August 22, 2014

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95813 -- VIA FAX

RE: SUPPORT: SB 850 (Block)

Dear Governor Brown:

I urge you to sign into law SB 850 (Block), the Community College Baccalaureate Pilot Program bill, when it comes to your desk in the near future.

SB 850 would allow 15 community colleges in 15 college districts to voluntarily participate in a pilot program to provide an applied baccalaureate degree in workforce training fields. The targeted fields are ones where employers now require baccalaureate degrees and in which public universities do not provide comprehensive access to these degrees. SB 850 strives to meet regional education needs of students and workforce needs of local economies. SB 850 degrees, by design, will not duplicate programs of the California State University, thus increasing opportunities for California students. This pilot program is especially beneficial to residents of the rural central valley where place-bound students often opt out of completing bachelor’s degrees because degree programs are offered far from home.

Bakersfield College in the Kern Community College District is exploring potential SB 850 pilot bachelor’s degree options that would offer multiple workforce applications throughout the southern San Joaquin Valley. Students who enroll in the potential SB 850 applied baccalaureate program at Bakersfield College could complete all courses to earn their bachelor’s degree without leaving the Bakersfield College campus.

The Kern Community College District Board of Trustees passed a resolution in support of the bill. The resolution noted that students in the central valley are less likely than others in California to complete a bachelor’s degree. SB 850 may prove to be an important avenue to help local residents extend their education. I encourage you to sign SB 850 legislation and support a mechanism for funding the legislation so that all our students may attain an education and become competitive in the state’s workforce.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Sandra V. Serrano
Chancellor