

## Key Legislative and HLC Considerations - SB1453

[SENATE BILL 1453](#) was passed into law in May 2021. The bill allows community colleges in the state of Arizona to offer bachelor's degrees. This document is intended to summarize key considerations related to SB1453 legislative requirements, Higher Learning Commission (HLC) requirements/guidance, and Maricopa County Community College District's (MCCCD) district wide approach to offering bachelor's degrees.

### Capacity/Number of Programs Offered and Tuition

SB1453 places a cap on the percentage of bachelor's degrees an individual college can offer, in relation to its total award offerings. *It is important to note that the HLC's requirements related to the number of programs at a new award level (bachelor's degrees) is more stringent than the legislation.* Both sets of requirements are outlined in the table below, along with MCCCD's approach to initial program offerings:

MCCCD Approach	HLC Requirement ( <a href="#">link</a> )	SB1453 Requirement
MCCCD's initial launch will be focused and remain within HLC thresholds. <b><i>The goal is five (5) total new bachelor's degree program offerings within MCCCD, with no individual college offering more than two (2) bachelor's degree programs in Fall 2023.</i></b>	A college may offer <b>up to two (2) programs at a new award level</b> (bachelor's degree). Adding additional programs requires evidence of success (as we define it) in initial bachelor's degree programs, and a change/update to the college's mission or student body profile.	For the first four (4) years a college offers bachelor's degrees, not more than 5% of total degree/certificate offerings can be bachelor's degrees. For year five (5) and beyond, the cap is raised to 10%.

MCCCD may not charge more than 150% of the current approved tuition rate for 300/400 level courses. At the current approved tuition rate of \$85/credit hour, the maximum allowable tuition rate for 300/400 level courses is \$127.50.

### Program Identification Considerations and Process

To meet the intent and requirements of the SB1453 legislation, and the HLC's anticipation that a collaborative approach will be used in the offering of bachelor's degrees, initial high-growth, high-demand program areas in the sectors that were discussed throughout the legislative process (Health Care, Information Technology, Education, and Public Safety) will be identified through regional college discussions. This will support access to bachelor's degree programs for students throughout Maricopa County. Colleges will also have an opportunity to submit programs for consideration outside of the identified areas if there is clear and compelling evidence to support the proposal. Please review the [program selection timeline](#) for more details. *It is recommended that colleges take a focused approach to identifying initial bachelor's degree program offerings for Fall 2023, with the consideration of offering additional programs in the future once the college and MCCCD demonstrate student success in initial offerings.*