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BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROPOSED FOR WLAC DENTAL HYGIENE PROGRAM

Los Angeles Community College District Chancellor Francisco Rodriguez, after consulting with the presidents of the nine LACCD schools and the LACCD Academic Senate, has selected the proposal from the West Los Angeles College Dental Hygiene program to submit for consideration for the state's historic baccalaureate degree pilot program.

California State Senate Bill 850 authorizes the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges to establish the program at no more than 15 community colleges.

Each district is allowed to submit only one proposal to the state chancellor's office for inclusion.

"LACCD is thrilled with this important and historic opportunity to offer our District's first bachelor's degree," said Chancellor Rodriguez. "Having several strong candidates for the four-year degree at LACCD is a credit to the strength of our faculty across the District. A bachelor's degree of Health Sciences in Dental Hygiene would allow the opportunity for all District colleges to support lower division, preparatory coursework that prepares students for careers in allied health. Our proposal is strengthened by LA Trade Tech receiving a \$19M federal Department of Labor grant geared to increase clinic-based opportunities across

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the District. We believe we are well-positioned to be selected as one of the 15 pilot colleges in the state.”

If approved, WLAC will be able to offer a Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene.

“We are very proud that our proposal was selected,” said Dr. Nabil Abu-Ghazaleh, West president. “A bachelor’s degree in Dental Hygiene will provide graduates employment opportunities in alternative settings beyond private dental practice such as research, administration, education, public health, community-based health clinics and working with special needs populations.”

West’s associate degree program in Dental Hygiene has been in existence since 1972. It has traditionally had 100% graduation and employment rates, and historically has been ranked in the top ten nationally on board examination scores. The Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) accredits the program, and students obtain licensure through the Dental Hygiene Committee of California (DHCC) upon successfully completing the program and passing state and national exams. All graduates obtain licensure.

Currently, a baccalaureate degree in dental hygiene is not offered at California’s state colleges and universities. This degree is only available at private institutions where the cost can range from \$80,000.00 to \$120,000.00 versus the significantly lower cost of delivering an equivalent program in a community college setting.

“This program could offer our students the chance to expand their horizon in higher education at an affordable cost,” said Scott Svonkin, president of the LACCD Board of Trustees. “That’s why our Board voted to participate in the great opportunity afforded by SB850. It’s an important step in our continuing effort to help our students achieve success in the career of their choice.”

About the Los Angeles Community College District

The Los Angeles Community College District, the nation's largest community college district, serves one-quarter million students a year in more than 36 cities in Los Angeles County at its nine colleges. The District covers nearly 900 square miles and has educated and trained the region's diverse workforce since 1969.

