

Date of Hearing: April 23, 2013

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
Das Williams, Chair  
AB 388 (Chesbro) – As Amended: March 19, 2013

SUBJECT: Community colleges: Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012.

SUMMARY: Defines "career advancement" for purposes of the Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012 as including, but not limited to, professional development, development of job skills, development of language skills, and job services for individuals with developmental disabilities.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: Student Success Task Force (SSTF). Numerous recent studies have noted that a significant percentage of students who are able to enroll in CCC courses do not complete in a timely fashion. These poor student success rates led to the enactment of SB 1143 of 2010, requiring the CCC Board of Governors (BOG) to convene a task force of stakeholders to make recommendations to the Legislature to improve CCC student success. The SSTF was comprised of 20 individuals (CCC chief executive officers, faculty, students, researchers, staff and external stake holders) who spent a year researching, studying and debating the best methods to improve student outcomes at the CCC. This effort resulted in 22 specific recommendations, adopted unanimously by the CCC BOG in January 2012, and the report was presented to the Legislature at a joint informational hearing of the Assembly Higher Education Committee and the Senate Education Committee in February 2012.

Central to these recommendations was the need to improve how CCCs assists students, early in their academic careers, to identify an educational goal and develop an education plan to achieve that goal. The recommendations touch on nearly every aspect of how the colleges operate, but most of them trace back to this core element. These recommendations have been implemented through regulatory changes, system-wide administrative policies, local best practices, and legislation. Two key elements are priority registration and the Student Success and Support Program.

Student who identify an educational goal and develop an education plan receive support through the Student Success and Support Program (SB 1456, Lowenthal, Chapter 624, Statutes of 2012), which provides improved support to students through counseling, advisement, orientation, assessment, and education planning. SB 1456 focused these student support services on entering students' transition into college to provide a foundation for students' completion of their educational goals with a priority toward serving students who enroll to earn degrees, career technical certificate, transfer preparation, or career advancement. Students who develop an educational plan also receive priority enrollment for classes. The education plan required for new students can be a short-term plan if the student is not clear about his or her educational goal and/or course of study, or if the student has a short-term goal.

Need for this bill. According to the author, "The enactment of this bill would define what services are allowed under the definition of a "career advancement" educational plan in order to

allow students with a specific intent allowed under the definition of enrolling in a California Community College.”

Definition is broad and unclear. It is unclear on what this definition is based. Its breadth and lack of clarity appears to dilute the intent and effectiveness of the SSTF by limiting CCCs ability to incentivize student behaviors that lead to completion.

Is this premature? SB 1456 has been in effect for less than four months, and the Committee has not been provided with evidence of a problem. Should the Student Success and Support Program be implemented and its effectiveness evaluated before altering its provisions?

Prior legislation. SB 1456 (Lowenthal), Chapter 624, Statutes of 2012, implemented the SSTF recommendations revising student support services and BOG fee waiver eligibility. AB 1741 (Fong) of 2012, which died in the Senate Education Committee, would have required the BOG to develop a plan to support the goals of SB 1456 and the following priorities: increasing the ratio of counselors to students; increasing funding for categorical programs that provide student support services; increasing the percentage of hours of credit instruction that are taught by full-time instructors consistent with existing law that sets a goal of 75:25 full-time to part-time faculty; and expanding part-time faculty office hours consistent with student needs.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file.

Opposition

None on file.

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