

Date of Hearing: April 19, 2016

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

AB 1985 (Williams) – As Introduced February 16, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Postsecondary education

**SUMMARY:** Requires the California Community Colleges (CCC) to develop a uniform policy regarding credit awarded for Advance Placement (AP) examinations. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Establishes Legislative intent to create a uniform AP credit policy within the CCC.
- 2) Finds that studies consistently find that pupils who earn AP Exam scores of three and higher are likely to demonstrate multiple measures of college success.
- 3) Finds that the lack of a uniform AP credit policy often serves as an academic and financial barrier for students enrolling in CCC and is a transfer obstacle for many pupils.
- 4) Requires the CCC to develop, and requires each CCC district to adopt, a uniform policy to award a pupil who passes an AP exam with a score of three or higher credit for a California Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) course with subject matter similar to that of the AP exam.
- 5) Provides for reimbursement to local agencies and school districts if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this bill contains mandated state costs.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Establishes the Board of Governors (BOG) and the Chancellor of the CCC to provide leadership and direction to the CCC while maintaining and continuing, to the maximum degree permissible, local authority and control in the administration of the districts (CCD). The BOG and Chancellor are responsible for a variety of functions, including establishing minimum standards, providing various reports, and various annual budgeting functions. In performing functions, BOG is required to carry out a process of consultation with institutional representatives, college organizations and interested individuals and parties. (Education Code Section 70901).
- 2) Pursuant to BOG regulations, the governing board of a CCD may adopt policies to grant credit for satisfactory completion of AP exams. The faculty in the appropriate discipline must approve AP examinations, scores deemed to constitute satisfactory performance, courses offered by the college for which credit will be granted, and requirements that may be met by such examinations in accordance with policies and procedures approved by the curriculum committee. The student's academic record must be clearly annotated to reflect that credit was earned through an AP exam. (5 CCR Sec. 55052).

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown.

**COMMENTS:** *Purpose of this bill.* AP courses are designed to provide rigorous academic coursework opportunities for high school students. Upon successful completion of AP courses, students are provided the opportunity to take an AP exam, conducted by the College Board, for

which scores range from 1-5. According to College Board, scores of 3-5 correlate to college course grades of C to A. According to the author, AP credit policies vary across the 113 community colleges. According to a College Board report entitled *AP Credit Policies at California Community Colleges*, 10 colleges do not grant credit or have unknown credit policies for all available AP exams, 24 colleges require a score of 4 to award credit, and 6 colleges require a score on some AP exams of 5. According to the author, the lack of a systemwide credit policy for the CCC creates an unnecessary barrier for students in receiving and transferring credits. In 2014, 16,178 AP test takers reported 47,180 AP exam scores to CCC.

*CSU policy on AP exam credit.* CSU Executive Order No. 1036, issued on July 14, 2008, provides that CSU campuses shall award baccalaureate credit toward degree and/or admissions eligibility to students who pass standardized external examinations (such as AP, International Baccalaureate, and College Level Entrance Program examinations). The Chancellor, in consultation with the General Education Advisory Committee is required to maintain a list of external examinations and passing scores, minimum credits toward admissions eligibility, minimum credits toward the baccalaureate degree, and, placement in GE Breadth area for transfer students seeking general education certification. According to the most recently available list, all AP exams require a minimum passing score of three.

*UC policy on AP exam credit.* According to UC, systemwide UC grants credit for AP exams on which a student scores a 3 or higher. Elective units awarded may be applied to UC graduation requirements for specific subjects and/or for general education/breadth requirements, as determined by each campus. For transfer students, AP exams can also be used to meet the minimum transfer admission subject requirements in English, math and 4 other courses chosen from the humanities, behavioral/social sciences, and biological/physical sciences.

*Support if amended.* The Community College League of California (League) is requesting amendments to strike the contents of the bill and instead require CCCCO to recommend, and each CCC district to adopt, a policy regarding the awarding of AP credits. The amendments would also require the Academic Senate of the CCC to develop a policy for reviewing the policies and procedures of awarding AP credit. Finally, the amendments would require that CCC districts complete periodic reviews of the AP policy. The League believes that local CCC districts should retain flexibility to adapt to transferability requirements.

*Suggested amendments.* Committee staff recommends amendments to (1) make the findings and declarations uncodified contained in the bill; (2) include the Academic Senate of the CCC in the development of the policy; (3) clarify that the CCC Chancellor's Office is responsible for developing the policy (in collaboration with the Academic Senate); and, (4) clarify that the policy should be applicable to IGETC, the CSU GE Breadth, and CCC GE transfer.

## **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

### **Support**

Association of California School Administrators  
College Board  
North Orange County Community College District  
Santa Rosa Junior College

School of Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Engineering, California State University,  
Bakersfield

**Opposition**

None on File

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