

Date of Hearing: April 18, 2017

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

AB 637 (Medina) – As Introduced February 14, 2017

SUBJECT: Community colleges: student equity plans.

SUMMARY: Requires campus-based research for purposes of student equity plans, to use a standard definition and measure of "equity" and "significant underrepresentation" as provided by the California Community Colleges (CCC) Chancellor.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Creates the Student Success and Support Program (SSSP) in order to provide a variety of programs intended to ensure the success of CCC students, including, but not limited to: a) student assessment before course registration; b) counseling and other education planning services; c) advising; and, d) development of an education plan leading to a course of study. Specifies funding for SSSP shall be targeted to fully implement orientation, assessment, counseling and advising, and other education planning services needed to assist a student in making an informed decision about his or her educational goal and course of study and in the development of an education plan. (Education Code (EC) 78212).
- 2) Requires that all community college districts (CCD), with the assistance of the California Community Colleges (CCC) Chancellor, establish and maintain institutional research to evaluate the effectiveness of the SSSP, as specified, and of any other programs or services designed to facilitate students' completion of their educational goals and course of study. Specifies the metrics for said research shall include, but be not limited to the following: a) prior educational experience, including transcripts when appropriate, as determined by the chancellor; b) educational goals and courses of study; c) criteria for exemption from orientation, assessment, or required counseling or advisement, if applicable; d) need for financial assistance; e) disaggregated data by ethnicity, gender, disability, age, and socioeconomic status, to the extent this information is available; f) academic performance, such as the completion of specified unit thresholds, success in basic skills courses, grade point average, course completion outcomes, transfer readiness, and degree and certificate completion; and, g) any additional information that the chancellor finds appropriate (EC Section 78214).
- 3) As a condition for receiving SSSP funding, and in order to ensure equal educational opportunities and to promote student success for all students, regardless of race, gender, age, disability, or economic circumstances, the governing board of each CCD shall maintain a student equity plan that includes, but is not limited to, the following for each community college in the CCD: a) campus-based research as to the extent of student equity by gender and specified underrepresented groups; b) goals for access to, and completion of, basic skills, career technical education and workforce training, and transfer courses for the overall student population and for each population group of high-need or disadvantaged students, and a determination of what activities are most likely to effectively meet those goals; c) where significant underrepresentation is found to exist, measures for addressing the disparities in those areas, implementation activities designed to attain the specified goals, including, but

not limited to, the adoption of evidence-based models of remediation; and, d) a schedule and process for evaluation. The plan shall be adopted by the governing board of the CCD and submitted to the CCC Chancellor, as specified (EC 78820).

- 4) Requires the CCC Chancellor to allocate funds provided for purposes of successfully implementing the activities and goals specified in the student equity plans, consistent with all of the following: a) the Chancellor shall ensure CCDs submit a student equity plan that is consistent, as specified in EC Section 78220; b) the Chancellor shall ensure that CCDs serving greater populations of students who are high-need or disadvantaged receive greater resources to provide services to students, consistent to the goals and activities specified in their student equity plans; c) the Chancellor shall establish criteria for calculating the number of high-need and disadvantaged students in a CCD; d) the Chancellor shall establish a list of eligible and ineligible expenditures and activities to ensure that funding is used to support the implementation of student equity plan goals and the coordination of services for the targeted student populations; and, e) the Chancellor shall report to the Department of Finance, the Legislative Analyst, and the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature, on the expenditure of student equity funds (EC Section 78221).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown.

COMMENTS: *Student equity plans.* The 2016-17 Budget Act allocated \$155 million in ongoing funds to CCDs to implement student equity plans. The 2016-17 allocations to districts were calculated using the existing student equity funding formula, which includes factors for annual full-time equivalent student (FTES), high need students, educational attainment of residential zip code, participation rate, poverty rate, unemployment rate, and unduplicated foster youth headcount.

To be noted, student equity funds must be used to address the student equity populations and indicators as defined in statute (EC Sections 78220 and 78221) and be based on the disproportionate impact study, goals, and activities as outlined in the CCDs student equity plans that are submitted to the CCC Chancellor's Office (CCCCO). Additionally, the colleges have two fiscal years to expend these funds. The expenditure cycle for the 2016-17 funds will thus end on June 30, 2018; the CCDs will have to provide mid-cycle and end of cycle expenditure reports to the CCCCCO in September 2017 and September 2018, respectively.

Student success and support. Senate Bill 1456 (Lowenthal), Chapter 624, Statutes of 2012, was enacted to implement some of the Student Success Task Force recommendations. Among other things, SB 1456 revised and recast the Seymour-Campbell Matriculation Act of 1986 as the Seymour-Campbell Success Act of 2012 in order to target funding to services such as orientation, assessment, and counseling and advising to assist students with the development of education plans. It also required that students define goals, required that students declare a course of study and mandated student participation in assessment, orientation and education planning.

At a regulatory level, the CCC Board of Governors (BOG) has approved regulations that provide enrollment priority to students who have participated in assessment, orientation and who have developed an education plan. A revision of Title 5 regulations is in progress to implement provisions of SB 1456 to require students to complete core services as well as to declare a course of study. Additionally, in 2012 the Board of Governors adopted enrollment priorities and, as of

Spring 2013, districts are required to notify students that accumulating 100 degree applicable units or being on academic or progress probation for two consecutive terms will result in the loss of enrollment priority. Finally, as of Fall 2014, students who complete orientation, assessment, and have a student education plan receive a higher enrollment priority.

Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) report. The LAO, per SB 1456 (as highlighted in the "Student success and support" section of this analysis), in September 2016 issued, "California Community Colleges: Second Progress Report on the Student Success Act of 2012". The report, in part, found that systemwide and college efforts to implement SSSP and student equity are generally consistent with the intent of the SB 1456. The report also found that SSSP and student equity activities vary across colleges. Additionally, the report found that under current guidelines, a college may receive conflicting answers as to whether an equity gap exists for a particular group, depending on which methodology the college chooses.

The report made several recommendations including, but not limited to: a) the Legislature should direct the CCCCO to identify a consistent way of measuring disparities for each of the specified student outcomes; and, b) the Legislature should direct the CCCCO to identify a list of practices shown to be effective in improving student success and reducing equity gaps in community college settings.

Need for the measure. According to the author, "Without a standard definition and measure of "equity" and "significant underrepresentation", colleges cannot set cohesive goals to reduce educational gaps and improve student success. A top-down approach to define these terms would help community colleges streamline their research efforts and better target underrepresented groups and improve educational equity."

This measure would require campus-based research for purposes of student equity plans, to use a standard definition and measure of "equity" and "significant underrepresentation" as provided by the CCC Chancellor.

Related and previous legislation. AB 504 (Medina), which will be heard in this Committee today, would, require the CCC Chancellor, when allocating SSSP funds to CCDs for purposes of successfully implementing activities and goals adopted in student equity plans, to establish a standard definition of "equity" and a standard definition of "significant underrepresentation" and measures of these terms, for use in the student equity places of CCDs.

SB 1143 (Liu) Chapter 409, Statutes of 2010, created the California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force which made 22 recommendations to the CCC BOG to improve student educational achievement in the state. To note, the CCC BOG approved the recommendations in January 2012, which focused on increasing student graduation, transfer, and certificate completion rates at then all 112 community colleges.

SB 1456 (Lowenthal) Chapter 624, Statutes of 2012, established the Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012, and among other reforms to the CCCs relating to student success, established the SSSP. To note, since the enactment of SB 1456, the Legislature and the Governor have continually provided funding to SSSP, which is currently \$285 million annually.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Faculty Association of California Community Colleges
Young Invincibles

Opposition

None on file

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