

Date of Hearing: August 6, 2013

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
Das Williams, Chair  
SB 440 (Padilla) – As Amended: August 5, 2013

SENATE VOTE: 39-0

SUBJECT: Public postsecondary education: Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act.

SUMMARY: Amends the Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act (SB 1440, Padilla, Chapter 428, Statutes of 2010) to require California Community Colleges (CCC) to create associate degrees for transfer within specified timelines and to require California State University (CSU) to accept these degrees in majors and concentrations that meet specified requirements. Additionally, requires CCC and CSU to provide outreach regarding the STAR Act transfer pathway. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Specifies that associate degrees for transfer must meet the requirements of an approved transfer model curriculum (TMC).
- 2) Requires CCC to create a TMC-aligned associate degree for transfer in every major and area of emphasis offered by the college for which an approved TMC has been finalized, within 18 months of the approval of the TMC. Provides until commencement of the 2015-16 academic year, for creation of TMC-aligned associate degrees for any TMC finalized prior to commencement of the 2013-2014 academic year.
- 3) Requires, before the commencement of the 2015-16 academic year, the development of at least two TMC in areas of emphasis, and at least an additional two TMC in areas of emphasis by the commencement of the 2016-17 academic year.
- 4) Specifies that CCC may require college success courses in preparation of obtaining an associate degree and that these nontransferable courses shall not be counted as part of the transferable unit limitation.
- 5) Requires CSU:
  - a) In guaranteeing admission with junior status to any CCC student who meets the associate degree for transfer requirements, to provide admission to a program or major concentration that is, either:
    - i) Deemed similar to his/her CCC TMC-aligned associate degree for transfer, as determined by the CSU campus to which the student is admitted; or
    - ii) That can be completed within 60 semester units of study beyond the CCC TMC-aligned associate degree for transfer, with completion ability determined by the CSU campus to which the student is admitted.
  - b) To accept TMC-aligned associate degrees for transfer in every major and concentration offered by that CSU campus that meets the aforementioned requirements. Requires CSU

campuses to make every effort to accept TMC-aligned associate degrees for transfer in each of the CSU concentrations. Defines "concentration" as an area of specialization within a major degree program.

- c) To develop an admissions redirection process for STAR Act transfer students who apply for admission but are not accepted into the CSU campuses specifically applied to.
- 6) Requires CCC and CSU, in consultation with stakeholders, to develop a communication and marketing strategy to increase the visibility of the associate degree for transfer pathway that includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:
- a) Outreach to high schools.
  - b) Information on the pathway prominently displayed in all CCC counseling and transfer centers.
  - c) Information on the pathway provided to all first-year CCC students developing an educational plan.
  - d) Targeted outreach to first-year students through campus orientations and existing student support services programs that may include, but not be limited to, First-Generation Experience, Mesa, and Puente.
  - e) Information on the pathway prominently displayed in CCC course catalogs.
  - f) Information on the pathway prominently displayed on the websites of each CCC and each CSU, and on the CaliforniaColleges.edu website.
- 7) Provides that if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to existing law.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the STAR Act and requires CCC to develop two-year (60 semester unit) associate degrees for transfer, which deems the student eligible for transfer into CSU. The associate degrees for transfer are required to include a minimum of 18 units in a major or area of emphasis, as determined by CCC, and an approved set of general education requirements.
- 2) CSU is required to guarantee admission with junior status to CCC students who meet the aforementioned requirements. Students are not guaranteed admission for specific majors or campuses, but CSU is required to provide priority admission to a student's local CSU campus and to a program or major that is similar to his or her associate degree for transfer major or area of emphasis, as determined by the CSU campus to which the student is admitted. Unless enrolled in a high unit major, students are required to complete only two additional years (60 semester units) of coursework at the CSU campus to earn a bachelor's degree.

- 3) Students that utilize the associate transfer degree process receive priority over all other CCC transfer students, except for CCC students who have entered into a transfer agreement between a CCC and the CSU prior to the fall term of the 2012-13 academic year.

FISCAL EFFECT: According to the Senate Appropriations Committee: One-time costs of \$700,000 - \$1 million to develop associate degrees for transfer for every major that has a TMC and every area of emphasis; minor ongoing workload for CCC campuses for communication efforts; and, no new costs for the CSU redirection process as CSU has recently developed a redirection process.

COMMENTS: Background. Following passage of the STAR Act, CCC and CSU formed the Implementation Oversight Committee (IOC) to work through enactment of the provisions of the law. While the STAR Act required individual CCC to develop degrees for transfer, CCC and CSU academic senates opted instead for a statewide approach to degree development in order to prevent significant variation in student lower-division coursework. Under this statewide development structure, faculty worked together to develop statewide Transfer Model Curricula (TMC). The TMC identify a pattern of lower-division courses in a major or area of emphasis that are deemed to adequately prepare CCC transfer students for the upper-division coursework within that major or area of emphasis. As of June 2013, TMC for 24 majors have been developed; there are currently no TMC in an "area of emphasis".

Once a TMC is approved, each community college works to design a "TMC-aligned associate degree for transfer" in that particular major or area of emphasis. The college department faculty determines the courses that make up the 18 required major units, based on the TMC. The proposed degree is vetted by the college's interdisciplinary curriculum committee and approved by the district governing board at a public hearing. The college submits the proposed degree to the CCC Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) for review and approval. The CCCCCO has set a goal of, by the end of 2014, all colleges having an associate degree for transfer in all programs in which they currently offer an associate degree and there is an approved TMC. Several colleges appear to be on track to achieve that goal. However, as of June 2013, having adopted 760 out of a total 1654 degrees, statewide CCC are less than halfway toward achieving that goal.

Under the STAR Act, CSU is responsible for determining which "TMC-aligned associate degrees for transfer" are similar to its own majors. According to CSU, an associate degree for transfer is considered similar to a CSU baccalaureate degree "when a specific CSU campus by its processes determines that a student so prepared can successfully complete the bachelor's degree within 60 additional units." The CSU Chancellor's Office tasked each CSU campus with identifying similar degrees for each of the approved TMCs. The Chancellor's Office has set a goal of offering at least one similar degree option in each TMC discipline in which a campus offers a bachelor's degree. As of June 2013, CSU campuses have declared 927 similar programs. Eight CSU campuses have identified at least one similar degree option in each TMC discipline where a bachelor's degree is offered, another ten campuses are within two degrees of achieving this goal. For five campuses, there are three or more TMC in areas where the campus offers a bachelor's degree but has not yet been able to deem a similar degree program.

LAO recommendations. In May of 2012, the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) released "Reforming the State's Transfer Process: A Progress Report on Senate Bill 1440", which found that additional work needed to be done by both segments in order to achieve the Legislature's intent. Specifically, the LAO recommended the Legislature:

- 1) Statutorily endorse the TMC approach as the preferred basis for associate degrees for transfer, and consider setting an expectation for the development of additional TMC.
- 2) Statutorily clarify that CCC are expected to create an associate degree for transfer in every major they offer that has an approved TMC, and consider establishing a timeline for achievement of full compliance.
- 3) Clarify in statute the expectation that, with limited exceptions, CSU campuses must accept TMC-aligned associate degrees for transfer in *each* of the CSU degree options within a given major.
- 4) Begin to identify next steps if the segments fall short of meeting the above goals. These steps could include involving external entities to address areas of poor compliance and the loss of some state funding (or *increases* if goals are exceeded).

Purpose of this bill. According to the author, while significant progress has been made, three years after the passage of the STAR Act (SB 1440, Chapter 428, Statutes of 2010) there are still foundational elements lacking in the areas of access, flexibility, and communication of this new transfer pathway. The author believes that without robust implementation of the STAR Act the state's transfer mission, students, and ultimately the State of California, will suffer.

Issues addressed in this bill. This bill addresses several of the recommendations of the LAO, issues raised by the Campaign for College Opportunity (Campaign), and amendments requested by the segments.

- 1) Statutory recognition of TMC process. Existing law deems a student eligible for transfer into the CSU under the provisions of the STAR Act when a student has completed (1) the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) or the CSU General Education-Breadth Requirements; and, (2) a minimum of 18 semester units in a major or area of emphasis, as determined by the CCC. This bill specifies that the 18 semester units in a major or area of emphasis must meet the requirements of an approved TMC. This change is consistent with STAR Act implementation to date and with the LAO recommendation.
- 2) CCC degree adoption timelines. Existing law does not establish a minimum number of associate degrees for transfer or a timeline for adoption at CCC campuses. This bill would, consistent with the CCCCCO internal goal, require each CCC to create an associate degree for transfer in every major and area of emphasis offered by the college for which an approved TMC has been finalized. Consistent with the LAO recommendation, this bill would establish an 18 month deadline for adoption, following the approval of the TMC. According to the CCCCCO, 18 months is consistent with the current timeline for creation of degrees.
- 3) Student success courses. Student success courses are designed to teach students how to navigate college; courses generally include lessons in study skills and time management, among other topics. Many CCC campuses encourage or require first-year students to enroll in student success courses. At the request of the CCCCCO, this bill authorizes CCC to enroll students in nontransferable student success courses and excludes those courses from the TMC-aligned associate degree for transfer unit limitation.

- 4) Development of TMC in areas of emphasis. Under the STAR Act provisions, CCC were required to create associate degrees for transfer that included 18 semester units within a major or area of emphasis. The term "area of emphasis" is not defined in statute; it is generally accepted as a less-specialized degree program, one with a broader curriculum within an academic subject area.

As indicated in the November 2012 report from the Campaign, "Meeting Compliance, but Missing the Mark" various CSU campuses have difficulty aligning upper-division coursework to meet accreditation standards if a student completes 18 units of subject prep in a major pre-transfer. The Campaign notes that most CSU bachelor's degrees do not require 18 units of lower-division coursework within a major. To address this concern, this bill would require, by the commencement of the 2015-16 academic year, the development of TMC in at least two areas of emphasis, and by the 2016-17 academic year, the development of TMC in at least four areas of emphasis.

The Campaign identified a number of CCC currently offering associate degrees in areas of emphasis. American River College currently offers associate degrees in Interdisciplinary Studies; these degrees are marketed as a pathway for students to prepare to transfer into a variety of majors at a four year college. Modesto Junior College offers an associate degree in "University Preparation, Emphasis in Humanities" and Golden West College offers several Liberal Arts degrees with emphasis in a variety of broad areas of study.

- 5) CSU similar degrees. Existing law provides students priority admission to CSU degree programs that are deemed by the CSU campus as "similar" to their TMC-aligned associate degree. According to the LAO, "while all CSU campuses have deemed at least some of their degree options similar to certain TMC-aligned associate degrees, acceptance is far from universal. Responses have varied across campuses and majors." This variation means students may not be granted priority admission or a 60-unit cap on additional required courses. This bill would require CSU to accept TMC-aligned associate degrees for transfer in every major offered by that CSU campus that is deemed "similar" or where degree completion can occur within 60 semester units. Further, this bill, consistent with the LAO recommendation, would require CSU campuses to make every effort to accept TMC-aligned associate degrees for transfer in each of the CSU concentrations within a major degree program.
- 6) CSU redirection. This bill requires CSU to develop an admissions redirection process for students who apply but are not accepted into their specific CSU campus. According to CSU, in 2011, a memorandum (Coded: AA-2011-19) was issued to campuses detailing the actions campuses must take to meet the admissions and redirection provisions of the law. Specifically, campuses designated as impacted or with impacted programs are directed to utilize the redirection functionality in CSU Mentor. Once a student is denied admission due to impaction, the student will receive a letter from the denying campus, informing the student that their application has been redirected to at least one other campus. The campus that the student's application is referred to must have capacity to admit the student in the student's major pathway. CSU indicates an intention to make additional improvements to CSU Mentor to provide students with information regarding impacted campuses and programs.
- 7) Outreach programs. According to the November 2012 report by the Campaign, the availability of the associate degree for transfer pathway is not being communicated well to

students. There are statewide marketing campaigns led by the two systems consisting of a website, radio advertisements, and direct outreach to counselors and staff. However, the benefits of the degrees are not being fully communicated to students on the individual campuses. An informal survey by the Campaign found that of the 407 students surveyed at 42 CCC campuses, only 30% had heard about the associate degree for transfer program, and of those students intending to transfer only 33% were aware of the program. This bill requires the segments, in coordination with stakeholders, to take specific actions to improve and expand outreach.

#### REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

##### Support

Advancement Project  
Alliance College Ready Public Schools  
Alliance for a Better Community  
California Campus Compact  
California Communities United Institute  
California Competes  
California Hospital Association  
Campaign for College Opportunity  
Central Valley Higher Education Consortium  
Families in Schools  
Gay-Straight Alliance Network  
Girls, Inc.  
Hispanas Organized for Political Equality  
Hispanic Bar Association of Orange County  
Hispanic Foundation of Silicon Valley  
Hispanic Scholarship Fund  
Inland Coalition  
Inland Empire Economic Partnership  
InnerCity Struggle  
League of Woman Voters of California  
Long Beach City College  
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce  
Los Angeles Urban League  
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund  
Middle College High School at San Joaquin Delta College  
National Council of La Raza  
Napa Valley College  
Parent Institute for Quality Education  
Project Grad Los Angeles  
Public Advocates  
Regional Economic Association Leaders of California  
Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce  
San Francisco Chamber of Commerce  
Stanislaus County Office of Education  
State Center Community College District  
Southern California College Access Network

The Education Trust - West  
The Institute for College Access and Success  
The Women's Foundation of California  
Youth Policy Institute

Opposition

Academic Senate of the California Community Colleges  
Academic Senate of the California State University

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