



## City Council Agenda Item

**City Council Meeting Date:** October 17, 2023

**TO:** Dean Albro, City Manager

**FROM:** Steven Valle, Administrative Analyst  
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**SUBJECT:** Approve and Direct the Mayor to Sign Letters of Support for the UnitED Central Coast Initiative

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### **Recommendation:**

Staff recommends the City Council approve and direct the Mayor to sign letters of support for UnitED Central Coast, an initiative to offer bachelor's degree programs at community colleges on the central coast (Attachments 1 and 2).

### **Background:**

The City, like many other employers in our region, has encountered challenges when recruiting candidates for positions requiring a four-year education. The high cost of living on the central coast often deters potential candidates from relocating to the area, despite their qualifications and enthusiasm for those positions.

UnitED Central Coast is a transformative educational initiative aimed at expanding higher education opportunities and fostering academic growth within the central coast community. Launched at a public event on October 5, 2023, UnitED Central Coast is a collaborative effort between Allan Hancock College and Cuesta College to share information and work cooperatively to meet local workforce needs by adding two four-year bachelor's degree programs, one at each college, through the California Community College baccalaureate program.

Recognizing the immense potential and untapped talent residing in the central coast region, the UnitED Central Coast initiative strives to bridge the gap between community colleges and bachelor's degree attainment. By introducing comprehensive bachelor's degree programs at Allan Hancock College and Cuesta College, UnitED Central Coast aims to empower individuals, enhance their skill sets, and provide a seamless educational pathway towards achieving their academic and professional aspirations.

**Discussion:**

The UnitED Central Coast initiative proposes adding two four-year bachelor's degree programs at local community colleges on the central coast: an Applied Professional Studies program at Allan Hancock College and a Bachelor of Science in Education program at Cuesta College. The introduction of these programs will create a significant opportunity for the central coast by addressing the challenges community members face when seeking affordable pathways to higher education.

By offering a locally accessible route to baccalaureate degrees in education and applied professional studies, individuals will be able to enhance their qualifications and embark on careers in education without the burden of relocating or incurring exorbitant costs from distant universities offering online degrees.

**Fiscal Impact:**

There is no fiscal impact.

**Conclusion:**

UnitED Central Coast is dedicated to creating a welcoming and inclusive learning environment where students receive individualized support from knowledgeable faculty members and cutting-edge tools throughout their academic careers. Through this initiative, Allan Hancock and Cuesta Colleges hope to help the central coast's residents realize their full potential, strengthen their communities, and empower themselves.

The proposed Applied Professional Studies program at Allan Hancock College and Bachelor of Science in Education program at Cuesta College will not only support the City's current employees who would like to advance their education, but also creates a pool of well-prepared individuals from our community who can take on leadership roles within our organization and others alike.

Respectfully submitted,

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Steven Valle, Administrative Analyst

**APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL:**

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Dean Albro, City Manager

- Attachments: 1) Letter of Support to Dr. Kevin Walthers (Allan Hancock College)  
2) Letter of Support to Dr. Jill Stearns (Cuesta College)