transfer

- Less than a third of community college students enroll in a four-year college.
- Fewer than 15% of students who enroll in community college go on to complete a bachelor's degree within six years.



## Filling gaps in transfer

- When they do transfer, students tend to lose credit. Students who transfer between public schools—the majority of transfer students—lose an estimated 37% of their credits.
- Allowing community colleges to offer bachelor's degrees can be a complementary way to expand access to the baccalaureate.



# Improving equity and access to bachelor's degrees

- About 55% of dependent students with family incomes below \$30,000 in 2011–12 started at a community college.
- In fall 2010, 49% of Black students and 51% of Latinx students started at a community college, compared with 36% of White students and 38% of Asian students.



# Improving equity and access to bachelor's degrees

- Only 21% of Black & 15% of Latinx Americans have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 34% of White Americans and 54% of Asian Americans.
- Community colleges are an onramp to bachelor's degrees for a diverse group of students making these degrees an important option to consider for closing equity gaps in attainment.



# Serving different students than public universities, expanding access

- In Florida, the average community college baccalaureate student is [31 years old](#), compared to 22 for upper-division students at public universities.
- And 3 in 4 community college baccalaureate students are from [populations](#) historically underserved in higher education.



# Serving different students than public universities, expanding access

- One [study](#) from Florida found that the presence of a local bachelor's degree program at a community college had a positive effect on bachelor's degree production of nearby public universities but negatively impacted bachelor's degree production at for-profit colleges.
- In Washington, the average baccalaureate student is [32 years old](#), and graduates from their CCB programs are [more diverse](#) than those at the universities.



# Saving students money & providing community

- [Nationwide](#), in-state tuition and fees at the average community college (\$3,730) is less than half of that at four-year public universities (10,440).
- Most bachelor's degrees at community colleges build on associate degree programs that are less expensive for students. Many have similar tuition structures for upper division courses. Sometimes that means a bachelor's degree that costs students less than [\\$10,000](#).



# Saving students money & providing community

- Students tend to choose CCB programs so they can stay near family.
- Many CCB students speak about the academic success they found for the first time in their associate degree program contributing to their decision to pursue a CCB where they have confidence in their success with many of the same faculty and learning community.



# Meeting employer demand

- According to a recent survey of employers, 76% of employers who now prefer a bachelor's degree believe they shifted their preferences within the last three years.
- The share of job vacancies requiring a bachelor's degree increased by more than 60% between 2007 and 2019.



# Meeting employer demand

- Over the last few [years](#), occupational associations have continued to recommend increased credential requirements (from an associate degree to a bachelor's degree) for health occupations including occupational therapy assistants, respiratory therapists, and nurses.
- One [study](#) found that while 60% of computer support specialist job postings require a bachelor's degree, only 39% of those currently employed in the field have that level of education.

# What comes next?

- Learn as much as you can:
  - Key resources include our state policy guide and our collections page of CCB research, CCRI's [research](#), the Community College Baccalaureate Association website and [Education Commission of the States](#) report.
  - Contact staff in other states that have implemented these degrees including [Florida](#) and [Washington](#).
- Create a coalition with like-minded community colleges, community college associations and systems, employers, and political champions like supportive legislators or the governor.
- Use our key facts, organize your coalition, and build an advocacy plan to address concerns head-on.

# References

The new economics of jobs is bad news for working-class Americans—and maybe for Trump

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2018/01/16/the-new-economics-of-jobs-is-bad-news-for-working-class-americans-and-maybe-for-trump/>

National Student Clearinghouse: Tracking Transfer <https://nscresearchcenter.org/signaturereport13/>

Escaping the Transfer Trap: Want more students to get bachelor's degrees? Let community colleges award them.

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Students Need More Information to Help Reduce Challenges in Transferring College Credits <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-574>

<https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Community-College-FAQs.html>

Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/raceindicators/indicator\\_RFA.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/raceindicators/indicator_RFA.asp)

OPPAGA Research on Florida College System Baccalaureate Degree Programs <http://www.trbas.com/media/media/acrobat/2018-01/70201696189400-18123310.pdf>

The Florida College System Transparency, Accountability Progress, and Performance, To what extent are Florida College System baccalaureate programs educating underserved student populations? <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7724/urlt/0083549-fcsbaccunderserved.pdf>

Competing for Bachelor's Degrees: Are Community Colleges Cutting into the Market Share of Four-Year Institutions?

[https://eb42b468-7eea-4ea9-aec6-31d4fb8260e2.filesusr.com/ugd/0f8ca0\\_8ce023b998cb4739a3dcf7dceec709bd.pdf](https://eb42b468-7eea-4ea9-aec6-31d4fb8260e2.filesusr.com/ugd/0f8ca0_8ce023b998cb4739a3dcf7dceec709bd.pdf)

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How Do Students Earning CCB Degrees Compare to Their Peers at Public Universities in Washington State? [https://www.washington.edu/ccri/newba\\_dn5/](https://www.washington.edu/ccri/newba_dn5/)

Trends in College Pricing 2019 <https://research.collegeboard.org/trends/college-pricing>

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Dismissed by Degrees: How degree inflation is undermining U.S. competitiveness and hurting America's middle class

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