

Date of Hearing: August 25, 2014

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Das Williams, Chair
AB 46 (Pan) – As Amended: August 5, 2014

SUBJECT: California State University: Online education

SUMMARY: Requires the California State University (CSU) Trustees to make specified data available upon request to the Academic Senate. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Requires, for the purposes of evaluating the quality of online educational programs, the CSU Trustees to, compliant with all relevant student privacy laws, make specified information available to the Academic Senate of the CSU and the campus academic senate, upon request.
- 2) Requires the information to relate to all matriculated CSU students and include:
 - a) The number of students enrolled in online courses;
 - b) With respect to each major course of study, the course completion rates for online courses and for courses other than online courses;
 - c) The grades earned by each student enrolled in an online course; and,
 - d) The course completion rates for students who are enrolled in online courses.
- 3) Requires the following information, if data is available:
 - a) Data relating to a student's use of university resources in connection with online coursework, including, but not necessarily limited to, analytic data concerning access to course materials; access to linked materials; performance on quizzes, tests, or examinations; and interactions with faculty, mentors, coaches, and other students in the online course. This data shall include any available information about the average amount of time it takes a student to complete an online assignment.
 - b) Demographic data relating to students enrolled in online courses, including, but not necessarily limited to, the ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender of those students, and the cumulative grade point averages of those students disaggregated by those demographic categories.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Requires the CSU Trustees, by January 1, 2015, to establish a series of uniform definitions for online education for purposes of measuring the effectiveness of online education and to report key performance data on online courses, as specified, to the Legislature by January 1, 2017, and every two years thereafter.
- 2) Provides for cross-enrollment in online education at the CSU and outlines the requirements to be met by a student in order to be qualified to participate. Each CSU campus is also

required to inform students who may enroll in an online course of the technical requirements for successful participation, any prerequisite courses or other academic preparation deemed necessary, and any materials, skills, knowledge, or other elements necessary to ensure a student's opportunity to succeed in the online course.

FISCAL EFFECT: According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, a negligible fiscal impact was determined pursuant to Senate Rule 28.8.

COMMENTS: Purpose of this bill. According to the author, this bill is intended to respond to concerns regarding a contract entered into in January 2013 by San Jose State University and Udacity, a massive open online courses provider, for purposes of a pilot program to examine online learning. The author's office contends that when members of the CSU Academic Senate requested student data, the information was not released by Udacity until a public records request was filed, and the released data did not include all information requested. The author's office also asserts that the company failed to comply with federal guidelines that protect student information. The author's office is concerned that, based upon a January agenda item presented to the CSU Trustees on "Enrollment Bottleneck Solutions" course and advising redesign programs will involve partnering with private companies to deliver public education services. As the CSU system works towards providing a robust and collaborative system of traditional and online course offerings, partnerships with third-party contractors are expected to become more common.

CSU opposition. CSU specifically opposes provisions of this bill requiring that data be disclosed, if that data is available, regarding a student's use of online resources (See: Summary (3)(a)). CSU argues that, although the data is only required to be disclosed if it is available, this bill *could* result in subsequent requirements for tracking students who have chosen to take online courses and programs to meet their degree objectives. CSU argues this is inappropriate and unnecessary, and a violation of students personal privacy.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Faculty Association

Opposition

California State University

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