

Date of Hearing: April 25, 2017

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

AB 1064 (Calderon) – As Amended March 21, 2017

**SUBJECT:** California State University: student discretionary expenses survey

**SUMMARY:** Requires the California State University (CSU), on or before January 1, 2021, and on or before each January 1 every three years thereafter, to conduct a survey of a representative sample of the student population at each CSU campus to determine the average student's annual discretionary expenses to attend the campus. The bill would require the campus to post its average on its Internet Web site within the six months immediately following completion of each campuswide survey. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires the CSU, on or before January 1, 2021, and on or before each January 1 every three years thereafter, to conduct a survey of a representative sample of the student population at each CSU campus to determine the average student's annual discretionary expenses, which shall not include tuition and fees, to attend the CSU campus.
- 2) Stipulates that discretionary expenses include, but are not limited to: housing, food, textbooks, supplies, course materials, educationally related technology, transportation expenses – including (but not limited to) travel expenses while at school and to and from a student's permanent address, medical expenses, child care expenses, and recreational expenses.
- 3) Requires CSU to exclude from the average determined pursuant to the survey a lack of, or a reduction in, expenses that would skew the average for at least both of the following scenarios:
  - a) Support or aid provided by close family or friends, including, but not limited to, free housing.
  - b) Poverty or hardship, including, but not limited to, homelessness.
- 4) Determines that the average annual total cost of attendance for each campus shall be determined pursuant to the above requirements.
- 5) Requires the results of this survey to be posted by each campus on their internet web site within the six months immediately following completion of each campuswide survey.

**EXISTING LAW:** Existing law establishes the CSU, under the administration of the Board of Trustees of the CSU, as one of the three segments of public postsecondary education in California. (Education Code Section 66010 et seq.)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown.

**COMMENTS:** *Purpose.* According to the author, the "...cost of attendance (COA) is not [accurately reported] at CSU campuses. In California, until 2007, the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) conducted a comprehensive survey and subsequent report on student

discretionary spending at California public and private postsecondary institutions. This was used as a measure to assess COA at public institutions in California. In 2007, the study was eliminated when CSAC's budget was decreased by 40%. Currently, the University of California conducts a comprehensive system-wide survey every three years to establish COA at each campus [- the most recent survey was released in February, and is based on responses from over 14,000 students]. The CSU uses the data from the 2007 SEARS study, conducted over ten years ago, and factors a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) to establish COA at the [its] 23 campuses.”

The author argues that COAs created using decade-old data and a COLA are not accurate. The author cites that, San Francisco State University and CSU, Bakersfield's have similar costs in their COA for food and housing. However, in 2015, the median monthly housing costs for renters in San Francisco was \$1558 compared to \$983 in Bakersfield. This same pattern of similar cost for food and housing being rendered for campuses with different housing costs is also found when comparing CSU Fresno with CSU Long Beach and CSU Chico with CSU Northridge.

*Arguments in support.* The organization uAspire, a non-profit dedicated to removing financial barriers to postsecondary education, writes, “. . .the actual cost of attending college in California – parallel to the cost of living – varies tremendously by campus. Students and families need an accurate understanding of housing, food, transportation, and other costs specific to their campus to make the right financial choices for their situation. We encourage the use of a student-survey, alongside other factors, to provide a more transparent picture of the cost of attending CSUs.”

*Related legislation.* AB 990 (Rodriguez), pending in Assembly Appropriations Committee, requires CSU campuses, and requests UC campuses, to annually post on their respective websites the cost of a one-bedroom apartment in the area surrounding the campus.

## **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

### **Support**

uAspire

### **Opposition**

None on file.

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