



November 17, 2025

Mary Cook
ADS Program Coordinator
San Jose City College
2100 Moorpark Ave.
San Jose, CA 95128

Dear Mary Cook,

Subject: **Summary of Key Findings for Proposed Bachelor's Degree in Alcohol and Drug Studies**

The Bay Region Center of Excellence (COE) has completed a labor market analysis in support of San Jose City College's application to offer a bachelor's degree program in Alcohol and Drug Studies (TOP 2104.40). This letter summarizes the key findings from our report and addresses the primary questions of workforce need, wage potential, and employer preferences for candidates with a baccalaureate degree.

In the report, the state-level analysis includes data for two occupations, Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors and Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers, both of which are combined for demand and gap analysis, as they frequently work in overlapping roles. Note that most of these occupations require a master's degree or higher, and the San Jose City College may want to offer a post-baccalaureate internship or residency to support students in continuing their education. Alternatively, they may provide students with specific job opportunities in the field that require only a bachelor's degree. This approach best reflects the overall labor market needs for the proposed bachelor's program.

✓ **Evidence of a Regional Supply-Demand Gap for Workers with Baccalaureate Degrees**

Our analysis shows a significant supply–demand gap for workers with baccalaureate level education in Alcohol and Drug Studies across the Bay Region. Data on projected job openings for the next 10 years indicate that the demand for qualified professionals in this field far exceeds the current supply of graduates from similar programs. Specifically, there are approximately 1,876 annual job openings in the region, and 1,279 annual (3-year average) awards for an annual undersupply of 597 students.

These calculations do not include the associate degree because most occupations in this field require a bachelor's degree or higher. A bachelor's degree program would help close this gap by preparing more qualified candidates to meet growing employer demand.

✓



✓ **Evidence that Employers Are Willing to Pay Alcohol and Controlled Substances Occupations a Regional Living Wage**

Based on our wage analysis, workers entering Alcohol and Controlled Substances occupations earn an average entry-level wage of \$24 per hour, which is slightly below the regional living wage of \$27 per hour for a single adult. However, median wages rise to \$32 per hour, surpassing the living wage and indicating strong earning potential as workers gain experience. This suggests that while graduates may begin just below the living wage threshold, wage progression over time allows professionals in this field to achieve sustainable incomes that meet or exceed local living standards.

✓ **Evidence that Employers Are Willing to Pay Baccalaureate Degree Holders More than Those with an Associate Degree or No Postsecondary Degree**

The analysis shows a clear wage premium for individuals holding a bachelor's or master's degree. For counselors, the average advertised wage rises from \$22 per hour for those with an associate's degree, \$24 per hour for those with a bachelor's degree and \$36 per hour for those with a master's degree. Similarly, social workers earn \$22 per hour for those with an associate's degree, \$24 per hour with a bachelor's degree, and \$33 per hour with a master's degree. These differences highlight the economic benefits of pursuing bachelor's and graduate level education, which is consistent with employers' need for well-qualified candidates.

✓ **Evidence that Employers Prefer Candidates with the Proposed Baccalaureate or Master's Degree**

Employer job postings indicate that 73% to 84% of postings specify an educational requirement or preference, with a significant share listing a master's degree as the preferred qualification, 50% for counselors and 41% for social workers. While not always required for entry, this data shows a clear preference for candidates with higher education levels, aligning with the goal of offering a bachelor's degree pathway to better prepare students for these roles.

Because most of these occupations require a master's degree or higher, San Jose City College may want to offer a post-baccalaureate internship or residency to support students in continuing their education. Alternatively, they may provide students with specific job opportunities in the field that require only a bachelor's degree. This approach best reflects the overall labor market needs for the proposed bachelor's program.

In summary, the labor market data indicates a significant regional supply-demand gap for workers with baccalaureate and master's degrees in Alcohol and Controlled Substances, and employers are generally willing to offer competitive wages that exceed the regional living wage. Furthermore, there is evidence of a significant wage premium and employer preference for candidates with bachelor's or higher degrees. While the preference for a baccalaureate degree among employers is not universal, the data support the expansion of bachelor's degree programs to better align with labor market demands and enhance workforce readiness.



Please find the full labor market report attached for a detailed review of the data and analysis. Should you have any questions or need further clarification, feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

Marcela Reyes, Ph.D.
Director, Research and Center of Excellence
Center of Excellence, Bay Region
(831) 219-8875
marcela@baccc.net