

Date of Hearing: May 13, 2020

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

AB 2578 (Irwin) – As Amended May 4, 2020

SUBJECT: Public postsecondary education: California State University: proficiency level of entering students.

SUMMARY: Requires the California State University (CSU) to provide specified information to the Legislature about the placement of freshmen at each CSU campus for purposes of certain general education requirements in one report to be submitted by April 1 of each year.

Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Reforecasts entry-level proficiency to general education written communication and mathematics and quantitative reasoning placement levels for the report CSU annually submits to the Legislature regarding first-time freshmen.
- 2) Deletes the requirement of a preliminary annual report on first-time CSU freshman be submitted to the Legislature and requires one report be submitted to the Legislature on or by April 1 of each year.
- 3) Stipulates the number and proportion of regularly admitted and specially admitted first-time freshmen who fall into the university's four levels of placement for general education written communication and mathematics and quantitative reasoning be included in the first-time freshmen report annually submitted to the Legislature.
- 4) Requires the CSU include the following in the first-time freshmen report annually submitted to the Legislature:
 - a) The number and proportion of regularly admitted and specially admitted first-time freshmen who meet the general education requirement for each category, per (3) above:
 - i) Prior to the fall term of the academic year;
 - ii) At the end of the fall term of the academic year;
 - iii) At the end of the spring term of the academic year; and,
 - iv) At the end of the fall term of the second academic year.
 - b) An analysis of the university's three factors that go into the multiple measures assessment of placement of freshmen into a specified level, and how predictive each of those factors is for student success indicators; and,
 - c) An analysis of any equity gaps by income, race, or ethnicity within and across the university's four levels of placement for general education written communication and mathematics and quantitative reasoning, and the university's plan to address any such gaps.

- 5) Stipulates that the CSU's three factors that go into multiple measures assessment of the placement of freshman are:
 - a) Course taking;
 - b) Grade-point-average (GPA); and,
 - c) Test taking.
- 6) Defines "student success indicators" as all of the following:
 - a) Persistence into the fall term of the second academic year at the CSU;
 - b) The number of units completed at the CSU in the first academic year; and,
 - c) GPA at the CSU in the first academic year.
- 7) Makes clarifying and technical changes to existing law.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Requires the CSU to provide specified information about the proficiency of freshman at each CSU campus in a preliminary report submitted on or before December 15 of each year and in a final report to the Legislature submitted on or before February 1 of each year (Education Code (EC) Section 66015.12).
- 2) Confers upon the CSU Trustees the powers, duties, and functions with respect to the management, administration, control of the CSU system and provides that the Trustees are responsible for the rule of government of their appointees and employees (EC Sections 66606 and 89500, et seq.).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: *Background.* During 2016, Governor Jerry Brown's Office, the Department of Finance, and the Legislature expressed concerns about some inconsistencies with the CSU General Education (GE) requirements, and encouraged the CSU to reexamine its policies and practices.

After over a year of consultation and discussion, the CSU Chancellor's Office issued Executive Order (EO) 1100-Revised. The CSU also saw the reexamination as consistent with CSU's efforts to remove administrative barriers to student success, one of six pillars, under Graduation Initiative 2025.

The goals of EO 1100-Revised were to:

- 1) Provide greater clarity regarding GE units, outlining the explicit minimum and maximum number of units for general education requirements;

- 2) Ensure equitable treatment of all students so that transfer students and entering freshmen have the same general education requirements; and,
- 3) Facilitate degree completion by explicitly allowing double counting of units that satisfy both GE requirements and major requirements.

To note, prior to EO 1100, students entering the CSU system had to demonstrate college level proficiency in English and math by taking placement exams. If a student failed to meet the required score in the placement exam, the student was automatically enrolled in up to three semesters of remedial education before being allowed to enroll in courses that counted toward their degrees. If students did not pass these remedial courses within the first year, they were removed from university rolls. Approximately 40% of freshmen each year were considered not ready for college-level work.

The adoption of EO 1100-Revised was to clarify and align GE policies in an effort to increase graduation rates and eliminate achievement gaps.

Purpose of the measure. According to the author, without understanding the degree to which incoming CSU students are prepared to succeed in credit-bearing courses, the Legislature is limited in its ability to propose policy changes or direct resources in the budget process to close achievement gaps and improve degree completion rates.

The author states, “AB 2578 will provide meaningful data to the Legislature via annual reports compiled by the CSU regarding student preparedness, as demonstrated by completion rates, credits earned, and GPA during a student’s first three semesters. The bill also requires the CSU to prepare an analysis of the multiple measures factors used by the university in its readiness determination and an assessment of how predictive each of those factors is for student success indicators. Finally, the bill increases accountability by requiring an analysis of any equity gaps by income, race, or ethnicity within and across the university’s levels of college readiness, and the university’s plan to address any such gaps.”

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file.

Opposition

None on file.

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