

Date of Hearing: July 8, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Mike Fong, Chair

SB 640 (Cabaldon) – As Amended June 19, 2025

SENATE VOTE: 37-0

SUBJECT: Public postsecondary education: admission, transfer, and enrollment.

SUMMARY: Establishes the California State University (CSU) direct admission program between participating CSU campuses and local educational agencies (LEAs). It further requires the California Community Colleges (CCC) to promote the CSU dual admission transfer program and requires the creation of at least five transfer model curricula (TMC) that are unrelated to existing Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADT). Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Establishes the CSU Direct Admission program and requires the CSU Chancellor to designate one or more CSU campuses as university participants in the program.
- 2) States the Legislature's intent that the CSU Chancellor designate each CSU campus with available enrollment capacity to be a university participant.
- 3) Requires that LEAs that have implemented a transcript-informed pupil accounts for pupils in grades 9 through 12 inclusive, to participate in the program.
- 4) Requires that the reporting available on the CaliforniaColleges.edu platform be used to provide the data required to determine program eligibility upon the implementation of transcript-information pupil accounts for pupils in grades 9 through 12, on the platform.
- 5) Provides all grade 12 pupils who are enrolled in a participating LEA are designated as CSU applicants.
- 6) Requires, on or before the priority application filing period each year, the CSU must send a direct admissions letter to each eligible student notifying them they have been directly admitted and describe the enrollment procedure necessary to enroll.
- 7) Specifies that upon accepting an offer of admission to one of the university participants, a pupil is required to complete the necessary procedures for enrollment.
- 8) Modifies provisions related to the CSU dual admission transfer pathways program for first-time freshman applicants by:
 - a) Extending the sunset date from the 2025-26 academic year to 2035-36 academic year;
 - b) Expands the period of time from two to three years for which a student is to complete an ADT or other established course of study for transfer to be granted guaranteed admission; and,

- c) Requires the CCC to promote the dual admission program to new students, as specified.
- 9) Requires the CCC Chancellor to establish, in collaboration with the Academic Senate for CCCs and the CSU, an intersegmental curriculum workgroup to be composed of CCC and CSU faculty who teach courses in fields of study with high opportunity for social mobility for purposes of creating no fewer than five TMCs that are not related to existing ADTs, in collaboration with the CCC Academic Senate.
- 10) Requires that the workgroup, once the TMC is finalized, to submit it to the CCC Chancellor's Office and make the TMC available to community college districts and requires the community college district.
- 11) Requires, if an ADT is created by a community college district based on a TMC finalized and made available each CSU campus to determine if there is a baccalaureate degree in a similar major to the TMC. The determination of similarity is to ensure that the students who earn the ADT that is created under the parameters of the TMC are guaranteed admission in that similar major at a CSU campus offering that major and be required to complete no more than 60 units after transfer to earn baccalaureate degree that is deemed similar to the ADT major if the students stays on that ADT pathway.
- 12) Defines various terms for the purposes of the bill including university participant to mean a campus of the CSU that is designated to participate in the CSU Direct Admission Program.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the Donahoe Higher Education Act, setting forth the mission of the UC, CSU, and CCC; and, defines "independent institutions of higher education" as nonpublic higher education institutions that grant undergraduate degrees, graduate degrees, or both, and that are formed as nonprofit corporations in California and are accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education (Education Code (EC) Section 66010, et seq.).
- 2) Requires, until the 2026–27 academic year, the trustees to offer for first-time freshman applicants meeting certain criteria a dual admissions program, and authorizes eligible first-time freshman applicants to enter into a dual admissions agreement with the CSU that guarantees the student's admission to a specific campus of the segment selected by the student at the time of the agreement if the student completes transfer requirements, which may include completion of an ADT or another established course of study for transfer within two academic years at a CCC (EC Section 66744.1).
- 3) 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 ADT to be deemed eligible for transfer into 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 the general education transfer

curricula, 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.).
- 4) Establishes, until July 1, 2027, the ADT Intersegmental Implementation Committee for specified purposes, including to serve as the primary entity charged with the oversight of the ADT (EC 66749.8).

FISCAL EFFECT: According to the Senate Committee on Appropriations:

- 1) The Chancellor's Office [CCC] estimates ongoing costs of up to \$57,500 for community colleges to provide specified information regarding the dual admissions program during new student orientations, campus websites, and within counseling offices and transfer centers.
- 2) The Chancellor's Office [CCC] estimates one-time General Fund workload costs of between \$19,000 and \$84,000 to convene an intersegmental curriculum workgroup to develop five TMCs.
- 3) The CSU estimates systemwide costs in the low hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to provide mailers and notify students of their admittance to a CSU.

COMMENTS: *Purpose of the measure.* According to the author, "it should be as easy and seamless to go from 12th grade to the next step as it is to go from 10th grade to 11th grade. Tens of thousands of California students are fully qualified to go to CSU, but don't jump the hurdles of the admissions process. At the same time, nearly half of CSU's campuses have substantial available enrollment capacity and need more students to sustain their high quality academic programs. High schools already have all the transcript information they need in order to validate that a graduating student is CSU-admissible. SB 640 seals the cracks through which too many students fall and gets a coveted letter of admission to thousands of qualified students."

Further, the author contends that, "SB 640 helps eliminate barriers to higher education for students who may be the first in their families to attend college by removing the need to navigate a complex and intimidating application process. Many first-generation students face significant obstacles, such as lack of college guidance, unfamiliarity with admissions procedures, and inability to pay application fees, that discourage them from applying, even when they are qualified."

Transfer Model Curricula (TMC). The Academic Senates for CCC and CSU developed a faculty-led, statewide, concerted effort to identify the course content for new ADT. The process of creating an ADT begins with developing a structure for the central component (i.e., major or area of emphasis) of an associate degree. This faculty-developed structure, known as a TMC, is vetted intersegmentally and adopted statewide and is then used by the CCC Chancellor's Office to create a template (Chancellor's Office Template or COT) that local colleges complete when submitting their TMC-aligned degrees to the Chancellor's Office for approval. As such, the process begins with statewide faculty development of a TMC and ends with local implementation of that TMC in the form of an ADT. This measure would require the creation of

no fewer than five TMCs for a field of study with high opportunity for social mobility that is not related to existing ADTs.

Establishment of ADTs. 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.

Community college transfer. The transfer function is an essential component of the commitment to access. The UC and CSU are to establish a lower division to upper division ratio of 40:60 in order to provide transfer opportunities into the upper division for community college students. The goal was that the UC and CSU would enroll at least one community college transfer student for each two freshmen enrolled. All eligible CCC transfer students are to be provided a place in upper division courses for their major and are to be given priority over freshmen in the admissions process.

National trends. More and more states are seeking to reduce the stress of high schools students by informing them that they have guaranteed admission to various state colleges and universities *before* students apply. States have shared that the intent of this “direct or promised admission” is to keep talent close to home and to develop an educated workforce. This admission process is a model that, in part, matches students with local colleges and universities based on their grades and informs them of their options, whether career education, a bachelor’s degree, or both is indeed attainable.

The number of state-run direct admissions programs has grown significantly from one state in 2015, to over a dozen in 2025. States with these programs include, Idaho (the first in the nation), Minnesota, South Dakota, Washington, Indiana, Hawaii, Connecticut, Wisconsin, Utah, Illinois, Texas, New York, and Oregon. Five of the aforementioned states adopted the policy just last year.

Committee Staff understands that several other states have introduced legislation this year, including Arkansas, or have plans to create pilot programs. Additionally, while this State does not have a statewide direct admission program, the CSU currently has a direct admission pilot program with 10 of the 23 CSU campuses.

CSU Direct Admission Pilot Program. As noted in the *National trends* section of this analysis, the CSU is currently piloting a direct admission program. The CSU, in partnership with the Riverside County Office of Education (RCOE) established the first partnership within the direct admission pilot program. According to a March 28, 2025, *Cal Matters* article, entitled, “No need to apply: Cal State is automatically admitting high school students with good grades,” over 17,000 high school seniors attending high schools within RCOE, in fall of 2024, received a congratulatory note indicating that due to their GPA and because of their particular high schools, they were automatically admitted to one of 10 CSU campuses of the students’ choice.

According to the CSU's October 23, 2024, Press Release, entitled, "CSU Partners with Riverside County to Launch First-Ever Direct Admission Pilot," the qualifying high school seniors in RCOE had to be on track to meet college preparatory courses (A-G requirements) and the direct admission offer is a conditional admission to one of the 10 CSU campuses by way of a brochure mailed to their home address. Students will then use the CaliforniaColleges.edu platform to select their preferred CSU campuses, with official acceptance letters to be sent directly from the various participating CSU campuses.

The current CSU campuses that students can attend include: CSU Channel Islands, Chico State, Cal State East Bay, Cal Poly Humboldt, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo – Solano Campus (previously was Cal Maritime), Cal State Monterey Bay, Cal State San Bernardino, CSU San Marcos, San Francisco State, and Sonoma State.

Per the CSU, in the October 2024 CSU Press Release, "we are excited to provide a direct pathway to higher education for thousands of high school students across Riverside County, we want students to know that the door to college opportunity is open to them, and to help relieve some of the stress and uncertainty about applying for college. Riverside County is an excellent location for this first-ever program for the CSU, as it is ethnically and economically representative of the diversity of California, and many of the students the CSU is so proud to serve."

This measure appears to build off of the West Sacramento Home Run Program (a program that provides access to high-quality early learning for all children, opportunities to develop valuable workplace skills, and financial assistance for postsecondary education and training) and the CSU's direct admission pilot program in RCOE.

Dual admission. This measure aims to extend and promote an existing CCC to CSU transfer program. Current law establishes the Dual Admissions Pathway at CSU for first-time freshman applicants starting in the 2023-24 through the 2025-26 academic year. The dual admission agreement guarantees that a student will: 1) be admitted to their chosen campus if they complete transfer requirements, which may include completion of an ADT or another established course of study for transfer within two academic years at a CCC; and, 2) have access to a library, counseling, and other services from the CSU campus nearest to their primary residence. Further, it requires CSU to report by April 1, 2026, on the program including college participants, a description of services, and information on program applicants and student outcomes.

This measure extends the dual admissions program until the 2035-36 academic year and expands eligibility to students who have completed an ADT or another established course of study for transfer within three rather than two years.

Additionally, this measure requires that the CCCs take the following actions in order to promote the CSU dual admissions program:

- 1) Share information about the program at new student orientation;
- 2) Provide information about the program through an annual email to the new students for each incoming fall term;

- 3) Post information about the program in an easily identifiable and accessible format on the campus website; and,
- 4) Post information about the program in counseling offices and transfer centers.

Arguments in support. According to Children Now, “the college application and admissions process is daunting for even the most informed students attending well-resourced high schools and while the transfer process from the CCC to the CSU has improved, more needs to be done to mitigate the often-insurmountable barriers to attending college. Establishing a direct admission process and eliminating the need for an application for CSU eligible students would remove unnecessary hurdles that limit access to the CSU. Expanding and extending the use of the dual admissions process would do the same for CCC students and creating TMCs that offer greater social mobility will increase the value and utility of attending a community college and earning a CCC degree or credential.”

Prior legislation. AB 928 (Berman), Chapter 566, Statutes of 2021, which, in part, requires the California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) to jointly establish a singular lower division general education (GE) pathway for transfer admission into both segments; requires California Community Colleges (CCC) to place students who declare a goal of transfer on an Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) pathway for their intended major; and, establishes the ADT Intersegmental Implementation Committee (ADT IIC) to serve as the primary entity charged with oversight of the ADT.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

American Association of University Women - California
 California Competes: Higher Education for a Strong Economy
 California State University Employees Union (CSUEU)
 Children Now
 EdTrust-West
 Fresno Unified School District
 Los Angeles Community College District
 Los Angeles Unified School District
 Partnership for Los Angeles Schools
 United Way California Capital Region

Opposition

None on file.

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