

State Board Approves Second Bachelor's Degree at Centralia College

Work in Progress: College Working to Offer Bachelor of Applied Science in Diesel

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Much work remains to be done, but a second bachelor's degree program at Centralia College jumped a major hurdle in the approval process this week.

The State Board of Community and Technical Colleges endorsed a bachelor's of applied science in diesel degree during its Thursday meeting in Olympia. The board approved the program unanimously after a lengthy review.

Centralia College hopes to offer the program beginning in the fall quarter.

Its current diesel tech program has become a popular choice not just for first-time college students, but also for people in worker retraining programs.

The college is fielding inquiries from prospective students, but in the meantime must go before the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, the regional organization that accredits community colleges and their programs in Washington and Oregon.

Associate Dean of Centralia College Baccalaureate Programs Larry McGee told The Chronicle Friday the state board approval process was rigorous, requiring a needs assessment for the program as well as staff having to show the board the program met state educational standards.

"We've literally been working for a full year to bring everything together," McGee said. "This was a huge moment in moving the program forward."

Centralia College intends to offer the bachelor of applied science in diesel to students who earned a two-year degree in diesel technology, but may lack training in other areas of diesel technology or other management education. The college hopes the program will broaden career opportunities for students who choose the program.

McGee said he's optimistic the next step in the process with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities will go well.

"We're on a tight timetable, and what we've seen before is that we have an ability to move on these things rather quickly," McGee said.

A proposed course syllabus and other information can be found online at

<http://bachelors.centralia.edu/diesel>.

Centralia College's first bachelor degree program, the bachelor of applied science in management, enrolled its first students and received federal student aid approval in late 2012.