
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Connie Leyva, Chair

2019 - 2020 Regular

Bill No: AB 1930 **Hearing Date:** July 29, 2020
Author: Medina, et al.
Version: May 18, 2020
Urgency: Yes **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Olgalilia Ramirez

Subject: Public postsecondary education: University of California and California State University: student eligibility policy.

SUMMARY

This bill, an urgency measure, requires the California State University (CSU) Trustees and requests the University of California (UC) Regents, to engage in a specified process before adding any undergraduate student eligibility requirements.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the UC as a public trust to be administered by the Regents of the UC; 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. (California Constitution Article IX, Section 9(a)).
- 2) Establishes the Donahoe Higher Education Act, setting forth the mission of the UC and CSU. (Education Code § 66010, et seq.).
- 3) States the Legislature's intent that in determining the standards and criteria for undergraduate and graduate admission to the UC and the CSU, the governing boards develop processes that strive to be fair and are easily understandable, and consider the use of criteria that allow students to enroll who are otherwise fully eligible and admissible but who have course deficiencies due to circumstances beyond their control and consult broadly with California's diverse ethnic and cultural communities. (EC § 66205 (a))
- 4) States that the Legislature's intent for the UC and CSU to seek to enroll a student body that meets high academic standards and reflects the cultural, racial, geographic, economic, and social diversity of California. (EC § 66205 (b)).
- 5) Grants CSU Trustees regulatory authority over the CSU. (EC § 89030, et seq.)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires the CSU Trustees and requests the UC Regents, before making changes in undergraduate student eligibility policy that adds eligibility requirements that impact students across its segment, to do both of the following:
 - a) Engage and coordinate with the other educational segments impacted by the policy to understand the impacts of the changes, including the California Department of Education and school districts, in order to try to align their respective student eligibility policies. The bill states that it is the Legislature's intent that there be a common set of clear state public university eligibility requirements for public school pupils.
 - b) Commission an independent study that:
 - i) Assesses whether the policy change under consideration would have a disparate impact on the eligibility rates of California public secondary school graduates who are underrepresented students.
 - ii) Examines the impact by race, ethnicity, income, and region.
 - iii) Examines the capacity of and resources needed by the educational segments affected by the change.
 - iv) Makes it and its findings publicly available. The bill further states that it is the Legislature's intent that the segments should not pursue student eligibility policies that would have such a disparate impact.
 - c) Present the policy change to the Legislature, as specified, no less than 60 days before the scheduled vote on the change.
- 2) Requires, after a change in the student eligibility policy that adds eligibility requirements is approved, all of the following:
 - a) The CSU Trustees and requests the UC Regents to convene an implementation committee to develop a multiyear plan for the change with consideration of individuals for membership including representatives from university faculty, K-12 system, student and other stakeholder organizations.
 - b) The implementation committee to provide an annual progress report, between the period of approval and the effective date of the policy change, to the Governor, the Legislature, and the governing bodies of the two segments.
 - c) The implementation committee to commission an analysis of the policy after it has been adopted and implemented in order to understand the ongoing impact of the policy.

- 3) Specifies that if a policy change in student eligibility requirements is approved between January 1, 2020, and the operative date of this bill, the CSU Trustees shall and UC Regents are requested to commission an independent study by a third party research organization to assess the actual impact of the change as well as comply with the requirements outlined in the bill.
- 4) Requires each segment to use existing resources to implement the bill's provisions.
- 5) Defines for the purposes of this bill, "segments," to mean the CSU and the UC.
- 6) Makes the bill an urgency measure in order to ensure that students who are currently preparing themselves academically will be eligible for the UC or the CSU and properly informed of proposed changes to student eligibility policies.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, "The goal of our higher education system should be to help students cross the finish line, not put up new and unnecessary hurdles." The author contends that, "AB 1930 creates commonsense oversight of public university admission and eligibility policies to ensure that any new policies have been thoroughly vetted prior to adoption. AB 1930 will allow us to have a larger conversation about admission requirements and potential impact as we strive to build equity within our higher education institutions."
- 2) ***Course requirements for undergraduate admission.*** Since the early 2000s, the UC and the CSU have established common high school course requirements for undergraduate admissions to ensure that potential university students are prepared to engage and be successful in university-level coursework. Students who follow the articulated sequence of courses in each of the subject areas listed below, and who meet other specified criteria, are eligible to apply and be considered for admission. The following list is commonly referred to the "a-g" subject area requirements:
 - a) 2 years of history/social science.
 - b) 4 years of college preparatory English composition and literature.
 - c) 3 years of college preparatory mathematics.
 - d) 2 years of college-preparatory science.
 - e) 2 years of the same language other than English.
 - f) 1 year visual and performing arts.
 - g) 1 year college preparatory elective.

- 3) **Recent effort to change admission requirements.** Recently, CSU considered a proposal to add a new course requirement to meet minimal eligibility standards for CSU admission by requiring the completion of an additional year of quantitative reasoning. As proposed, the quantitative reasoning requirement could be fulfilled by taking an additional course from subject area “c-mathematics,” “d-science” or a quantitative reasoning course from the “g-college preparatory elective.” It further required course completion prior to a student’s senior year of high school commencing with the entering freshman class of 2027.

The proposal to adopt the new course requirement was scheduled to go before the Board of Trustees in January 2020. However, concerns were raised by numerous advocacy groups around the necessity of an eligibility change, disparate access to higher-level coursework in K-12 and overall impact to students particularly those from historically underrepresented groups. Subsequently, the vote was postponed. Instead, the Trustees adopted a seven-year phased-implementation plan, which includes the establishment of a steering committee, and completion of an independent analysis along with annual reporting. This bill requires the segments to engage in similarly activities. Committee staff understands that the CSU Board of Trustees are to revisit the adoption of the quantitative reasoning requirement in Spring 2022 to allow time for the independent analysis to conclude.

- 4) **Applicability to current eligibility requirements?** The UC and the CSU each have other criteria for undergraduate admission, including meeting grade point average (GPA) and/or standardized test score benchmarks that coincide with completion of the a-g course pattern. This bill creates a statutory process for which the CSU and UC governing boards are to consider new eligibility factors under their respective policies, as well as, a process for monitoring implementation after adoption. It is unclear, however, whether the language currently in the bill is applicable when revisions are made within an existing requirement. For example, proposals that revise the current GPA cut-off needed for admittance. According to the author, the intent is to trigger the bill’s provisions when a new eligibility requirement is added, not when an existing requirement is changed. For purposes of having a clear policy that aligns with the author’s intent **staff recommends, author agrees, that the bill be amended** to state, “adds new eligibility requirements,” in EC § 66205.4(a), (b)(1), and (b)(2) and additionally specify that “new eligibility requirement,” does not include an existing eligibility requirement that was revised to be more or less stringent.
- 5) **Arguments in support.** The Campaign for College Opportunity notes, “while the UC pursued a possible change in their Science course requirements, they commissioned the Public Policy Institute of California to study the effects of its potential adoption. The PPIC study documented a concerning disparate impact on how such a new admission requirement would impact students of color, which contributed to the UC decision to maintain current requirements and avoid inadvertently harming entry for Black, Latinx, and low-income students.” They assert however, “At the CSU, a proposal (2019 proposal) to require an additional year of quantitative reasoning for freshman eligibility was put forth without soliciting input from the K-12 system or conducting an independent study to forecast the intended and unintended impacts from its implementation.

“Additionally, it is noted that the bill would provide due diligence is done on behalf of students at schools that are not sufficiently supported to absorb the costs of complying with new, unilaterally established university requirements.”

- 6) ***Arguments in opposition.*** In addition to concerns about the broad application of AB 1930 applying to any proposal that institutes a new requirement to admission policies, the CSU contends that, “The transparency and oversight AB 1930 is seeking has already been established. Since January, the CSU has been working to issue a contract for an independent third-party analysis of their potential impacts of the proposed [quantitative reasoning course] requirement. Additionally, the CSU has constituted the steering committee that will begin work this August. Therefore, a bill that mandates procedural requirements that have already been implemented does not seem warranted at this time.”

SUPPORT

Campaign for College Opportunity
Los Angeles Unified School District
National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter
Nextgen California
The Education Trust - West

OPPOSITION

California State University

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