
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Carol Liu, Chair
2015 - 2016 Regular

Bill No: AB 968
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Subject: Postsecondary education: transcripts

SUMMARY

This bill requires the governing boards of California's public and private postsecondary education institutions to indicate that a student has been suspended or expelled from the institution on the student's transcript for the time period of the student's ineligibility to enroll.

BACKGROUND

Existing law requires the University of California (UC) Regents, the California State University (CSU) Trustees, and the governing board of every Community College District (CCD) to adopt specific rules governing student behavior and applicable penalties for violations of the rules; as well as the adoption of procedures by which students are informed of such rules and applicable penalties.
(Education Code § 66300)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires the governing boards of each CCD, the CSU Trustees, the UC Regents, and the governing board of each independent and private postsecondary educational institution to indicate on a student's transcript that the student is ineligible to enroll due to suspension or expulsion for the time period of the student's ineligibility.
- 2) Makes findings and declarations about the differences in policies and practices relative to the notation of disciplinary dismissals on student transcripts, the risk this may create for the institution and student, and specific reference to violations related to the commission of a sexual assault.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, ensuring communication between campuses is a vital step to providing a safe learning environment for students. This bill would create a standard and ensure consistency between postsecondary education segments so that a receiving institution can determine whether a background check of a potential transfer student is necessary prior to enrollment.

- 2) **Current practice.** According to a recent survey by the American Association of Collegiate Registrar's and Admissions Officers, most institutions (84 percent) make transcript notations when a student is ineligible to re-enroll for academic reasons, but only a few (29 percent) note suspensions or dismissals for disciplinary reasons. California's public postsecondary education institutions do not currently follow a standard notation method regarding suspensions and expulsions. The University of California makes a general notation when a student is expelled. The California State University makes a permanent general notation if the student is expelled, or suspended for one academic year or more, withdraws in lieu of suspension or expulsion, or withdraws pending misconduct investigations or disciplinary proceedings. The community colleges report that they provide for a notation on the transcript if a student was expelled for academic reasons, but that there is no standard for notations for students expelled for reasons other than academic deficiencies. This bill would require all California institutions, public and private, to indicate when a student is ineligible to re-enroll due to suspension or expulsion on the student's transcript for the period of time the student is ineligible to re-enroll.
- 3) **Community Colleges.** Current law provides that any community college district (CCD) that receives an application for admission from an individual who has been expelled from, or who is undergoing expulsion proceedings in, another district for any of a number of specified offenses may deny, permit, or permit conditionally, the enrollment of the student. The district must first hold a hearing, as specified, to determine whether the individual poses a continuing danger to the district's students and employees. Current law also requires a formal appeal process be established for any student denied enrollment under these provisions.

This bill would require notation of the student's suspension or expulsion on the transcript regardless of the reason. A suspended student would only have such noted on their transcript for the period of the suspension. An expelled student attempting to transfer to another community college may already be required to disclose the expulsion, but would be entitled to a hearing and appeal process if denied enrollment. It does not appear that the provisions of this bill would require disclosure of the reason for expulsion/suspension on the transcript.

- 4) **National guidelines.** The Association for Student Conduct Administration (ASCA), a national membership based organization that provides education and resources to facilitate best practices of student conduct administration and conflict resolution on college campuses, recommends that all institutions place an appropriate notation on an academic transcript to indicate when a student is ineligible to re-enroll at that institution as a consequence of disciplinary action.

ASCA notes that transcript notations are important, but will not be effective at reducing the risk of violence to a campus absent a comprehensive approach to admissions, review of information, and appropriate action based on that review. ASCA also recommends that institutions:

- a) Ask key questions to solicit information about a potential student's conduct and/or criminal history prior to being admitted to the institution;

- b) Have systemic ways to review and utilize this information in relevant admission decisions, as well as to promote individual student success and safer campus communities;
- c) Develop and communicate procedures explaining the notation, duration of notation, and retention and release of records; and,
- d) Communicate these practices to students through their appropriate institutional privacy or other record policies, including via website to current and prospective students.

SUPPORT

California Coalition Against Sexual Assault
California Federation of Teachers
California State Student Association
California State University
University of California

OPPOSITION

None received.

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