**What are key differences among the definitions of university, senior college, junior college, college, technical college and community college?**

Here are some general understandings of these terms and the uniqueness associated with each term.

A **university** awards both undergraduate (bachelor’s) and graduate degrees. It may have several schools or colleges within the university including an undergraduate division which confers bachelor's degrees and a graduate division which comprises a graduate school and professional schools, each of which may confer master's degrees and doctorates.

A **senior college** is a college offering the regular four-year courses of study traditionally required for a bachelor's degree. It differs from a junior college by offering the upper division or last two years of a four-year college.

A **college** generally refers to a postsecondary school that offers courses leading to a degree (such as a bachelor's degree or an associate's degree).

A **community college** may also be referred to as a junior college, technical college or city college. These are generally two-year public institutions of higher education that award certificates, diplomas and associate's degrees as well as offer adult and continuing education. Their role is closely tied to meeting the needs of the community they serve and many have taxing authority similar to a school district. Community colleges are often viewed as more comprehensive in nature by offering a full array of transfer and workforce programs.

**Junior colleges** began over 100 years ago with Joliet Junior College in Illinois which was established in a high school as the equivalent of thirteenth and fourteenth grades to prepare qualified students for the final two years of college. Junior colleges provided an accessible and affordable way for students to acquire the first two years of a four-year degree. Other postsecondary vocational programs were added over time. Most public junior colleges, which typically aim to serve a local community, have either replaced "junior" with "community" in their names or dropped both terms.

**Technical Colleges** provide post-secondary vocational education, or **technical** skills in response to the needs of business and industry. They typically award degrees and certificates of proficiency as well as continuing education units. Programs are designed to be terminal in nature and non-transferable to other colleges and other degree programs.