
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Connie Leyva, Chair

2019 - 2020 Regular

Bill No: SB 484 **Hearing Date:** April 3, 2019
Author: Portantino
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Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Olgalilia Ramirez

Subject: Public postsecondary education: community college transfer students.

SUMMARY

This bill 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 California Community College, Chancellor's Office in a manner that is accessible to the California State University (CSU) and the University of California (UC) for purposes of streamlining transfer.

BACKGROUND

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 California Community College (CCC) transfer students in an approved transfer agreement program, among others. (Education Code § 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. (EC § 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. (EC § 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 California Community College (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. (EC § 66745-66749.5)

- 5) Authorizes any community college student who meet all the requirements for transfer established by the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act to request that the UC guarantee admission with junior status and to request the granting of priority admission to a program or major similar to his or her community college major or area of emphasis.
- 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. (EC § 66721.9)

ANALYSIS

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 Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT).
 - b) Notify students of their completion of the ADT requirements.
 - c) Automatically award the student with the ADT.
 - d) Add the student to the identification system described below in 3).
- 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 and the UC.
- 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.

- 7) Specifies that the provisions of this bill shall be operative only if the Legislature appropriates sufficient funds to pay for all state-mandated costs that will be incurred by community college districts.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** In an effort to streamline transfer pathways from community college to the California State University (CSU), the Legislature enacted the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act of 2010 established by SB 1440 (Padilla, Chapter 428, Statutes of 2010) which required California Community Colleges (CCC) to develop the Associate Degree for Transfer (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.

- 2) ***Benefits of an ADT.*** The Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act, established by SB 1440 requires CCC districts 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. Completion of an ADT guarantees:
- a) 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.
 - b) No additional lower-division CSU coursework.
 - c) 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.
 - d) Priority admission at CSU.

For students transferring to UC, under the 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.

- 3) ***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 for four years and only 38 percent transfer after six years. The report also noted the following:

- a) Most students who participated in the study did not understand the ADT.
 - b) The students are confused by the offering of both an associate's degree and ADT in the same discipline.
 - c) The students who earned an associate's degree did not know if the degree they received was an ADT.
 - d) Both community colleges and California State University campuses need to improve counseling and online supports for transfer students.
 - e) Community colleges should institute degree audit programs to assist students in transfer planning.
- 4) ***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.
- 5) ***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 that this bill aligns with these efforts.
- 6) **Prior legislation.**
- SB 478 (Portantino, 2017) identical to this bill, would require the governing board of each community college district to direct community colleges to identify and

notify students who complete an associate degree for transfer (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 California State University (CSU) and the University of California (UC) for purposes of streamlining transfer. SB 478 was ultimately vetoed by Governor Brown whose message read in part:

“I am returning Senate Bill 478 without my signature. This bill would require each community college to identify all students who have completed the requirements for an associate degree for transfer and automatically award that degree, but only in those years where the state budget appropriates specific funds for this purpose.

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.”

SUPPORT

None received

OPPOSITION

None received

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