

CONSENT ITEM (RESOLUTION 25-10-45)

October 16, 2025

Tab 5

Everett Community College - Proposed Bachelor of Science in Computer Science

Brief Description

In September 2014, the State Board adopted a revised approval process, selection criteria, and application materials for community and technical colleges seeking to offer an applied baccalaureate program. In 2021, the State Board's authority was expanded to include Bachelor of Science degree programs in computer science. The final step in the approval process requires State Board action on the college's application to offer the proposed bachelor's degree.

How does this item link to the State Board's Strategic Plan?

In June 2023, the State Board adopted an updated strategic plan, which focuses on four goals: increase access and retention among populations who can benefit the most from college; improve completion and transfer rates for students across all program types; provide flexible career-training options that are responsive to the needs of businesses and industries; and secure resources and develop systemwide strategies to support colleges' financial sustainability and resiliency. Colleges offering baccalaureate degrees meet the needs of changing economies by increasing the number of skilled employees in the areas of greatest demand. Through bachelor level degrees, colleges create greater access to higher education by enrolling underserved populations, particularly place-bound working adults, and ensure community and technical colleges are affordable and accessible for students. Community and technical college bachelor's degree programs provide access for students who have been historically underserved by and had limited access to bachelor's-level education. They also meet the local workforce needs and allow students to remain in their home communities.

Background information and analysis

Everett Community College's goal is to expand access to Computer Science (CS) degree programs for diverse students, support them comprehensively, and prepare them for a rapidly changing job market in the technology field. Everett Community College proposes to offer a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science (BSCS) degree that is explicitly designed around student support. In response to well-documented barriers in Science, Engineering, Technology, and Mathematics (STEM) education (McGee, 2020; Sims, 2018; Sims et al., 2020), the proposed bachelor's degree program will innovate in how CS is taught by embedding inclusive pedagogical strategies, holistic wraparound services, and multiple entry and exit points across the curriculum. The focus of this proposed program aligns with the legislative intent of Substitute Senate Bill (SSB) 5401 from the 2021 Washington State Legislature.

The curriculum design integrates interdisciplinary learning across STEM, CS, and Information

Technology fields, with a focus on hands-on experiences, including project-based and community-centered work. Topics in the courses include (a) techniques, skills, and tools necessary emerging practices related to artificial intelligence, (b) principles and practices of security and privacy in computing, and (c) local and global impacts of computing solutions on individuals, organizations, and society, including the ethical use of AI. The program design emphasizes belonging and accessibility in computing and encourages students to examine cultural dimensions of technology.

Innovative course design will ensure that a high level of learning in math is preserved while also being made more accessible, as informed by recent and relevant research. A study by Brodley, Quam, & Weiss (2024) concluded that calculus should not be required as a prerequisite to introductory computer science courses as it functions as an “institutional barrier which impacts students’ discovery, retention, and persistence in computing.” Instead, essential calculus concepts are presented in context in upper division courses (such as Machine Learning) after students have completed and succeeded in the introductory and lower division computer science courses. Students who wish to pursue specialized engineering tracks and/or graduate studies can still complete a full calculus course sequence as one path (but not the only path) to fulfill program requirements.

Through a collaboration involving a preliminary alignment of courses, Everett Community College obtained a letter of support from the University of Washington Bothell’s School of STEM stating that students graduating from Everett’s BSCS program (and opted to take Calculus 1 and 2 as part of the program) will meet the academic prerequisites for their Master of Science in Computer Science and Software Engineering program. In addition, the program design sought to align with industry input, consulting with an advisory board consisting of employers and industry representatives.

While the proposed BSCS program plans to admit students who have completed an associate degree along with prerequisite courses that prepare students for the program without any additional admissions requirements (such as an essay), it also affords an opportunity for students who may have substantial industry experience and/or related military service to satisfy coursework and/or entry requirements through the college’s Academic Credit for Prior Learning (ACPL) process.

The Statement of Need for the Bachelor of Science in Computer Science was presented by Everett Community College at the February 2024 board meeting. If approved, this program will be Everett Community College’s second bachelor’s degree offering and Everett Community College will be the 15th college in our system to offer a BS Computer Science program.

Recommendation/preferred result

These proposals meet criteria established by statute and Board policy based on staff review and feedback from peer reviewers from the community and technical college system. Staff recommends State Board action on the following:

- Resolution 25-10-45 approving Everett Community College’s Bachelor of Science in Computer Science

Policy Manual Change Yes ☐ No ☒

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STATE OF WASHINGTON
STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES
RESOLUTION 25-10-45

A resolution to approve Everett Community College's application to offer a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science upon recommendation of the State Board for Community and Technical College staff.

WHEREAS, Substitute Senate Bill 5401, passed by the 2021 Washington State Legislature, authorizes the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to approve bachelor of science degree programs in computer science offered by community and technical colleges; and

WHEREAS, consistent with the Washington State Legislature's requirement, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges developed objective criteria for the approval of community and technical college applied baccalaureate degrees; and

WHEREAS, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges staff found that Everett Community College's application provided evidence that met or exceeded all objective selection criteria and will expand baccalaureate degree capacity in the state;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges approves the recommendation to authorize Everett Community College's Bachelor of Science in Computer Science;


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges authorizes the Executive Director to make adjustments to this action, including any necessary changes to the state board's policy manual, as necessary, for actions taken by the Governor, Legislature, data corrections, externally imposed restrictions or guidelines, uniform accounting and reporting requirements, and unanticipated changes in state or federal law.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED on October 16, 2025

Attest



Nate Humphrey, secretary



Martin Valadez, chair