

Date of Hearing: June 21, 2016

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

SB 412 (Glazer) – As Amended June 8, 2016

**SENATE VOTE:** 36-0

**SUBJECT:** The California Promise

**SUMMARY:** Establishes the California Promise to support students who enroll in the campuses of the California State University (CSU) and the California Community Colleges (CCC) in obtaining associate degrees within two academic years, and baccalaureate degrees within four academic years, as applicable, of the academic year of the student's freshman admission. Specifically, **this bill:**

1) Finds and declares all of the following:

- a) This part is needed to facilitate the availability and completion of coursework for degree programs offered by campuses of the CSU and the CCC and to ensure that students enrolled in these campuses are able to complete associate degree programs within two academic years, and baccalaureate degree programs within four academic years, as applicable, of the academic year of the student's freshman admission.
- b) A more concerted, statewide effort to create pathways to four-year graduation is needed at the CSU. For the 2010 cohort of full-time, first-time students at the CSU, 19 percent graduated within four academic years. According to the Legislative Analyst's Office, the most recent nationally comparable data shows that the CSU overall four-year graduation rate was 16 percent in 2011, below the national rate of 26 percent among similar public institutions.
- c) Impediments to graduating within four academic years include the failure of students to complete sufficient units per academic year and the lack of available high-demand courses.
- d) New approaches are critical for the future of higher education in California. Efforts have been ongoing, though sporadic, to improve postsecondary educational institution enrollment and graduation. These efforts will need to be intensified and made more broadly systemic.
- e) Students who graduate within four academic years save tens of thousands of dollars. In addition to the direct costs of extended college and university enrollment, students miss out on earnings in the workforce while they remain in school.
- f) When California experiences a decline in college and university graduates, the state's economy shrinks and employers seek qualified candidates outside the state. Furthermore, a larger share of the state's workforce is downgraded to lower-paying jobs and consumer behavior and home ownership declines, which leads to plummeting revenues for local and state government and to more people relying on increasingly decimated government services.

- g) According to the Public Policy Institute of California, if bold measures are not taken, California will fall short of the state's economic demand by 1.1 million college and university graduates by 2030. An increased demand for highly educated workers will outweigh the number of qualified applicants for available jobs, which will be exacerbated when scores of highly educated baby boomers retire. The share of workers with a baccalaureate degree will be 33 percent in 2030, below the 38 percent that will be needed.
  - h) The impact of graduation rates from CSU campuses is felt not only throughout the state, but also the nation. One out of every 10 California employees is a CSU graduate, while one out of every 20 United States citizens with a college or university degree graduates from a campus of the CSU. These statistics emphasize the national importance of graduation rates at CSU campuses.
  - i) It is the intent of the Legislature that the California Promise will enable the CSU system to meet and exceed the national average of similar public postsecondary educational institutions as quickly as possible.
  - j) The California Promise programs established at the CSU and the CCC in accordance with this part should aim to reflect the demographics of their respective campuses and target a diverse set of students.
- 2) Defines the following terms:
- a) "Academic year of the student's freshman admission" means the first full academic year in which a person is a student at a campus of the CSU or the CCC
  - b) "Board of governors" means the Board of Governors of the CCC.
  - c) "Trustees" mean the Trustees of the CSU.
- 3) Requires the trustees and the board of governors to develop and implement a California Promise program, as specified, at 10 or more of their respective campuses.
- 4) Requires, commencing with the 2017–18 fiscal year, the trustees and the board of governors to authorize each campus with a California Promise program to enter into a pledge with a qualifying student of the campus, including a CCC transfer student, to support the student in obtaining an associate degree within two academic years, or a baccalaureate degree within four academic years, as applicable, of the academic year of the student's freshman admission.
- 5) Requires qualifying students to comply with the following:
- a) Be a California resident for purposes of in-state tuition eligibility.
  - b) Complete at least 30 semester units or the quarter equivalent per academic year. Units completed by the student during a summer term may count towards the previous or following academic year as determined by the trustees.
  - c) CCC students must be enrolled in an associate degree for transfer program at a CCC, and participate in the Student Success and Support Program.

- 6) Requires each program established by the trustees at a CSU campus to be reviewed by each campus' graduation initiative advisory committee or a committee designated with similar functions. The committee:
  - a) Must ensure the goals of the program and implementation steps lead to increasing the campus' four-year graduation rates for students who enrolled as first-time freshman and two-year graduation rates for community college transfer students; and
  - b) May develop additional eligibility requirements to prioritize specific student populations that have lower four-year graduation rates at the campus for those who enroll as first-time freshman and lower two-year graduation rates for those who enroll as CCC transfer students, including, but not limited to, all of the following student populations:
    - i) Students who receive financial aid under the federal Pell Grant Program or the Cal Grant Program;
    - ii) Underrepresented students; and,
    - iii) First generation college students.
- 7) Establishes Legislative intent that each California Promise program gradually scale up in order to accommodate as many students into the program as feasible.
- 8) Requires the support provided by a CSU campus to a student who participates in the campus' California Promise program to include, at least:
  - a) Priority registration in coursework; and,
  - b) Academic advisement that includes monitoring the student's academic progress.
- 9) Requires the support provided by a CCC campus to a student who participates in the campus' California Promise program to include the services outlined in the Student Success and Support Program, including orientation, assessment, counseling, advising, and other assistance.
- 10) Requires the trustees and the board of governors to develop application criteria, administrative guidelines, and additional requirements, including how campuses will measure student success, for purposes of implementing and administering the California Promise program; and authorizes the requirements to include a minimum grade point average for participating students.
- 11) Requires the trustees and the board of governors to take into consideration the report on graduation rates required pursuant to the Budget Act of 2016.
- 12) Requires the trustees to submit a report to Legislative policy and fiscal committees by January 1, 2021 that includes:
  - a) The total number of students participating in the program disaggregated by individual campus and all of the following:
    - i) CCC transfer students and students who enroll as first-time freshman.

- ii) First generation college students.
  - iii) Recipients of financial aid under the federal Pell Grant Program or the Cal Grant Program established in Chapter 1.7 of Part 42.
  - iv) Student ethnicity.
- b) The total number of students who graduated in four academic years for students who enrolled as first-time freshman and two academic years for CCC transfer students, disaggregated by individual campus and the aforementioned characteristics.
- 13) Requires the trustees shall submit a report to Legislative policy and fiscal committees by January 1, 2019, that includes the total number of the first cohort of CCC transfer students participating in the program, disaggregated by individual campus and the aforementioned characteristics.
- 14) Requires the aforementioned reports to include a summary description of significant differences regarding implementation of the California Promise program by campus, including, but not limited to, the prioritization of student populations, the role of academic advising, and the implementation of priority registration.
- 15) Requires the trustees and the board of governors to submit recommendations to the appropriate policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature by March 15, 2017, regarding potential financial incentives that can benefit students who participate in the California Promise program, including, but not limited to, incentives for qualifying students who are unable to graduate within four or two academic years due to a lack of course offerings.
- 16) Requires a student who participates in the California Promise program at a CCC and who successfully completes his or her associate degree for transfer within two academic years to be guaranteed participation in the California Promise program at the CSU transfer campus, if established.
- 17) Requires the trustees and the board of governors to make every effort to close the achievement gap and encourage broad participation in a California Promise program that reflects a participating campus' demographics.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Establishes the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act and requires CCC districts to develop and grant a transfer associate degree that deems the student eligible for transfer into the CSU, when the student meets specified course requirements (EC Section 66746). The CSU is required to guarantee admission with junior status to any community college student who meets specified requirements, but provides that the student is not guaranteed admission for specific majors or campuses. (EC Section 66747).
- 2) Establishes the Student Success Act and requires CCC to provide student services and support, including orientation, assessment, counseling and education planning, referral to specialized support services, and evaluation of each student's progress and referral to appropriate interventions. Students have the responsibility to identify an academic and career goal, declare a specific course of study, be diligent in class attendance and completion

of assigned coursework, and complete courses and maintain academic progress toward an educational goal. (EC Sections 78210-78219; Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations Sections 55500-55534)

- 3) Requires CSU and CCC districts, and requests the University of California (UC) to give priority for registration for enrollment to the following:
  - a) Any member or former member of the Armed Forces, as defined, who is a resident of California and who has received an honorable discharge, a general discharge, or an other than honorable discharge for any academic term attended at one of these institutions within four years of leaving state or federal active duty, if the institution already administers a priority enrollment system. Current law further requires that the veteran use this benefit within 15 years of leaving state or federal active duty and requires that these students comply with student responsibilities established by the Student Success Act of 2012. (EC Section 66025.8)
  - b) If the institution already administers a priority enrollment system for registration, to any current or former foster youth. (EC Section 66025.9)
  - c) CCC districts that administer a priority enrollment system for registration to grant priority registration for enrollment to students in the Extended Opportunity Program and Services and to disabled students. (EC Section 66025.91)
- 4) Establishes EOPS to extend opportunities for CCC education to all who may profit regardless of economic, social and educational status, and to encourage local community colleges to identify students affected by economic, language, and social disadvantages and encourage their enrollment and achievement of their educational objectives and goals; and authorizes local CCC governing boards to provide services that may include loans or grants for living costs, student fees, and transportation costs and also scholarships, work-experience and job placement programs. (EC Section 69640 - 69656)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown. This bill was amended in the Assembly and the prior contents, which were unrelated to higher education, were removed. This bill has not been heard in its current form by a fiscal committee.

**COMMENTS:** *Purpose of this bill.* According to the author, "despite the proven track record as a leader in higher education, the CSU's four-year graduation rate continues to lag behind the rest of the nation. According to the CSU, the most recent nationally-comparable data shows their overall four-year graduation rate was 16.2 percent for the Fall 2008 cohort of first-time, full-time freshmen, well below the national rate of 24.9 percent among similar public institutions. The most recent American Freshman Survey from the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA, which found that 84 percent of freshmen entering public colleges expect to graduate in four years, demonstrates the clear gap between expectation and reality. Finishing in four years saves students and their families tens of thousands of dollars."

The author believes the California Promise programs established by bill "will increase the CSU's four-year graduation rate, lower cost and debt obligations of students and their families, and ensure the number of CSU degrees is expanded to meet the needs of California employers."

*CSU promise programs.* Information provided by the CSU, at the request of Committee staff, shows that four campuses currently have pledge programs (Cal Poly Pomona, Fresno, Fullerton, and San Bernardino). Generally, these programs, some of which date back to 2007, operate consistently with the requirements of this bill. The overall results of programs are mixed. While four-year graduation rates for program participants are much higher than the undergraduate student populations that do not participate in the programs, attrition rates are also high (sometimes 50% or more). In addition, some campuses have discontinued programs due to low student participation.

*CSU Graduation Initiative.* In October 2014, the CSU initiated “Graduation Initiative 2025” was approved by the CSU, and set a number of completion goals, including increasing graduation rates and closing achievement gaps. The CSU Chancellor's Office initiated a number of activities to accomplish these goals, including reducing the number of units required to earn a BA/BS degree, expanding the Associate Degree for Transfer program, expanding cohort-based learning communities, expanding Summer Bridge and other transitional programs, hiring more tenure track faculty and academic advisors, and building relationships with community and business partners, community colleges and K-12 school districts to ensure students are prepared for college, among other activities.

*Committee consideration.* The 2016 Budget Act provided CSU \$35 million in one-time funds, contingent on the system setting four-year graduation rate and two-year transfer graduation rates targets. The CSU is required to develop an action plan for the system and for each campus by September 30, 2016. The budget provides CSU with the flexibility to develop tailored plans for each campus. ***Rather than require CSU to establish 10 Promise Programs, the Committee may wish to consider whether it would be more appropriate to allow CSU some flexibility to determine whether Promise Programs or other evidence-based policies and practices are a better solution, on a campus-by-campus basis, to improve on-time graduations.***

*CCC student success initiative.* In January 2012, the Student Success Task Force (SSTF) report was approved by the CCC Board of Governors and made 22 specific recommendations aimed at increasing college and career readiness, strengthening support for entering students, incentivizing successful student behaviors, aligning course offerings to meet student needs, improving education of basic skills students, revitalizing and re-envisioning professional development, enabling efficient statewide leadership and increase coordination among colleges, and aligning resources with student success recommendations. These recommendations are currently being implemented through the Student Success Initiative by the CCC Chancellor's Office, and, since 2012, funded by the State through the Student Services Support Program categorical fund. As currently drafted, this bill proposes a new Promise Program

*CCC-CSU Transfer Pathway.* SB 1440 (Padilla), Chapter 428, Statutes of 2010, created the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act, and required CCC to create two-year 60 unit Associate Degrees for Transfer that are fully transferable to CSU. Though these students are not guaranteed admission to a particular CSU campus or into a particular degree program, SB 1440 gives them priority admission to a CSU program that is "similar" to the student's CCC major or area of emphasis, as determined by the CSU campus to which the student is admitted. Once admitted, SB 1440 students need only complete two additional years (an additional 60 units) of coursework to earn a bachelor's degree.

*Committee consideration.* As drafted, this bill would layer a new program on top of the existing efforts at CCC to improve student completion. ***The author has proposed amendments removing CCC from the scope of this bill and instead requiring CSU to guarantee entry into a promise program for any CCC student who transfers with an ADT.***

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

None on File

**Opposition**

None on File

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