
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Benjamin Allen, Chair

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Bill No: SB 478 **Hearing Date:** March 29, 2017
Author: Portantino
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Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
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Subject: Public postsecondary education: transfer of community college students to the California State University or University of California

SUMMARY

This bill requires 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), 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) enrollment systems 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 California State University (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 CSU prior to the fall term of the 2012-13 academic year. It also requires the California Community Colleges (CCC) and the CSU to establish a student-centered communication and marketing strategy to increase the visibility of the Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) pathway, as specified. (EC § 66745-66749.5)

- 5) Authorized any community college student who met all the requirements for transfer established by the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act to request that the University of California (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.
 - b) Notify students of their completion of the associate degree for transfer requirements.
 - c) Automatically award the student with the associate degree for transfer.
 - d) Add the student to an identification system maintained by the community college campus in a manner that can be accessed electronically by the California State University and the University of California enrollment systems.
- 2) Requires officials to complete the steps listed above within 45 days of the student completing the associate degree for transfer requirements.
- 3) Authorizes a student to affirmatively opt out of receiving an associate degree for transfer or to be included in the accessible identification system maintained by the community college campus.

- 4) Specifies that the automatic awarding of an associate degree for transfer and the requirement to add a student to the accessible identification system do not apply to a student who opts out of receiving an associate degree for transfer.
- 5) Specifies that the requirement to add a student to the accessible identification system also does not apply to a student who opts out of being included in that system.

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 University of California (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 (Padilla, Chapter 428, Statutes of 2010) 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 California State University (CSU) in 2015-16, and half of the bachelor's degrees conferred by the CSU in 2014-15 were awarded to students who and transferred from a community college. At the University of California (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 Associate Degree for Transfer (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 CSUs 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 are ADT students notified?** Generally, California Community College (CCC) students are not notified of their completion of the ADT requirements nor is the degree automatically awarded. 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 the Community College Chancellor's Office, colleges are not equipped with the tools such as an automated degree audit system of which would be required to implement the provisions outlined in this bill. A system like the one described in this bill could simplify the process for students and presumably increase the number ADT graduates.
- 5) **Technical amendment.** As drafted this bill makes references an ADT as "associate degree **of** transfer" rather than "associate degree **for** transfer," staff recommends a technical amendment to fix the drafting error to be consistent with current law and read "associate degree for transfer," throughout the bill.

6) ***Prior and related legislation.***

SB 1440 (Padilla, Chapter 428, Statutes of 2010) creates the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act, which requires community colleges to create two-year 60 unit Associate Degree for Transfers (ADTs) that are fully transferable to California State University (CSU). Once admitted, these students need only complete two additional years (an additional 60 units) of coursework to earn a bachelor's degree.

AB 2302 (Fong, Chapter 427, Statutes of 2010) authorized any community college student who met all the requirements for transfer established by SB 1440 to request that the University of California (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.

SB 440 (Padilla, Chapter 720, Statutes of 2013) expanded the provisions of the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act to require that CCCs create Associate Degree for Transfer (ADTs) in every major, and in areas of emphasis, and to require that the CSU accept these degrees, and develop an admissions redirection process for students who completed these degrees but are denied admission to the CSU campus to which they have applied. It also required the CCC and the CSU to establish a student-centered communication and marketing strategy to increase the visibility of the ADT pathway, as specified.

SUPPORT

None received.

OPPOSITION

None received.

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