

Date of Hearing: June 25, 2019

**ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

Jose Medina, Chair

SB 484 (Portantino) – As Amended June 11, 2019

**SENATE VOTE:** 33-0

**SUBJECT:** Public postsecondary education: community college transfer students

**SUMMARY:** Requires the governing board of each community college district to direct colleges to identify and notify students who have completed an associate degree for transfer (ADT), to automatically award these students that degree and add the students to an identification system that is maintained by the California Community Colleges (CCC) Chancellor's Office and would be accessible electronically by the California State University (CSU), the University of California (UC), independent institutions of higher education for purposes of streamlining transfer. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires the governing board of each community college district to direct the appropriate officials at their respective campuses to do all of the following:
  - a) Identify students who complete an ADT;
  - b) Notify students of their completion of the ADT requirements;
  - c) Automatically award the student with the ADT; and,
  - d) Add the student to the identification system described in 3) below.
- 2) Requires that the identification, notification, automatic awarding and addition of the student to the identification system as outlined in a) through d) above be completed at the end of each academic term.
- 3) Requires the CCC Chancellor's Office to maintain an identification system that can be accessed electronically by the CSU, the UC, and independent institutions of higher education, as defined.
- 4) Permits a student to affirmatively exercise an option to not receive an ADT or to not be included in the identification system by opting out.
- 5) Specifies that the provisions that require the awarding of an ADT and inclusion of the student in the identification system are not applicable to students who opt out receiving an ADT.
- 6) Specifies that the requirement to add a student to the identification system also does not apply to a student who opts out of being included in that system.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Declares the Legislature's intent that the CSU and the UC, for purposes of enrollment planning and admission priority practice at the undergraduate level, prioritize CCC transfer

students in an approved transfer agreement program, among others. (Education Code (EDC) Section 66202)

- 2) Requires the Board of Governors of the CCC, the UC Regents, and the Trustees of the CSU, in consultation with their respective Academic Senates, to jointly develop, maintain and disseminate a common core curriculum in general education course for the purposes of transfer, and establishes a variety of related requirements. (EDC Section 66720-66722.5)
- 3) Requires each department, school, and major of the UC and CSU to establish discipline specific articulation and transfer program agreements for majors with lower division prerequisites and establishes a number of related reporting and other requirements. (EDC Section 66740, et seq.)
- 4) Establishes the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act under which CCC districts are required to develop and grant a transfer associate degree that deems the student eligible for transfer into the CSU, when the student meets specified course requirements. In addition, the CSU is required to guarantee admission with junior status to any community college student who meets specified requirements, but provides that the student is not guaranteed admission for specific majors or campuses. However, the CSU is required to grant a student priority admission to his or her local CSU campus and to a program or major that is similar to his or her community college major or area of emphasis, as determined by the CSU campus to which the student is admitted. Students that utilize the associate transfer degree process are required to receive priority over all other community college transfer students, except for community college students who have entered into a transfer agreement between a community college and the California State University prior to the fall term of the 2012-13 academic year. It also requires the CCC and the CSU to establish a student-centered communication and marketing strategy to increase the visibility of the Associate Degree for Transfer pathway, as specified. (EDC Section 66745-66749.5)
- 5) Stipulates that a private nonprofit postsecondary educational institution that chooses to accept an associate degree for transfer will guarantee admission with junior status to a community college student, with admission to a program or major and concentration, as applicable, that meets either of the following:
  - a) Is similar to the student's community college transfer model curriculum-aligned associate degree for transfer, as determined by the private nonprofit postsecondary educational institution to which the student is admitted; and,
  - b) May be completed with not more than 68 additional semester units for majors at institutions requiring 128 semester units or not more than 102 quarter units at institutions requiring 192 quarter units for a degree. A private nonprofit postsecondary educational institution admitting a community college student with an associate degree for transfer may require the student to take additional courses at the institution as long as the student is not required to take any more than the additional semester units or quarter units specified above. (EDC Section 666749.6)
- 6) Requires the Regents of the UC to annually report on CCC transfer students admitted to the UC, beginning no later than March 2017 and until March 2022 including reporting on

students who indicate on their admission application that they received an ADT and who were admitted. (EDC Section 66721.9)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, the CCC Chancellor's Office estimates Proposition 98 General Fund costs ranging from \$720,000 to \$1.8 million for community college districts to comply with the bill's requirements. The costs would likely be deemed to be reimbursable by the state. The CSU indicates a cost of at least \$100,000 (General Fund) to design, code, test, implement and roll-out this information to the Chancellor's Office and CSU campuses. Staff notes that there may be similar costs for UC.

**COMMENTS:** *Need for the bill.* In an effort to streamline transfer pathways from community college to the CSU, the Legislature enacted the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act of 2010 established by SB 1440 (Padilla, Chapter 428, Statutes of 2010) which required CCC to develop the ADT. The degree guarantees students admission, with junior standing, to a CSU campus. According to the author, despite the simplification efforts of the Legislature, the transfer processes from the CCC to the CSU and the UC remain complex and difficult for students. The author asserts that recent research found systematic problems with the implementation of ADT's including that most CCC students do not understand the ADT or know they have one, thus they do not take advantage of its benefits.

This bill seeks to simplify the ADT certification process for students who completed the requirements for the degree and transfer to UC or CSU thereby ensuring that students who meet criteria for an ADT receive its benefits.

*Background.* The Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act, established by SB 1440 (Padilla), Chapter 428, Statutes of 2010, in part, required CCC districts to develop and grant a transfer associate degree that deemed the student eligible for transfer into the CSU, when the student met specified course requirements. Completion of an ADT guarantees:

- 1) Admission with junior status to a CSU campus to a major determined to be similar to the ADT, but not to a specific campus or major.
- 2) No additional lower-division CSU coursework.
- 3) No more than 60 semester units of upper division CSU coursework to complete a bachelor's degree that, in addition to the 60 units completed at community college, results in a 120 unit pathway to a bachelor's degree.
- 4) Priority admission at CSU.

To note, for students transferring to UC, under the UC's comprehensive review policy, the ADT is among one of the nine criteria campuses are able to use to select their admitted class when they receive more minimally qualified applicants than they can admit.

*Related report.* The Education Insights Center recently published a report, *Trial and Error: California Students Make the Best of an Improving Yet Complex Transfer Process*. The report notes that transfer students represented about half of new undergraduate enrollment at the CSU in 2015-16, and half of the bachelor's degrees conferred by the CSU in 2014-15 were awarded to students who transferred from a community college. At the UC in 2015-16, about 28 percent of

new undergraduates had transferred from community college and community college transfer students were awarded about a third of the UC's bachelor's degrees in 2014-15. Despite this representation of community college transfer students at the state's public universities, only 24 percent of students who enroll intending to transfer actually do so after four years and only 38 percent transfer after six years. The report also noted the following:

- 1) Most students who participated in the study did not understand the ADT.
- 2) The students are confused by the offering of both an associate's degree and ADT in the same discipline. The students who earned an associate's degree did not know if the degree they received was an ADT.
- 3) Both community colleges and California State University campuses need to improve counseling and online supports for transfer students.

Lastly, the report recommended that both community colleges and the CSU need to improve counseling and online support for transfer students and community colleges should institute degree audit programs to assist students in transfer planning.

*How colleges traditionally notified students.* Generally, CCC students are not notified of completion of ADT requirements nor are degrees automatically conferred. A student must file a petition for an ADT prior to receiving the award. It appears that ADT students seeking admittance to a four-year public university self-identify and submit verification that they have finished requirements for the ADT. According to the CCC Chancellor's Office, colleges are not equipped with the tools necessary to comply with the provisions of this bill such as having an automated degree audit system. A system like the one described in this bill could simplify the process for students and presumably increase the number of ADT graduates.

*Parallels to Guided Pathways initiative and funding formula.* Citing current efforts related to improving student success programs and services, the 2017-18 Budget Act provided resources for implementation of Guided Pathways to support community colleges develop an integrated, institution wide approach to student success. The initiative is meant to implement systemic change at each college to do the following: improve student knowledge of what course to take to meet their completion objectives, monitor student progress toward completion, and develop clear learning outcomes for students. In addition, under the same budget act the state adopted a new community college apportionment funding formula, known as the Student Focused Funding Formula, which transitions from focusing solely on enrollment, to also include funding based on student outcomes and the number of low-income students. The funding formula, within the student outcome category, incentives degree completion and to a greater extent ADT completion. It appears this bill aligns with those efforts.

*Inclusion of the independent universities.* Recent amendments taken by the author in the Assembly include non-profit independent institutions of higher education among the entities that can access an electronic ADT identification system. The Budget Act of 2018 included provisions that maintained the Cal Grant award for students attending accredited nonprofit colleges and universities at \$9,084 if the nonprofit sector admit at least 2,000 community college students who earned an associate degree for transfer in 2019-20, 3,000 such students in 2020-21, and 3,500 in 2021-22. These amendments will potentially help independent institutions recruit the ADT graduates necessary to meet the requirements of the 2018 Budget Act.

*Prior legislation.* SB 478 (Portantino, 2017), nearly identical to this bill, would have required the governing board of each community college district to direct community colleges to identify and notify students who complete an ADT, to automatically award these students with the degree and add the students to an identification system that is maintained by community colleges in a manner that is accessible to the CSU and the UC for purposes of streamlining transfer. SB 478 was ultimately vetoed by Governor Brown whose message read in part:

“I support efforts to increase the number of transfer students to the California State University and the University of California, as well as to other four-year private universities, but funding a sporadic, manual "degree audit" is not the answer.”

“It would be better for community colleges to update their technology systems and processes in total, so that all students know how close they are to completing their degrees.”

SB 1425 (Block, 2013), would have required that the CCC Chancellor to develop or identify a commercially available utility to conduct systemwide automatic degree audits and required all CCC campuses to award degrees and certificates, as specified, retroactively to students who have been identified, as specified, as eligible to receive a degree or certificate. SB 1425 was held in the Assembly Committee on Appropriations.

## **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

### **Support**

Association of Independent California Colleges & Universities  
Campaign for College Opportunity

### **Opposition**

None on file.

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