
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Carol Liu, Chair
2015 - 2016 Regular

Bill No: AB 1985
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Consultant: Kathleen Chavira
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Fiscal: Yes

Subject: Postsecondary education

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges (CCC), in collaboration with the Academic Senate of the CCC, to develop a uniform policy to award credit, as specified, to a student with a minimum Advanced Placement test score of 3, and requires each CCC District to adopt the policy.

BACKGROUND

Existing law establishes the Board of Governors (BOG) and the Chancellor of the CCC to provide leadership and direction to the CCC while maintaining and continuing, to the maximum degree permissible, local authority and control in the administration of the districts (CCD). The BOG and Chancellor are responsible for a variety of functions, including establishing minimum standards, providing various reports, and various annual budgeting functions. In performing functions, BOG is required to carry out a process of consultation with institutional representatives, college organizations and interested individuals and parties. (Education Code § 70901)

Existing law authorizes the governing board of a community college district to adopt policies to grant credit for satisfactory completion of advanced placement (AP) exams. The faculty in the appropriate discipline must approve AP examinations, scores deemed to constitute satisfactory performance, courses offered by the college for which credit will be granted, and requirements that may be met by such examinations in accordance with policies and procedures approved by the curriculum committee. The student's academic record must be clearly annotated to reflect that credit was earned through an AP exam. (Title 5, California Code of Regulations § 55052)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires the Chancellor's Office of the CCC, in collaboration with the Academic Senate of the CCC, to develop a uniform policy to award course credit to a student with a minimum score of 3 on an Advanced Placement exam. It requires that course credit be provided, as appropriate, for:
 - a) A California Intersegmental General Education Transfer curriculum requirement.

- b) A California State University (CSU) General Education Breadth requirement.
 - c) A local community college general education requirement.
- 2) Identifies potentially reimbursable state mandated costs.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, advanced placement (AP) credit policies vary across each of the 113 California Community Colleges (CCC). While the overwhelming majority of CCC transfer students attend the CSU system, which has an established and clear policy for awarding AP exam credit, students who first attend a community college runs the risk of losing the college credit they earned through their AP scores. Students are forced to retake introductory courses although they have already demonstrated proficiency as evidenced through their scores. According to the author, the lack of a systemwide credit policy for the CCC creates an unnecessary barrier for students in receiving and transferring credits.
- 2) ***Advanced Placement (AP) Courses.*** According to the College Board, the provider of AP exams, these courses are designed to provide rigorous academic coursework opportunities for high school students. Upon successful completion of an AP course, students are provided the opportunity to take an AP exam, conducted by the College Board, for which scores can range from 1-5. According to a College Board report entitled *AP Credit Policies at California Community Colleges*, 10 colleges do not grant credit or have unknown credit policies for all available AP exams, 24 colleges require a score of 4 to award credit, and 6 colleges require a score on some AP exams of 5. In 2014, 16,178 AP test takers reported 47,180 AP exam scores to CCC.
- 3) ***Other public institutions?*** It appears that the other public postsecondary educational institutions have adopted and made available their AP exam/credit policies:
- a) ***California State University (CSU).*** CSU Executive Order No. 1036, issued on July 14, 2008, provides that CSU campuses shall award baccalaureate credit toward degree and/or admissions eligibility to students who pass standardized external examinations (such as AP, International Baccalaureate, and College Level Entrance Program examinations). The Chancellor, in consultation with the General Education (GE) Advisory Committee is required to maintain a list of external examinations and passing scores, minimum credits toward admissions eligibility, minimum credits toward the baccalaureate degree, and, placement in GE Breadth area for transfer students seeking general education certification. According to the most recently available list, all AP exams require a minimum passing score of three.

- b) *University of California (UC)*. According to UC, systemwide UC grants credit for AP exams on which a student scores a 3 or higher. Elective units awarded may be applied to UC graduation requirements for specific subjects and/or for general education/breadth requirements, as determined by each campus. For transfer students, AP exams can also be used to meet the minimum transfer admission subject requirements in English, math and 4 other courses chosen from the humanities, behavioral/social sciences, and biological/physical sciences.
- 4) ***Appropriate control over granting of academic credit?*** As currently drafted, this bill would statutorily dictate a score on an exam for the purpose of granting academic credit. Control over the content of the exam, and determination of the score on the exam would be under the control of the test provider. In essence, the granting of academic credit would be delegated to a non-governmental, non-academic entity that has a financial interest in the success of the AP exam program, with no ability for the California Community College to modify the policy if the exam or its content change.

At the same time, shouldn't a public postsecondary education system have a clear and consistent policy regarding the extension of credit for Advanced Placement examinations?

- a) **Staff recommends** the bill be amended to eliminate the minimum standard of a score of three on page 3 of the bill and instead, add to the findings and declarations on page 2 lines 3-5, indicate that the policy consider the granting of credit for a minimum score of three.
- b) **Staff also recommends** that the bill be amended to require that the policy be adopted and applicable to the enter class for fall 2016-17 and to authorize the periodic review and adjustment of the policy to align with other public higher education institutions.
- c) **Staff further recommends** that each campus be required to post the adopted policy on its Web site.

SUPPORT

Association of California School Administrators
College Board
Education Trust West
Los Angeles Unified School district
North Orange County Community College district

OPPOSITION

Academic Senate for California Community Colleges
Faculty Association of California Community Colleges

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