

Date of Hearing: April 17, 2012

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Marty Block, Chair

AB 1741 (Fong) – As Amended: March 20, 2012

SUBJECT: California Community Colleges: Student Success Infrastructure Act of 2012.

SUMMARY: Requires the California Community Colleges (CCC) Board of Governors to develop a plan for supporting specified goals as part of its efforts to improve student success that are contained in SB 1456 (Lowenthal), pending in the Senate. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Establishes the Student Success Infrastructure Act of 2012 to do the following:
  - a) Provide the necessary counseling and instructional infrastructure at CCC to ensure that students have the access to support services and classroom instructors to increase their opportunities for success.
  - b) Complement the Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012 (SB 1456, Lowenthal) in its purpose of providing improved orientation and counseling services to student and greater access to instructional faculty.
- 2) Establishes the Student Success Infrastructure Fund in the State Treasury for the purpose of funding the following goals:
  - a) Increasing the ratio of faculty counselors to students;
  - b) Restoring categorical programs that provide student support services;
  - c) Increasing the percentage of hours of credit instruction that are taught by full-time instructors consistent with existing law that sets a goal of 75% full-time to 25% part-time faculty; and,
  - d) Improving the professionalization of part-time faculty, including, but not limited to, expanding part-time office hours consistent with student needs.
- 3) Requires the CCC Board of Governors to develop a plan to support the goals of the Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act and the Student Success Infrastructure Act, consistent with the needs of individual districts and statewide policies regarding student success.
- 4) Declares this bill is only operative to the extent funds are appropriated for this purpose in the 2012-13 fiscal year and successive fiscal years.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Known as the Seymour-Campbell Matriculation Act of 1986, establishes a matriculation process at CCC for the purpose of realizing a student's educational objectives. (Education Code § 78212)

- 2) Requires CCC to convene a task force, as specified, to make recommendations to the Legislature for improving CCC student success. (SB 1143, Liu, Chapter 409, Statutes of 2010)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: Background. CCC is the educational gateway for 2.6 million students, representing nearly 25% of the nation's community college student population. However, students are rapidly losing access as course offerings have been reduced due to budget cuts, and numerous reports have shown that those who cannot get courses too often do not reach their education goals—between 53% and 41% depending on the goal identified—and the statistics are much lower for Latino and African American students.

CCC Student Success Task Force. The Legislature passed SB 1143, Liu, Chapter 409, Statutes of 2010, to require the CCC Chancellor to convene a task force of stakeholders to make recommendations to the Legislature to improve CCC student success. After a year of study and research, this January the CCC Student Success Task Force (SSTF) issued a report with 22 recommendations to improve CCC students' success in completing their certificates, degrees and educational goals.

The recommendations are designed to refocus priorities on the core missions of remedial education, workforce preparation, certificate and degree attainment, and transfer, by improving matriculation services and incentivizing successful student behaviors, aligning course offerings to student needs, improving basic skills education and professional development, strengthening statewide CCC leadership, increasing CCC coordination, maintaining a student success scorecard and data system, and aligning resources with these recommendations. The Assembly Higher Education Committee, the Senate Education Committee, and Senate Budget Subcommittee on Education held an oversight hearing on the SSTF recommendations on February 1, 2012.

Faculty views on SSTF. The SSTF included five faculty members. However, the statewide CCC Academic Senate, the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (FACCC), the California Teachers Association, the California Federation of Teachers, and the California Community College Independents, have expressed concern that the recommendations narrow the CCC mission, take key academic decisions out of the purview of the local faculty, could negatively impact disadvantaged students, and do not address key needs, including restoring general and categorical funding.

How will the SSTF recommendations be implemented? Most of the recommendations can be implemented through regulation, the budget, or state administrative policy. Six recommendations require statutory changes, most of which are contained in SB 1456 (Lowenthal), pending in the Senate. SB 1456 refocuses the existing matriculation process on providing student support services to students on the front-end of their educational experience as follows:

- 1) Target student success and support funds for assessment, orientation, and education planning services and authorize the Board of Governors to establish policies that eventually require students to complete these services and provide for exemptions when necessary.

- 2) Require that campuses participate in a common assessment system and post a student success campus score card as a condition for receiving student success categorical funding; and,
- 3) Establish new requirements and conditions for students to receive a Board of Governors fee waiver that include identifying a degree, certificate, transfer or career advancement goal and meeting academic and progress standards, including a requirement that students not accumulate more than a specified number of units, excluding basic skills and English-as-a-Second-Language coursework. SB 1456 also authorizes the Board of Governors to determine the unit cap and develop policies that provide statewide guidance to colleges on implementing an intervention and appeals process for the new fee waiver requirements.

Need for this bill. According to the author, this bill is designed to complement SB 1456 in its goal of providing greater levels of orientation and counseling to students and access to instructional faculty. The four priority items addressed in this bill all constitute indispensable infrastructure for a system of higher education that may move in a direction (assuming passage of SB 1456) in which students are rewarded or punished based upon their ability to develop and stick to an education plan.

What does this bill do? This bill would require the CCC Board of Governors to develop a plan to provide budgetary support for the goals of SB 1456 *and* the following goals:

- 1) Increasing the ratio of faculty counselors to students;
- 2) Restoring categorical programs that provide student support services;
- 3) Increasing the percentage of hours of credit instruction that are taught by full-time instructors consistent with existing law that sets a goal of 75% full-time to 25% part-time faculty; and,
- 4) Improving the professionalization of part-time faculty, including, but not limited to, expanding part-time office hours consistent with student needs.

Is this bill a complement or a competitor? The SSTF recommends that a Student Support Initiative be a top priority for new CCC monies to support efforts to improve students' success based on local needs, including but not limited to, implementing diagnostic assessments, orientation, and education planning. The SSTF did not identify the four funding priorities contained in this bill as necessary first steps to improving student success.

Arguments in support. According to FACCC, this bill's sponsor, the four areas identified in this bill are necessary to increase the potential for student success. FACCC states, "We believe this measure should be viewed as a companion piece to SB 1456 (Lowenthal), legislation implementing major components of the Student Success Task Force. Since September, we have relayed our concerns to the Chancellor's Office and to legislative offices that it would be both improper and unrealistic to expect as major a shift in our community college system as envisioned by the Student Success Task Force without proper attention to the infrastructure referenced in AB 1741."

Arguments in opposition. According to the CCC Chancellor's Office, this bill suggests that student improvement can only be achieved once the goals of the Student Success Infrastructure Act are funded and does not acknowledge that there are interim steps that can be taken without

incurring new costs. Moreover, once there are new resources available, AB 1741 proposes to fund existing models without considering new and innovative approaches to serving students as cost-effectively as possible. The Chancellor's Office also notes that many of the funding priorities in this bill are outside the policies addressed by SB 1456, stating, "AB 1741 is loaded down with a laundry list of investments that, while meritorious, are outside the scope of SB 1456."

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

American Association of University Women  
California Community College Independents  
California Federation of Teachers  
Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (sponsor)  
Gavilan College Faculty Association

Opposition

California Community College Chancellor's Office

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