BC picked for community college bachelor's degree test run

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The chancellor of California's vast community college system announced 15 schools on Tuesday that he wants to participate in a pilot program that allows the state's 2-year schools to offer baccalaureates for the first time.

The colleges presented by Chancellor Brice Harris to the system's Board of Governors came from 36 applicants and are located throughout the state, from Crafton Hills College near San Bernardino and Mesa College in San Diego to Feather River College in Quincy and Shasta College near Redding.

Until now, the state's 112 community colleges have offered only 2-year degrees. But a bill authored by Democratic State Sen. Marty Block and signed by Gov. Jerry Brown last year established a seven-year pilot program that allows a maximum of 15 college districts to offer a single 4-year degree each in subjects not currently offered by the University of California or California State University systems.

Under the legislation, participating students would pay an additional $84 per unit for their upper-division courses. The regular per-unit fee for community college classes is $46 per unit.

Emergency services, dental hygiene, automotive technology, respiratory care and mortuary science are some of the degrees the participating community colleges plan to offer.

Nineteen other states have community colleges that offer bachelor's degrees, according to the Community College Baccalaureate Association.

California's move comes as its higher education institutions are recovering from several years of deep budget cuts that limited enrollment and course offerings, making it harder for students to complete their studies.

Block said the program will help more students prepare for jobs without having to take out loans and give employers a more qualified workforce to draw from.

The Board of Governor's is being asked to give initial approval to the 15 schools Harris recommended. The selected programs will then undergo further review before a final vote scheduled for March.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES PICKED TO OFFER 4-YEAR DEGREES

— Antelope Valley College, Airframe manufacturing technology

— Bakersfield College, Industrial Automation

— Crafton Hills College, Emergency Services and Allied Health Systems
— Cypress College, Mortuary Science
— Feather River College, Equine Industry
— Foothill College, Dental Hygiene
— West Los Angeles College, Dental Hygiene
— Mira Costa College, Bio-manufacturing,
— Modesto Junior College, Respiratory Care
— Skyline College, Respiratory Care
— Rio Hondo College, Automotive Technology
— Mesa College, Health Information Management
— Santa Ana College, Occupational Studies
— Santa Monica College, Interaction Design
— Shasta College, Health Information Management