

Ceremonial Signing of AB-91 MOU Marks Historic Moment for Cali-Baja Region Students

CHULA VISTA — Leaders from California and Mexico gathered at Southwestern College on Monday, Oct. 21, for the ceremonial signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) finalizing Assembly Bill 91 (AB-91). The event marked a milestone in cross-border education, granting students living in Mexico, within 45 miles of the California-Mexico border, the opportunity to attend community colleges in San Diego and Imperial Valley at in-state tuition rates.

The MOU finalizes the implementation of AB-91, which will benefit students who have relocated to neighboring regions of Mexico due to California's high cost of living. Imperial Valley College (IVC), Southwestern College and other community colleges within the San Diego and Imperial Counties Community College Association (SDICCCA) will be able to extend affordable education to low-income students.

"The enactment of AB-91 represents a historic step forward for our students and our region as this initiative breaks down financial barriers and allows students to access higher education that is essential for the workforce demands of the Cali-Baja region," said Alexis Villa, vice president of Student Services and Equity at Imperial Valley College.

The event featured remarks from California Assemblymember David Alvarez, who authored AB-91, California Community Colleges Chancellor Dr. Sonya Christian and Luis Gilberto Gallego Cortez, Secretario de Educación de Baja California.

AB-91 establishes a four-year pilot program allowing eligible low-income students residing within 45 miles of the California-Mexico border to pay in-state tuition at participating community colleges, including IVC. The law will take effect Jan. 1, 2024, with IVC launching its application process between July and August 2024.

The event concluded with the official signing of the MOU, followed by a group photo of the dignitaries.

Students interested in the AB-91 program at Imperial Valley College can contact IVC's Admissions and Records Office at 760-355-6101 to learn about the application process. The program provisions are scheduled to remain in effect until July 1, 2028.