



Assembly Bill 847 (Bocanegra) FACT SHEET

Bill Summary

Assembly Bill 847 ensures transparency and accessibility of data on the representation of academic senates to provide a more complete picture of faculty and leadership diversity at the state's public colleges and universities.

The Need

Diverse faculty and leadership at California's public colleges and universities are critical to understanding and therefore meeting the needs of our increasingly diverse student body. Having a clear picture of what diversity looks like across our systems is the first step to ensure that leadership is reflective of and responsive to the students it serves. Research demonstrates that institutions whose faculty more accurately reflects the demographics of its student body population are more likely to retain and graduate studentsⁱ, thus contributing to future workforce demands.

California currently lacks the basic information necessary to draw a complete picture of faculty and leadership diversity across higher education campuses and systems. While data on the diversity of faculty and college presidents is readily available, little information is available on the diversity of members of faculty academic senates who have substantial influence over curriculum development, admission policies, state policy implementation, and faculty hiring. Additionally, academic senates at individual colleges across the state's higher education systems differ in what they share publicly about their membership on their websites. Some colleges provide partial rosters, some have outdated rosters, and others don't provide their membership rosters at all.

This information is critical to inform the statewide conversation around faculty and leadership diversity which the state has recently taken steps to improve. The Budget Act of 2016 provided funding to support the [California Community Colleges Equal Employment Opportunity Program](#) and required the Chancellor's Office to report the racial/ethnic and gender composition of faculty and its efforts to assist campuses in providing equal employment opportunity in faculty recruitment and hiring practices, as well as system-wide training, monitoring, and compliance activitiesⁱⁱ. The Assembly Committee on Higher Education also held an oversight hearing on "Improving Faculty Diversity in California's Public Colleges and Universitiesⁱⁱⁱ."

This information can also help campuses and academic senates address these important issues and supplement their efforts to assess the efficacy of recruitment, retention and other employee processes. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) has also prioritized increasing diversity through their Equity and Diversity Action Committee which recommends strategies that promote student equity and student success, including effective teaching and student learning styles and fostering a campus climate conducive to faculty diversity and student achievement. The Committee advises on guidelines, laws and regulations related to equal opportunity and cultural diversity and promotes the integration of equity and diversity issues in appropriate ASCCC activities.

The Opportunity

Executive leadership positions and academic senate bodies are empowered to enact policy and drive hiring decisions that ultimately affect the diversity of faculty on a campus. These vital decisions inevitably impact the classroom and campus environment for students. AB 847 is an important step in ensuring that California has a complete picture of



leadership diversity across colleges and universities and that leadership is reflective and responsive to the students it serves.

Supporters

- A Place Called Home
- Alliance for Boys and Men of Color
- Alliance College-Ready Public Schools
- American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education, Inc.
- Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Los Angeles
- Center for Urban Education, University of Southern California Rossier School of Education
- College for All Coalition
- Imperial Valley College
- Inland Empire Economic Partnership
- Los Angeles Urban League
- Greenlining Institute
- Student Senate for California Community Colleges, Region III
- United Way of Greater Los Angeles
- Women’s Foundation of California
- Youth Policy Institute
- One individual from Santa Monica Community College

ⁱ "A Community College Instructor Like Me: Race and Ethnicity Interactions in the Classroom." Robert Fairlie, Florian Hoffman, and Philip Oreopoulos. National Bureau of Economic Research, September 2011.

ⁱⁱ [California Community Colleges EEO and Diversity Practices Handbook](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ [Assembly Committee on Higher Education 10/6/16 Hearing Background Information](#).