San Diego Community College District Expands Program Smoothing Transition to a Cal State University Campus

The San Diego Community College District (SDCCD) took another significant step toward boosting student success when its Board of Trustees agreed today to expand a program that makes it easier for SDCCD graduates to enroll at a California State University campus.

The SDCCD Board approved an additional seven Associate Degree for Transfer programs, on top of the 11 Associate Degrees for Transfer approved earlier this year, bringing the total number approved by the board to 65. The latest Associate Degree for Transfer programs were approved in Biology, Chemistry, and Economics at San Diego City College; Chemistry and Music at San Diego Mesa College; and Biology and Chemistry at San Diego Miramar College.

The programs now go to the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office for final approval.

The Associate Degree for Transfer program was launched in the fall of 2011 as the California Community Colleges and California State University (CSU) systems worked toward implementing a more seamless transition for community college students. Under the program, authorized under Senate Bill 440, community college students who complete an associate degree designated for transfer are guaranteed admission to the CSU system with junior status and are given priority consideration when applying to their local CSU campus and to a particular program that is similar to the student’s community college major.

“For students who plan to transfer to a four-year university, earning an associate degree first is something we strongly recommend,” said SDCCD Chancellor Constance M. Carroll. “With expansion of the Associate Degree for Transfer program our students now have more options.”

The Associate Degree for Transfer is becoming a more popular option for community college students across California. A state Legislative Analyst’s Report released this year found the
number of students earning an Associate Degree for Transfer reached nearly 12,000 in the 2013-14 academic year. Some 800 Associate Degrees for Transfer were awarded in the first year of the program.

The number of degrees awarded in the SDCCD has grown from two in 2011-12 to 146 the following year, 482 last year, and more than 900 in the academic year that just ended in May.

Expansion of the Associate Degree for Transfer program is the latest in a series of actions taken by the SDCCD to boost student success. In May, the district announced an agreement with Point Loma Nazarene University that will allow students graduating from City College’s two-year nursing education program to continue their studies for another 15 months so they can earn their bachelor’s degree. That followed the launch of a districtwide effort to double the number of students who earn a degree or certificate by 2022 – and it seems to be working. District colleges awarded 3,314 associate degrees this year, up 37 percent from the 2,414 degrees awarded last year.

As the second-largest of California’s 72 community college districts, the San Diego Community College District serves approximately 100,000 students annually through three two-year colleges and San Diego Continuing Education. The three colleges, San Diego City College, San Diego Mesa College, and San Diego Miramar College, offer associate degrees and certificates in occupational programs that prepare students for transfer to four-year colleges and entry-level jobs. Beginning fall 2015, Mesa College will also offer baccalaureate degrees in the field of Health Information Management.