
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Carol Liu, Chair
2015 - 2016 Regular

Bill No: AB 340
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Consultant: Kathleen Chavira
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Subject: Postsecondary education: campus climate: report

SUMMARY

This bill requires the California Community Colleges (CCC) Board of Governors (BOG) and the California State University (CSU) Trustees, and encourages the University of California (UC) Regents, to each generate a report, as specified, pertaining campus climate.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Declares it a shared goal of public education and independent institutions of higher education to achieve educational equity not only through a diverse and representative student body and faculty, but also through educational environments in which each person, regardless of race, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, disability or economic circumstances has a reasonable change to fully develop his or her potential. (Education Code § 66010.2)
- 2) Provides that it is the policy of the State of California to afford all persons, regardless of disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other basis that is contained in the prohibition of hate crimes, as specified, equal rights and opportunities in the postsecondary institutions of the state. (EC § 66251)
- 3) Declares that, consistent with specified federal law provisions, all students have the right to participate fully in the educational process, free from discrimination and harassment and that California's postsecondary educational institutions have an affirmative obligation to combat racism, sexism, and other forms of bias, and a responsibility to provide equal educational opportunity. It also declares the Legislature's intent that each postsecondary educational institution undertake educational activities to counter discriminatory incidents on school grounds and, within constitutional bounds, to minimize and eliminate a hostile environment on school grounds that impair the access of students to equal educational opportunities. (EC § 66252)
- 4) Requests the UC Regents, CSU Trustees, and the governing board of each community college district to adopt and publish policies on harassment, intimidation,

and bullying to be included within the rules and regulations governing student behavior within their respective segments of public postsecondary education. (EC § 66302)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires the California Community Colleges (CCC) Board of Governors (BOG) and the California State University (CSU) Trustees, and encourages the University of California (UC) Regents, to generate a report once every biennium of the legislative session, beginning with the 2017-2018 Regular Session that include, but is not limited to the following elements:
 - a) New and recent administrative efforts intended to affect campus climate.
 - b) Recent campus program developments related to gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and gender identity that impact campus climate.
 - c) Data, including, but not limited to, student demographic data, and crime data, including, but not limited to, the data required to be kept and disclosed under specified federal law and other hate crime statistics.
- 2) Requires the CCC BOG and the CSU Trustees, and encourages the UC Regents, to each post the respective segment's report on its Internet Web site and send it to the Governor, the Attorney General, and the appropriate policy committees of the Legislature.
- 3) Defines "campus climate" to mean a measure of an individual's experience within a learning environment, specifically on the current attitudes, practices, policies, and behaviors of campus life that impact the success and retention of all members of a campus community.
- 4) Deletes the request that the CSU Trustees and each community college district governing board adopt and publish policies on harassment, intimidation, and bullying as part of their rules and regulations governing student behavior and instead, requires such action if the governing body expends funds to support activities related to campus climate, as defined.
- 5) Requests the UC Regent adopt and publish policies on harassment, intimidation, and bullying to be included within their rules and regulations governing student behavior.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) **Source of the bill.** This bill is a result of the efforts of the Assembly Select Committee on Campus Climate. According to the author, "The select committee sought to examine public safety protocols and practices of California's higher education institutions while exploring solutions to encourage campus safety and

promote healthier campus climates. The select committee's mission was to ensure that the state's college campuses are safe and welcoming environments for all students. " The author contends that, existing law does not specifically address campus climate and that this measure would be the appropriate next step in creating some type of oversight of campus climate. According to the author the UC recently conducted a system-wide campus climate survey which revealed that every campus handles related situations differently. As California's higher education systems continue to grow and become increasingly diverse, students need to feel safe on campus and knowledgeable about campus procedures, policies, and services.

- 2) ***Assembly Select Committee on Campus Climate.*** Created by former Speaker John Perez in 2014, the select committee was a result of a number of incidents such as a 2013 case involving an African-American student who experienced on-campus racial bullying at San Jose State. The committee held four hearings throughout the state and heard from system-wide representatives, university administrators, faculty, university staff, students, community organizations and policy experts. The committee issued a report with its recommendations in October 2014. Among other things, the committee recommended that the UC, CSU and CCC provide an annual report to the Legislature on recent challenges and developments in regards to campus climate. This bill implements these report recommendations with the intent that there be a certain level of oversight and that the Legislature be kept informed of any major changes at California colleges and universities.

SUPPORT

Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges
California Conference of the NAACP
California Federation of Teachers
California State University

OPPOSITION

None received.

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