

Date of Hearing: April 25, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Mike Fong, Chair

AB 1749 (McCarty) – As Amended April 3, 2023

SUBJECT: Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act: University of California.

SUMMARY: Expands, commencing with the 2025–2026 academic year (AY), provisions of the Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act to additionally require that a student who earns an associate degree for transfer (ADT) be deemed eligible for transfer into a University of California (UC) baccalaureate degree program if they meet certain requirements; requires the UC to guarantee admission with junior status to a California Community College (CCC) student, as specified; and, provides that a student admitted to the UC pursuant to this Act is entitled to receive priority over all other CCC transfer students, excluding CCC students who have entered into a transfer agreement between a CCC and the UC before the fall term of the 2025–2026 AY. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires the UC, beginning in the 2025-2026 AY, to participate in the ADT guarantee program.
- 2) Stipulates that CCC students transferring to the UC with an ADT must have a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0.
- 3) Provides that a student admitted to the UC pursuant to this Act is entitled to receive priority over all other CCC transfer students, excluding CCC students who have entered into a transfer agreement between a CCC and the UC before the Fall term of the 2025–2026 AY.
- 4) Requires the Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) in the Spring of 2026, to review and report to the Assembly Committee on Higher Education, the Senate Committee on Education, and the respective education finance budget subcommittees of the Assembly and Senate, an update on the implementation of the STAR Act after the inclusion of the UC.
- 5) Makes clarifying and technical changes to existing law.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the UC as a public trust to be administered by the UC Regents; and, grants the Regents full powers of organization and government, subject only to such legislative control as may be necessary to insure security of its funds, compliance with the terms of its endowments, statutory requirements around competitive bidding and contracts, sales of property and the purchase of materials, goods and services (Article IX, Section (9)(a) of the California Constitution).
- 2) Requires the segments of higher education to develop an intersegmental common core curriculum in general education 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 California State University (CSU) (Education Code (EC) Section 66720).

- 3) Requests the 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).
- 4) Requests the UC Regents, on or before March 1 in each year from 2017 to 2022, inclusive, to submit an annual report to the Legislature, on the UC's data on student transfers, as specified, including, but not limited to, all of the following:
 - a) The number of students who reported to the UC on their admissions application that they received an ADT and who were granted admission to the UC, along with the average CCC grade point average of these students, broken down by UC campus;
 - b) The admissions rate and yield rate for students who reported to the UC on their admissions application that they received an ADT, broken down by UC campus;
 - c) The number of students who reported to the UC on their admissions application that they received an ADT and who enrolled at the UC, along with the average CCC grade point average of these students, broken down by UC campus; and,
 - d) The number of students who reported to the UC on their admissions application that they received an ADT and who graduated from the UC within two or three AYs for the cohort graduating in the year of the report, broken down by UC campus.

Requests the UC Regents, beginning on or before March 1, 2019, in its report to the Legislature on data on student transfers to include the same data points, pursuant to (4)(a – d) inclusive above, on transfer students with a UC Transfer Pathway (EC 66721.9).

- 5) 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).
- 6) 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).
- 7) Establishes the Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act, which, in part, requires, commencing with the fall term of the 2011-2012 AY, a student that receives an ADT to be deemed eligible for transfer into a CSU baccalaureate degree program 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.).
- 8) Requires the CSU and UC to jointly establish a singular lower division general education (GE) pathway for transfer admission into both segments, and also requires the CCC to place students who declare a goal of transfer on an ADT pathway for their intended major. Establishes the ADT intersegmental implementation committee to serve as the primary entity charged with oversight of the ADT [also referred to as the STAR Act of 2021] (EC Section 66749.8).
- 9) 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 2012-2013 AY (EC Section 89267.5).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: *Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG) process at the UC.* The TAG program at the UC guarantees CCC students admission to their top choice UC campus if they meet specified conditions. All undergraduate campuses participate in the program except the UC campuses of Berkeley, Los Angeles, and San Diego. By participating in the TAG program, students can ensure their admission to a specific UC campus, some of which offer an early review of a student's academic record, early admission notification, and specific guidance on major preparation and general education coursework. Students may only apply for a TAG at one UC campus, but may apply to as many additional UC campuses without a TAG as they wish.

Students who are admitted with a TAG are not required to attend that UC campus. The UC campuses specify the majors that participate in the TAG program and the requirements for guaranteed admission in each major. Qualifications for a TAG may include:

- 1) Completion of specific lower-division general education and/or major-preparation courses;
- 2) Minimum GPA; and/or,
- 3) Minimum numbers of UC transferable units.

Once a TAG is approved, students must fulfill all remaining coursework and GPA requirements designated on the TAG agreement to maintain their guaranteed offer of admission. When a student does not satisfy the conditions of the TAG contract prior to enrollment, the student's admission to the UC campus may be rescinded.

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.

Pursuant to existing law, the UC is not required to participate in the ADT program. While six of the nine undergraduate campuses of the UC participate in the TAG, there remains confusion for CCC students who choose to transfer to a UC campus.

Purpose of this measure. According to the author, “AB 1749 delivers on a long-standing goal in California: to simplify and streamline transfer paths for hardworking, qualified community college students wishing to attend a UC or a CSU. Creating a universal transfer path will increase economic opportunity and prosperity for all Californians and help our state economy thrive.”

The author states that, “this measure is focused on equity given that our most diverse college institutions are community colleges and reducing hurdles to 4-year post-secondary completion is a top priority for the state and a necessity for increasing equity in 4-year degree attainment.”

Governor’s current 2023-2024 Budget proposal. The Governor’s Budget proposal requires only one campus of the UC, the UCLA campus, to implement two strategies to improve the community college transfer processes. The UCLA campus would need to: (1) enact and maintain policies to participate in the TAG program; and, (2) create and maintain pathways for students transferring with an ADT. By March 31, 2024, the UCLA campus would need to submit a report to the Director of the California Department of Finance indicating its commitment to meeting said requirements.

The Governor’s Budget proposal stipulates that if the UCLA campus does not comply, the UCLA campus could face the loss of \$20 million in ongoing state funding.

It remains unclear why the Governor’s Budget proposal only calls upon the UCLA campus to implement the two strategies. In 2022-2023, UCLA expects to enroll approximately 3,300 new transfer students, which is more than any other UC campus. The UC San Diego campus, with the next best transfer data, expects to enroll approximately 2,700 new transfer students during 2022-2023. Further, transfer students at UCLA graduate at higher rates than the UC system overall.

Master Plan for Higher Education. The original Master Plan for Higher Education was approved in principle by the Regents and the State Board of Education (which at that time governed the CSU and the Community Colleges) on December 18, 1959, and was submitted to the Legislature in February 1960.

A special session of the 1960 Legislature passed the Donahoe Higher Education Act, which included many of the Master Plan recommendations. Governor Edmund G. (Pat) Brown signed the Donahoe Act into law on April 26, 1960. For various reasons, many of the key aspects of the Master Plan were never enacted into law although agreed to by the segments and the state.

The major features of the Master Plan as adopted in 1960 and amended in subsequent legislative and governing board actions are as follows:

- 1) The UC is designated as the state's primary academic research institution and is to provide undergraduate, graduate and professional education. UC is given exclusive jurisdiction in public higher education for doctoral degrees (with a few exceptions--see CSU below) and for instruction in law, medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine.
- 2) The CSU's primary mission is undergraduate education and graduate education through the master's degree including professional and teacher education. Faculty research is authorized

consistent with the primary function of instruction. CSU is authorized to independently award four specific doctoral degrees – the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Educational Leadership and doctoral degrees in Audiology (Au.D.), Physical Therapy (DPT), and Nursing Practice (DNP). Other doctorates can be awarded jointly with UC or an independent institution.

- 3) The CCC's have as their primary mission providing academic and vocational instruction for older and younger students through the first two years of undergraduate education (lower division). In addition to this primary mission, the Community Colleges are authorized to provide remedial instruction, English as a Second Language courses, adult noncredit instruction, community service courses, and workforce training services.

Access and differentiation of admissions pools. The establishment of the principle of universal access and choice, and differentiation of admissions pools for the segments:

- 1) The UC was to select from among the top one-eighth (12.5%) of the high school graduating class.
- 2) The CSU was to select from among the top one-third (33.3%) of the high school graduating class.
- 3) The community colleges were to admit any student capable of benefiting from instruction.

Access guarantee. Subsequent policy has modified the Master Plan to provide that all California residents in the top one-eighth or top one-third of the statewide high school graduating class who apply on time be offered a place somewhere in the UC or CSU system, respectively, though not necessarily at the campus or in the major of first choice. State law affirms the state's commitment to fund all eligible California residents:

“The University of California and the California State University are expected to plan that adequate spaces are available to accommodate all California resident students who are eligible and likely to apply to attend an appropriate place within the system. The State of California likewise reaffirms its historic commitment to ensure that resources are provided to make this expansion possible, and shall commit resources to ensure that [eligible] students are accommodated in a place within the system” (EC Section 66202.5).

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 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 the upper division and are to be given priority over freshmen in the admissions process.

Committee comments. As cited in the *Existing law* section of this analysis, the STAR Act of 2021 (pursuant to AB 928, Berman, Chapter 566, Statutes of 2021), in part, required the CSU and UC to jointly establish a singular lower division GE pathway for transfer admission into both segments, and also required the CCC to place students who declare a goal of transfer on an ADT pathway for their intended major. Components of the STAR Act of 2021 remain in the early stages of the implementation process.

The intent of the STAR Act of 2021 is to simplify the transfer process for eligible CCC students seeking to transfer, by creating one pathway for transfer admission to both the CSU and UC; which should alleviate ongoing confusion CCC students' face when determining which campus to transfer while ensuring they are eligible to transfer to either segment.

This measure requires all undergraduate campuses of the UC to establish an ADT, as specified, beginning with the Fall 2025-2026 AY.

The STAR Act of 2021, while not requiring the UC to establish an ADT, as aforementioned, does stipulate that CSU and UC collaboratively create a single transfer admission pathway for CCC students seeking to transfer.

The Committee may wish to explore if the provision of this measure is premature and if it conflicts with the implementation of AB 928 (Berman).

Additionally, as currently drafted, this measure requires the UC to create the ADT program. However, the UC, pursuant to the State Constitution (as cited in the *Existing law* section of this analysis), is an autonomous body.

The Committee may wish to explore if the provisions of this measure are constitutional.

Arguments in support. According to the Campaign for College Opportunity (Campaign), “despite making significant progress over the last decade to improve the transfer process through the ADT, California’s transfer process remains significantly impeded by misalignment between the CSU and UC’s preferred transfer programs, and remains overly complex as a result of the UC’s reliance on separate transfer admission programs rather than utilizing the ADT as a systemwide admission guarantee.”

Further, the Campaign states, that, “by utilizing separate campus by campus transfer admission guarantees via the TAG program, or even program by program transfer agreements via the Pathways Program, community college students are left to navigate a complex maze of costly decision points as they navigate the transfer maze, while also deciding whether their transfer goals are with the CSU or the UC. This misalignment is of particular concern for California’s low income, first generation, Black, and Latinx students. Latinx students represent over half of the students who declare a transfer goal, yet only 35% transfer within four years. Black students declare transfer goals at a much lower rate, only seven percent, and only five percent successfully transfer.”

The Campaign contends that, “there is much progress to celebrate about in our pursuit of a streamlined, simplified transfer pathway that is easy for students to navigate – with the most significant progress occurring when the CCC, CSU, and UC are willing and able to collaborate around shared goals and adopt universally accepted pathways for the purposes of transfer. The most recent example of our public higher education segments coalescing in this way is through the adoption of a singular General Education pathway (Cal-GETC) for the purposes of transfer to both the CSU and UC. The development of Cal-GETC took significant effort from each segments’ faculty representatives, but their efforts to prioritize the student experience will result in less confusion and improved time to degree for students. However, more work remains to simplify transfer. We owe it to our students to ensure that they have a clear roadmap for transfer success, and that community college students are able to utilize the ADT to earn an admissions guarantee to both the CSU and the UC.”

Prior legislation. AB 928 (Berman), Chapter 566, Statutes of 2021, the STAR Act of 2021, in part, required the CSU and UC to jointly establish a singular lower division GE pathway for transfer admission into both segments, and also required the CCC to place students who declare a goal of transfer on an ADT pathway for their intended major.

SB 440 (Padilla), Chapter 720, Statutes of 2013, requires, prior to the 2014-2015 AY, a CCC create an ADT in every major that has an existing transfer model curricula (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

California School Employees Association
Campaign for College Opportunity

Opposition

None on file.

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