

April 10, 2025

To Long Beach City College Library Department,

I am writing this letter to strongly support LBCC's pursuit of creating and establishing a bachelor's degree in Library Science. As a library administrator, a previous faculty member of library certificate programs, and as someone who has assisted in guiding the national efforts of library assistant training programs through the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), I feel confident that a bachelor's program in Library Science is not only much needed, but that LBCC would be able to host the program successfully.

To date, there are 24 states and 187 community colleges that offer workforce bachelor's degrees to their communities. However, per the Community College Baccalaureate Association's national inventory of community college baccalaureate degree (CCB) programs, there are none in the field of Library Science. And according to ACRL's data, California hosts the largest inventory of library certificate programs in the nation. These certificate programs can serve as a springboard into baccalaureate degrees, but those students who wish to continue their library studies have to transfer out of state in order to pursue that path.

Currently, the educational landscape for library staff is reliant on certificate programs. Although these programs are highly valuable, as an administrator, we seek candidates that have well-rounded educational backgrounds. A certificate program provides the very specific, library-focused skills and knowledge needed, but do not supply the more general knowledge and deeper experiences gained through a program infused with general education requirements. Library workers identified by the Standard Occupation Classification as "library assistants" (SOC code 43-4121) have a broad range of educational backgrounds, but the highest concentration is seen at the baccalaureate level at 29%. To expand this further, the highest concentration of educational attainment for library technicians and library assistants collectively is at the baccalaureate level at 27%. These positions are what the certificate programs prepare students for, but the data succinctly demonstrates that the majority of working library staff hold baccalaureate degrees. Students with a focus on a career in libraries need these bachelor programs, and LBCC could help address this need through the provision of a Library Science baccalaureate degree, which is found nowhere else in California's public higher education landscape.

I hope you are able to move forward with establishing a bachelor's program in Library Science. If there is any other information you would like from me or if there's anything else I can do to further support these efforts, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Walter Butler | PhD, MLIS
Director of Library and Information Services
Santa Monica Colleg