

Date of Hearing: April 7, 2015

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

AB 968 (Williams) – As Introduced February 26, 2015

SUBJECT: Postsecondary education: transcripts

SUMMARY: Requires California public and private educational institutions to indicate on student transcripts when a student has been suspended or expelled. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Establishes the following findings and declarations:
 - a) At public and private colleges and universities across California, the student academic transcript is recognized as the official record of a student's academic progress from admission until separation from the institution;
 - b) The transcript is often the only document that must accompany a student in the process of transferring to another institution, and it is thus important for both students and institutions that the transcript accurately reflects the student's performance;
 - c) A violation of a student code of conduct, including the commission of sexual assault, can result in a student being temporarily or permanently separated from an institution;
 - d) Significant inconsistencies exist in current policies and practices related to the notation of disciplinary dismissals on student transcripts;
 - e) The absence of this pertinent information can put a receiving institution and its students at risk, and may raise liability concerns for the institution from which the student transfers; and,
 - f) The disclosure of student suspensions and expulsions on student transcripts ensures the integrity and transparency of student transcripts and the safety and security of California campuses.
- 2) Requires the governing board of each community college district (CCD), the Trustees of the California State University (CSU), the Regents of the University of California (UC), the governing body of each independent institution of higher education, and the governing body of each private postsecondary educational institution to indicate when a student is ineligible to reenroll due to suspension or expulsion on the student's transcript for the period of time the student is ineligible to reenroll.
- 3) Provides for reimbursement to CCD's if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state.

EXISTING LAW: Requires the UC Regents, the CSU Trustees, and the governing board of every CCD to adopt specific rules governing student behavior and applicable penalties for violations of the rules; institutions must also adopt procedures by which students are informed of rules and associated penalties. (Education Code Section 66300)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown.

COMMENTS: *Purpose of this bill.* According to the author, ensuring that the various university campuses are communicating with each other is a vital step toward providing a safe learning environment for students. A standard notation on a student's transcript will notify the university to perform a background check on the potential transfer student so they can best determine whether they should enroll the student into their university.

Existing practice among California's public institutions. California's public postsecondary education institutions do not currently follow a standard method of noting on an academic transcript when a student is suspended or expelled. UC makes a general notation when a student is expelled. CSU makes a general notation if the student is expelled, or suspended for one academic year or more. Committee staff understands that CCDs provide for a notation on the transcript if a student was expelled for academic reasons, but that there is no standard for notations for students expelled for reasons other than academic deficiencies. This bill would require all California institutions, public and private, to indicate when a student is ineligible to reenroll due to suspension or expulsion on the student's transcript for the period of time the student is ineligible to reenroll.

National standard. The Association for Student Conduct Administration (ASCA), a national membership based organization that provides education and resources to facilitate best practices of student conduct administration and conflict resolution on college campuses, recommends that all institutions place an appropriate notation on an academic transcript to indicate when a student is ineligible to re-enroll at that institution as a consequence of disciplinary action.

ASCA notes that transcript notations are important, but will not be effective at reducing the risk of violence to a campus absent a comprehensive approach to admissions, review of information, and appropriate action based on that review. Thus, ASCA also recommends that institutions:

- 1) Ask key questions to solicit information about a potential student's conduct and/or criminal history prior to being admitted to the institution;
- 2) Have systemic ways to review and utilize this information in relevant admission decisions, as well as to promote individual student success and safer campus communities;
- 3) Develop and communicate procedures explaining the notation, duration of notation, and retention and release of records; and,
- 4) Communicate these practices to students through their appropriate institutional privacy or other record policies, including via website to current and prospective students.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Coalition Against Sexual Assault
California Federation of Teachers
California State Student Association

Opposition

None on File

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