

Date of Hearing: April 16, 2024

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Mike Fong, Chair

AB 2057 (Berman) – As Amended March 19, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Associate Degree for Transfer.

**SUMMARY:** Removes the sunset of the Associate Degree for Transfer Intersegmental Implementation Committee (ADT IIC) and requires the State to adopt and monitor certain goals, as specified. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Finds and declares the following intent of the Legislature:
  - a) The 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education promised an accessible, affordable, and high-quality higher education for all California students who qualify. The transfer pathway, from community college to a four-year postsecondary educational institution, is an integral component of the master plan's commitment to access and affordability;
  - b) The associate degree for transfer (ADT) was established in 2010 to create a streamlined transfer pathway for California Community Colleges (CCC) students to the California State University (CSU) or University of California (UC) systems by aligning coursework necessary to transfer to a CSU or a UC with the coursework needed to earn an associate degree with the goal of ensuring CCC students earn an associate degree while on their path to transfer, streamlining the transfer requirements across the CCC system, reducing time and excess credit units for the benefit of the student and the state, and guaranteeing a student junior standing at the CSU so they can expect to achieve a bachelor's degree in two years;
  - c) The structural framework of the ADT established to simplify the transfer pathway is a 60-unit threshold for the lower division coursework, plus a 60-unit maximum threshold for the upper division coursework. With this, every student who selects the ADT pathway and completes 60 transferable credits in the CCC system will be awarded an ADT. In addition to earning a degree, the student would complete the requirements for transfer and earn guaranteed admission with junior standing to a corresponding degree program at the CSU or other participating institution;
  - d) The ADT IIC was established by Chapter 566 of the Statutes of 2021 (Assembly Bill No. 928 in 2021) to serve as the primary entity charged with the oversight of the ADT for the sole purpose of strengthening the pathway for students and to ensure it becomes the primary transfer pathway in California between campuses of the CCC and the UC, the CSU, and participating independent institutions of higher education, as specified, so that more students can avail themselves of the transfer pathway's benefits;
  - e) The ADT IIC is comprised of 16 members who are representative of a cross-section of stakeholders, including student, institutional, and faculty representatives from the CCC, CSU, and UC systems, along with representatives from the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU), members of educational equity and social justice organizations, and members with expertise in the fields of science, technology,

engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and with expertise in higher education research that includes scholarship on student transfer issues in California; and,

- f) In December 2023, the ADT IIC submitted their final report of recommendations to the Governor and Legislature, which included recommendations on setting goals for increasing transfer rates and proposing a unit threshold for STEM degree pathways. These recommendations emerged from many months of discussions and deliberations, were rooted in guiding premises, and bolstered by research and analysis. The ADT IIC offered these recommendations emboldened by the strong belief that the State of California must dramatically improve equity in transfer student outcomes to sustain a productive workforce in California, improve the well-being of the state's residents, and provide fair opportunity for social and economic mobility.
- 2) States that the Legislature intends to enact legislation based on recommendations from the ADT IIC.
  - 3) Defines the following for purposes of this measure:
    - a) "ADT" means associate degree for transfer;
    - b) "STEM" means science, technology, engineering, and mathematics;
    - c) "TMC" means transfer model curriculum, or transfer model curricula, as appropriate.
  - 4) Stipulates that California must adopt and monitor all of the following goals, which are designed to prioritize closing equity gaps by race and ethnicity in transfer outcomes:
    - a) By 2030, close equity gaps by race and ethnicity in the outcomes of students who begin in the CCC and seek to transfer to any four-year institution within six years; and,
    - b) By 2030, close equity gaps by race and ethnicity in the outcomes of students who begin in the CCC and seek to apply, be admitted, to enroll, and to graduate from the UC and the CSU segments.
  - 5) Requires that the 60-unit lower division maximum requirement to be retained for an ADT, with the exception of (a) as enumerated below:
    - a) For high-unit STEM major pathways, ADT pathways may be established that contain up to, but no more than, 66 units of lower division coursework, and require the submission of clear evidence and rationale for the higher units during the TMC approval process.
  - 6) Requires that, on or before January 1, 2025, TMC drafts to be in place for the high-unit STEM pathways of biology, chemistry, computer science, engineering, environmental science, mathematics, and physics for the purposes of meeting admissions eligibility to both the CSU and the UC segments, and other four-year institutions that choose to participate in the ADT, such as members of the AICCU and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) currently engaged with the CCC Office of the Chancellor. Where a single TMC to both the UC and the CSU is not possible, clear evidence and rationale explaining why separate TMCs are needed will be required.

- 7) Requires that the CCC, within 18 months of the approval of a new TMC, or the approval of revisions to an existing TMC, must create an ADT for each TMC, as specified.
- 8) Requires each campus of the CSU, within 12 months of the development of an ADT, as specified, to determine similarity of the ADT pathway to a baccalaureate degree in a similar major to the TMC. Requests the UC and AICCU campuses to identify those TMCs that fulfill major preparation requirements for transfer admission.
- 9) Requires each campus of the CSU, for the purposes of determining similarity, as specified, after a TMC template is created or revised for a major, to determine if there is a baccalaureate degree in a similar major to the TMC. This determination of similarity shall ensure that students who earn the ADT, that is created under the parameters of that TMC, are guaranteed admission in that similar major at one of the CSU campuses offering that major and will be required to complete no more than 60 units after transfer to earn the baccalaureate degree that is deemed similar to the major of the ADT if the student stays on that ADT pathway.
- 10) Stipulates that transparency concerning the membership and composition of the faculty discipline review groups and other intersegmental curriculum groups is required.
- 11) Makes clarifying and technical changes.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Requires the segments of higher education to develop an intersegmental common core curriculum in general education (GE) for the purpose of transfer. This common core curriculum is known as the Intersegmental General Education Transfer curriculum (IGETC). Any student who completes the IGETC course pattern is deemed to have completed the lower division coursework required for transfer to the UC or the CSU (Education Code (EC) Section 66720).
- 2) Requests UC to identify commonalities and differences in similar majors across all UC campuses and provide CCC students with the information in at least the top 20 majors (EC Section 66721.7).
- 3) Requires the governing board of each public postsecondary education segment to be accountable for the development and implementation of formal systemwide articulation agreements and transfer agreement programs, including those for general education or a transfer core curriculum, and other appropriate procedures to support and enhance the transfer function (EC Section 66738).
- 4) Requires the Chancellor of CSU, in consultation with the Academic Senate of the CSU, to establish specified components necessary for a clear degree path for transfer students, including specification of a systemwide lower division transfer curriculum for each high-demand baccalaureate major (EC Section 66739.5).
- 5) Establishes the Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act, which, in part, requires, commencing with the fall term of the 2011-12 academic year, a student that receives an associate degree for transfer to be deemed eligible for transfer in to a CSU baccalaureate

degree when the student meets specified requirements. Requires a granting of this degree when a student:

- a) Completes 60 semester or 90 quarter units eligible for transfer to the CSU and that includes the CSU General Education Breadth program for IGETC, and a minimum of 18 semester or 27 quarter units in a major area of emphasis as determined by the district; and,
  - b) Obtains a minimum grade point average of 2.0 (EC Section 66745, et seq.).
- 6) Establishes, until July 1, 2025, the ADT IIC for specified purposes, including to serve as the primary entity charged with the oversight of the ADT. Requires the ADT IIC, on or before December 31, 2023, to provide the Legislature with recommendations on certain issues impeding the scaling of the ADT and streamlining transfer across segments for students (EC Section 66749.8).
- 7) Requires the CSU Chancellor's Office to implement articulated nursing degree transfer pathways for Associates Degree in Nursing (ADN) students at CCCs seeking a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing (BSN) at CSU prior to the 2012-13 academic year (EC Section 89267.5).

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown

**COMMENTS:** *Establishment of ADTs and the IIC.* Enacted over a decade ago, the ADT was designed to simplify the transfer maze at CCC. Since its enactment, the ADT has made significant strides in streamlining the transfer process for students, and has become a successful pathway to earning a bachelor's degree. The ADT is a two-year, 60 unit degree that guarantees admission to the CSU and participating private institutions of higher education. Students who earn an ADT are automatically eligible to transfer as an upper-division student in a bachelor's degree program and need only complete two additional years (an additional 60 units) of coursework to earn a bachelor's degree.

The ADT IIC was established in 2022 and is also known as the AB 928 Committee. The AB 928 Committee serves as the primary entity charged with the oversight of the ADT for the sole purpose of strengthening the pathway for students and ensures it becomes the primary transfer pathway in California between campuses of the CCC and the UC, the CSU, and participating independent institutions of higher education, so that more students can avail themselves of the ADT's benefits.

The AB 928 Committee is comprised of 16 members who are representative of a cross-section of stakeholders, including student, institutional, and faculty representatives from the CCC, CSU, and UC systems, along with representatives from the AICCU, members of educational equity and social justice organizations, and members with expertise in the STEM fields and with expertise in higher education research that includes scholarship on student transfer issues in California.

In December 2023, the AB 928 Committee submitted their report of recommendations to the Governor and Legislature, which included recommendations on setting goals for increasing transfer rates and proposing a unit threshold for STEM degree pathways. These recommendations emerged from many months of discussions and deliberations, were rooted in

guiding premises, research, and analysis. The AB 928 Committee offered recommendations with the understanding that California needs to continue to improve equity and equality in transfer student outcomes in order to sustain a productive workforce, thereby improving the well-being of the people of California and providing a fair opportunity for social and economic mobility.

*Purpose of the measure.* According to the author, “the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education promised an accessible, affordable, and high-quality higher education for all California students. The transfer pathway, from community college to four-year institution, is an integral component of the Master Plan’s commitment to access and affordability. Too many community college students hoping to find an affordable and achievable pathway to a four-year university instead are confronted with a maze of pathways and requirements that create confusion, lead to unnecessary unit accumulation, and too often lead to students dropping out before earning a degree.”

The author states, “to address these challenges, I authored AB 928, the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act of 2021, which is transforming the transfer process through reimagining transfer from the student perspective. One of the student-centered provisions of AB 928 created the Associate Degree for Transfer Intersegmental Implementation Committee. This committee was charged with enhancing coordination and communication between higher education institutions, identifying transfer attainment goals, overseeing the Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT), and providing recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor to strengthen the ADT so that more students can avail themselves of the ADT pathway’s benefits.”

Lastly, the author states that, “in December 2023, the Committee released their report of recommendations, including setting goals for increasing transfer rates and proposing a unit threshold for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degree pathways. AB 2057 would build upon my previous transfer legislation to enact five high-impact recommendations continuing student-centered efforts to improve transfer.”

This measure enacts the following five recommendations from the ADT IIC to improve transfer:

- 1) Adopt and monitor two specific goals, designed to prioritize first and foremost the closing of equity gaps by race and ethnicity in transfer outcomes.
- 2) Retain the 60-unit maximum requirement for ADTs while providing an option for up to an additional six units for high-unit STEM ADTs and require the submission of clear evidence and rationale for the higher units during the TMC approval process.
- 3) Require that TMC drafts are in place for Engineering, Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Environmental Science, Physics, and Computer Science pathways that prepare students for transfer to both the CSU and UC systems and other four-year institutions that choose to participate.
- 4) Establish timelines for when CCC will create ADTs for the above STEM pathways and for when CSU campuses will determine similarity of the ADT to a baccalaureate degree.
- 5) Require transparency concerning membership and composition of the Faculty Discipline Review Groups and other intersegmental curriculum groups.

This measure will also remove the sunset date on the ADT ICC. The author states that, “allowing the continuation of the AB 928 Committee, has been successful in providing a venue to facilitate intersegmental coordination and greater state-level accountability. In fact, the AB 928 Committee has been highlighted as a model in enhancing coordination and communication between higher education institutions.”

*Committee comments and amendments.* This measure keeps ADT IIC/the AB 928 Committee functioning, that is to say, it does not sunset the ADT IIC; however, it is unclear what the exact role and nature of the ADT IIC will entail.

*Moving forward, the author may wish to specify the role of the ADT IIC and how it will intersect with the goals as outlined in this measure; will the ADT IIC serve as the monitor or overseer? Will specified entities report to the ADT IIC?*

Additionally, this measure states that, “where a single TMC to both the UC and the CSU is not possible, clear evidence and rationale explaining why separate TMCs are needed will be required.” However, it is presently unclear as to what the term “clear evidence and rationale” entails and how it would be determined.

*Moving forward, the author may wish provide a definition of “clear evidence and rationale” or provide specificity as to what “clear evidence and rationale” entails. The author may wish to determine if, once the “clear evidence and rational” is synthesized, publicity posting the outcomes or methods behind the “clear evidence and rational” to the appropriate website(s).*

Further, the measure states that, “on or before January 1, 2025, TMC drafts must be in place for the high-unit STEM pathways of biology, chemistry, computer science, engineering, environmental science, mathematics, and physics for the purposes of meeting admissions eligibility to both the CSU and the UC segments, and other four-year institutions that choose to participate in the ADT, such as members of the AICCU and HBCUs currently engaged with the CCC Office of the Chancellor. Where a single TMC to both the UC and the CSU is not possible, clear evidence and rationale explaining why separate TMCs are needed will be required.

Committee Staff understands that some segments were concerned that the date of January 1, 2025, was unrealistic; however, this date is for the drafts to be provided, not the final TMCs. Committee Staff notes that the AB 928 report recommendations suggested the same TMC drafts to be in place by the 2024-25 academic year.

This measure stipulates that California must adopt and monitor all of the specified goals, which are designed to prioritize closing equity gaps by race and ethnicity in transfer outcomes by 2030; however, the measure does not provide a due date. To ensure that there is no ambiguity with implementing by a specific time, *Committee Staff recommends, and the author has agreed to accept, the following amendment:*

Section 4. Section 66749.81 (1) By **January 1**, 2030, close equity gaps by race and ethnicity in the outcomes of students who begin in the CCC and seek to transfer to any four-year institution within six years; and, (2) By **January 1**, 2030, close equity gaps by race and ethnicity in the outcomes of students who begin in the CCC and seek to apply, be admitted, to enroll, and to graduate from the UC and the CSU segments.

Further, in order to provide clarity as to high-unit STEM major pathways, *Committee Staff recommends, and the author has accepted, the following amendment:*

Section 4. Section 66749.81 (2) For high-unit STEM major pathways, **identified as high-unit STEM pathways by the Associate Degree for Transfer Intersegmental Implementation Committee.**

Committee Staff understands that the ADT IIC consistently highlighted the need for transparency as the implementation of the recommendations move forward. With that in mind, *Committee Staff recommends, and the author has agreed to accept, the following amendment:*

Section 4. Section 66749.81 (f) Transparency concerning the membership and composition of the faculty discipline review groups and other intersegmental curriculum groups is required. **as follows:**

**(1) For each faculty discipline review group, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges shall regularly report to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, and the Academic Senate of the California State University shall regularly report to the California State University Chancellor's Office, the following:**

**(A) The total number of faculty members serving on each faculty discipline review group, including how many members work for a California Community College, how many members work for a California State University, how many members work for a University of California institution, and how many members work for a private institution.**

**(B) The names of each member, the higher education institutions where each member works as instructional faculty, and the academic disciplines that each member provides classroom instruction for.**

**(2) The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and the California State University Chancellor's Office shall regularly update their websites to reflect the membership and composition of the faculty discipline review group pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (f).**

*Arguments in support.* According to a coalition of higher education advocates, student leaders, and civil rights organizations, including, but not limited to, the California State Student Association, the Campaign for College Opportunity, and the Dolores Huerta Foundation, “The ADT is a powerful and proven tool in closing racial equity gaps: when comparing the cohort of students who successfully transferred in 2015-16 versus 2021-22, Latinx students transferring with an ADT jumped from 25% to 53%. For Black students, the percentage of students successfully transferring with an ADT rose from 14% to 36%.”

The coalition contends that, “progress in closing persistent racial and ethnic equity gaps in transfer attainment varies widely across disciplines. To create an ADT, discipline faculty first create a transfer model curriculum, or TMC, providing the framework of curriculum students would take to earn an ADT in a specific major. Of the 40 TMCs currently developed, very few of these pathways are in STEM fields: a systemic limitation to students’ ability to seamlessly transfer within STEM majors. For example, despite being a high demand major corresponding to growing workforce demands, there are no ADT pathways for the engineering and industrial

technologies major at the CCC, since there is no engineering TMC to serve as the framework for developing that ADT pathway.”

Further, according to the coalition, “the AB 928 ADT Intersegmental Implementation Committee was created in 2022, and tasked with providing expert recommendations on setting statewide goals for closing racial equity gaps in transfer, guidance for improving availability and accessibility of STEM pathways, and reengaging ADT earners who did not ultimately transfer – all with the objective of improve the accessibility and utility of the ADT to improve the transfer process for students.”

Lastly, the coalition states that, “AB 2057 would improve the utility of the ADT, particularly for STEM majors, by codifying the following recommendations from the Committee’s report, which were unanimously approved by the Committee’s full membership – including student, institutional, faculty, educational equity advocacy, research, and STEM expert stakeholders.”

*Prior legislation.* AB 928 (Berman), Chapter 566, Statutes of 2021, in part, requires the CSU and UC to jointly establish a singular lower division GE pathway for transfer admission into both segments; requires CCC to place students who declare a goal of transfer on an ADT pathway for their intended major; and, establishes the ADT IIC to serve as the primary entity charged with oversight of the ADT.

SB 440 (Padilla), Chapter 720, Statutes of 2013, requires, prior to the 2014-15 academic year, a CCC create an ADT in every major that has a TMC. Specifies that once a TMC is approved by faculty, community colleges use it to design an ADT in that particular major.

AB 2302 (Paul Fong), Chapter 427, Statutes of 2010, made changes to existing law regarding transfer admissions to support the transfer pathway proposed by SB 1440 (Padilla) (as described below).

SB 1440 (Padilla), Chapter 428, Statutes of 2010, created the STAR Act, which, in part, created the ADT; a two-year 60-unit associate degrees for transfer that are fully transferable to CSU. These degrees require completion of: (1) a minimum of 18 units in a major or area of emphasis, as determined by each community college; and, (2) an approved set of general education requirements. Students who earn such a degree are automatically eligible to transfer to the CSU system as an upper-division student in a bachelor’s degree program and need only complete two additional years (an additional 60 units) of coursework to earn a bachelor’s degree.

## **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

### **Support**

Alliance for a Better Community  
Blu Educational Foundation  
California Chamber of Commerce  
California State Student Association  
Campaign for College Opportunity  
Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement  
Consejo De Federaciones Mexicanas  
Dolores Huerta Foundation



Hispanas Organized for Political Equality  
Innercity Struggle  
Los Angeles United Methodist Urban Foundation  
Office of Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis  
Parent Institute for Quality Education  
Promesa Boyle Heights  
Public Advocates  
Southern California College Access Network  
Student Senate for California Community Colleges  
Uaspire  
UC Student Association  
United Way of Greater Los Angeles  
University of California Student Association  
Young Invincibles

**Opposition**

None on file.

**Analysis Prepared by:** Jeanice Warden / HIGHER ED. / (916) 319-3960