

Date of Hearing: April 9, 2013

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
Das Williams, Chair  
AB 1025 (Garcia) – As Amended: March 21, 2013

SUBJECT: Public postsecondary education: credit by examination.

SUMMARY: Requires the California Community Colleges (CCC) and the California State University (CSU) and requests the Regents of the University of California (UC) to provide information about credit by examination opportunities to students wherever course and class information is available. This measure also requires districts to be reimbursed for costs if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state.

EXISTING LAW: Several statutes and regulations govern credit by examination.

- 1) Authorizes the UC Regents as the governing body of the UC and grants authority to the Regents to determine final policies and procedures on behalf of the UC (Education Code [EC] § 92020 and §92430).
- 2) Establishes the CSU Board of Trustees (BOT) as the governing body of the CSU and specifies the BOT's power, duties and functions with respect to the management, administration, and control of the CSU (EC § 66600 and § 66606).
- 3) Authorizes the governing board of each CCC district to adopt policies and procedures pertaining to credit by examination and allows for the governing board of the CCC district to grant credit to any student who satisfactorily passes an examination approved or conducted by proper authorities of the college (5 California Code of Regulations § 55050).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: Purpose of this bill. According to the author, "Due to congestion, many college students are finding it hard to complete their education in a timely manner. One option a student can utilize in order to progress faster is the ability to gain credit by examination, for courses that they have prior knowledge of." The author contends that many students are not aware of the availability of the credit by examination option or even how to utilize it. The author states, "It may be that in the past counselors were relied on for the dissemination of the information, however due to budget cuts it [is] difficult for student[s] to see a counselor in a timely manner."

Additionally, the author believes that some college professors are not even aware of where to find information relating to credit by examination. According to the author, "The amount of information available [as it relates to credit by examination] varies from school to school with some posting the forms needed while other are less detailed. With the internet so heavily [accessible], any and all information that would be used by the student should be available there.

Credit by examination. A variety of credit by examination tests are used and accepted by the UC, CSU, and CCC. Credit by examination tests are comprised of campus-originated challenge examinations (differentiated from placement examinations) and the standardized external examinations, such as Advance Placement (AP) tests, International Baccalaureate (IB) and

College Level Entrance Program (CLEP). AP and IB exams are taken by high school pupils who were enrolled in AP and IB classes in high school.

A recent research brief by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), found that underserved students who earn credit through prior learning assessments have higher degree to completion rates and shorter time-to-degree. CAEL also found that there is a financial savings benefit for low-income students who take and successfully pass credit by examination tests, since the cost of having prior learning evaluated for credit is typically less than the cost of the tuition for the same number of credit hours.

Segment policies. The UC, CSU, and CCC already appear to have policies and procedures in place to ensure students have multiple ways of receiving all the information they need regarding credit by examination.

- 1) The UC admissions website lists all of the UC accepted credit by examination options. Additionally, according to the UC Office of the President, UC confers regularly with high school guidance counselors regarding the UC admissions policies, including credit by examination. The UC admissions directors and staff at each campus regularly attend college fairs on high school and CCC campuses and speak at a variety of other venues to address questions from prospective students including credit by examination.
- 2) Three years ago, the Academic Senate of the CSU unanimously endorsed a policy providing guidelines for the use of CLEP examinations as the basis for awarding general education credit. This policy applies to CSU students and to those planning to transfer to a CSU campus. The CSU provided their guidelines to the CCC whose students transfer to the CSU; the guidelines inform the CCC students how to apply CLEP examinations toward certifications of general education requirements prior to transfer. Additionally, the CSU partnered with the College Board (administers of the CLEP examinations) to ensure students are made aware of their CLEP options. According to the CSU and the College Board, students are made aware of their CLEP examination options in a number of ways, including, via faculty and advisers, admissions office, adult and/or veterans office, registrar's office and campus testing centers. Additionally, the CSU has posted their CLEP policies on their website and have included their credit by exam policies in their catalogs and other publications for students and parents.
- 3) The Academic Senate for the CCC endorsed their newest policy providing guidelines for the use of CLEP examinations as the basis for awarding general education credit in June of 2011. The Academic Senate's policy is very similar to that of the CSU (as described above). Additionally, according to a January 2013 credit by examination survey performed by the CCC Chancellor's Office and completed by 74 CCC campuses, every college expressed they have credit by examination policies and procedures clearly defined and relayed to their students. The respondents also stated that their college credit by examination policies and procedures are listed in all course catalogs and on their websites.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file.

Opposition

None on file.

Analysis Prepared by: Jeanice Warden / HIGHER ED. / (916) 319-3960