



California Community Colleges

COMMON COURSE NUMBERING

TASK FORCE REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(DRAFT)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[Assembly Bill 1111](#) (AB 1111)¹ calls on the California Community Colleges (CCC) to adopt a student-facing common course numbering (CCN) system in order to “streamline transfer from two- to four-year postsecondary educational institutions and reduce excess credit (unit) accumulation.”

To spur this effort, the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO) formed the AB 1111 Common Course Numbering Task Force (CCN Task Force) to make recommendations for a systemwide implementation plan. Reflecting the CCCCCO’s participatory governance system, the CCN Task Force includes broad and diverse representation from across the system’s 73 districts and 116 colleges. Members reflect key stakeholder groups invested in and intimately knowledgeable about transfer student success, including: community college students themselves; representatives from the Academic Senate for CCC; administrative leaders, including representatives from the CCC Chief Instructional Officers; student service professionals, including student success deans; technology officers; institutional effectiveness researchers; chief executive officers; and trustees. Critically, the CCN Task Force has benefited from robust engagement of the CCC’s four-year transfer partners, the California State University (CSU), University of California (UC), and members of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU). The CCN Task Force was collaboratively led by two co-chairs: Virginia “Ginni” May, Past President of the Academic Senate for CCC and Professor of Mathematics and Statistics at Sacramento City College, and Tram Vo-Kumamoto, Past President of the CCC Chief Instructional Officers and Vice President of Instruction at Saddleback College.

¹ California State Legislature. 2021. [Assembly Bill No. 1111, Postsecondary Education: Common Course Numbering System](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB1111). https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB1111

The pages that follow describe more about the CCN Task Force and its work, including the history of CCN in California – and why this effort is different and destined for success. Perhaps most importantly, this report includes the CCN Task Force’s Recommended Implementation Plan, which features recommendations such as the following:

- **Definition and scope of a student-facing common course numbering system.**
To better support students and meet the transfer-focused intent of the legislation, the CCN Task Force defines student-facing CCN as a system that ensures that all students can identify courses across the system as being comparable and therefore transferable and degree-applicable across the CCCs *and also to* the CSU, the UC, and independent colleges and universities in California regardless of CCC sending institution.
- **A new vision for intersegmental transfer, articulation, and collaboration in California.** The CCN Task Force has made recommendations for the design of a robust CCN system to be implemented in concert with a new vision for dramatically improved transfer and articulation across the state of California. To realize that vision, the CCN Task Force is calling for a resourced infrastructure for intersegmental faculty collaboration – inclusive of faculty from the CCCs, the UC, the CSU, AICCU’s member institutions, and other critical transfer partners²– that sets out a new and streamlined way of approaching transfer. The initial funding already appropriated by the legislature is critical to helping the California Community Colleges implement this new system, and a long-term funding plan that is inclusive of support for at least the UC, CSU, and AICCU’s member institutions is necessary to ensure sustained success. The current funding, while significant, will not support completion and sustainability of the new student-facing common course numbering system. Appendix II indicates funding gaps for this intersegmental work.
- **Expected outcomes of student-facing CCN.** The CCN Task Force expects that implementation of a student-facing CCN system, when done well, will achieve outcomes that include: easy identification of which courses meet general education and which courses meet major preparation requirements within the CCCs; improved articulation for transfer to four-year institutions; increased transparency about how courses transfer; improved technology infrastructure; and progress on the Vision for Success goals, including improved transfer student outcomes and the closing of equity gaps.

² For example, the CCC has established reciprocity with a number of critical partners, including a number of out-of-state institutions such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

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- **A statewide intersegmental CCN Council, with an accompanying steering and operational structure.** The CCN Task Force recommends a CCN Council to set strategic direction and goals, guide the work of implementation work groups, and identify policy barriers to strong implementation of CCN. A Steering Committee, in coordination with the CCCCCO CCN operations team (staff, contractors, etc.), should provide planning and facilitation for the CCN Council. Work groups, specifically focused on CCN Development and CCN Technology and Processes, should carry the work forward. The Recommended Implementation Plan includes recommendations for their charges, membership, guiding principles and activities.
 - **Foundational elements of a CCN system.** The CCN Task Force outlined recommendations such as: clear definitions of key terms related to the CCN Implementation; a framework for which course elements must be identical or equivalent for a course to be numbered the same with consistent transferability and applicability; a sample course numbering taxonomy system that aligns course identification across all CCCs and aligns with technological requirements from the different systems housing this information; and a CCN Descriptor development process that is efficient, of high quality, engages all segments of higher education, authentically engages faculty, provides opportunities for streamlining processes, and protects current students from disruptions.
 - **Foundational elements of a technology infrastructure.** The CCN Task Force’s recommendations address technology needs and solutions to reconcile current data, increase data-informed decisions, expedite operational processes such as verifications of CCN Descriptor elements, and create a streamlined CCN repository linked to local curriculum software.
 - **A strategy for communicating well with all necessary stakeholders.** The CCN Task Force recommends a body of work designed to ensure the communication of the CCN work to all stakeholder groups, operationalized within the CCCCCO and supported in consultation with the CCN Council, its entities, and other stakeholders.
 - **A detailed and aggressive CCN Implementation Timeline.** The CCN Task Force’s recommendations include milestones for how the CCN work can continuously progress through groups of courses in a scheduled cycle (commencing 2024), while continuing to build toward a vision for a sustainable CCN infrastructure with CSU, UC, and AICCU (all three currently not mandated to participate), which is necessary to ensure that all existing and future courses going through the CCN process are accepted and approved for transfer across segments.

The CCN Task Force acknowledges that CCN presents a historic opportunity to make the California higher educational system easier to navigate and finally addresses a long-recognized barrier that impedes countless students. While implementing a CCN system

will not magically solve all of the pain points in the transfer student experience, it is necessary foundational work and, if done well, will enhance credit mobility and improve equitable associate and baccalaureate degree attainment. The CCN Task Force feels confident that the Recommended Implementation Plan described in this Summary Report can and will result in a CCN system that has the potential to greatly benefit students and meet the stated intent of the AB 1111 legislation. The CCN Task Force encourages all stakeholders to move forward quickly and responsibly, ensure funding and resources are available for implementing and sustaining an effort of this magnitude, and center the equitable success of our students.