

ASSEMBLY BILL 440

Community College Associate Degree and Recognition of Student Transfer Preparation Act

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FACT SHEET

PROBLEM

Currently, the coursework necessary to transfer to the California State University or University of California differs from the classes required to earn an Associate Degree. As a result, many transfer students leave the system having completed the transfer requirements but do not have a degree to show for their work, are unable to participate in community college graduation ceremonies, and are ineligible for certain awards.

THIS BILL

The **Community College Associate Degree and Recognition of Student Transfer Preparation Act** is a proposal to allow individual community colleges to grant an Associate Degree in a field of study for transfer to eligible students who successfully complete 60 semester (or 90 quarter) units, complete 18 semester (or 27 quarter) units of coursework in a major or area of emphasis, and meet the minimum transfer requirements to a campus of the California State University or University of California.

This proposal will:

- Support student success by providing increased educational opportunities for Californians throughout the state;
- Recognize the achievement of community college students who have successfully completed the rigorous general education and coursework within a field of study on their path to transfer to a four-year university; and,
- Increase the number of in-state community college students transferring to a four-year university, thereby increasing their earning potential and job marketability for the benefit of California's economy.

BACKGROUND

Since the adoption of the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education, preparing students to transfer to a four-year university has been a core function of the community college system. Successful progression from lower-division coursework to degree completion is a basic principle of California higher education and is critical to the future of California's economy.

Today, 1 in 4 jobs require an Associate Degree or higher. In the near future, 1 in 3 new jobs will have such a requirement. The community college system allows the state to address the serious shortage of educated workers. As a way to meet these workforce demands in a cost-effective way and to provide students with support to complete their overall educational pursuits, this proposal will incentivize students to earn an Associate Degree while preparing for transfer to a four-year university.

AB 440 will help reinforce a pathway towards upward economic mobility and encourage students when they are able to continue on at a four-year university by recognizing that they have completed a transfer preparation course pattern. This also allows students to meet the competitive selection criteria for transfer and maximizes the cost effectiveness of the community college pathway to a Bachelor's Degree.

Other states such as Oregon and Florida already offer a similar Associate Degree that is built around a transfer agreement because the degree program exposes students to a broad spectrum of classes while helping them develop the skills needed to succeed in college and in life.

It is anticipated that there will be minimal cost in implementing this program. Most costs associated with this degree could be absorbed by existing counseling and student services.

Through these difficult fiscal times, increasing student success will have long-term benefits for California's economy. The Community College Associate Degree and Recognition of Student Transfer Preparation Act is a manageable reform in an otherwise bleak economic climate.

SUPPORT

- Campaign for College Opportunity (Sponsor)
- Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges
- Community College League of California
- California State University
- California Postsecondary Education Commission
- California Chamber of Commerce
- The Greenlining Institute
- California Business Roundtable
- Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce

- The Women’s Foundation of California
- Orange County Business Council
- California Business for Education Excellence
- Women’s Policy Institute, Education Team
- Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities
- San Francisco Chamber of Commerce
- California Catholic Conference
- College OPTIONS
- Girls, Inc.
- Investing in Kids in California
- Community Coalition
- Pierce College
- San Francisco Education Fund
- Stanislaus County Board of Education
- Kern County Superintendent of Schools
- Organization of Farmworker Women Leaders
- Gay-Straight Alliance Network
- Public Advocates
- PolicyLink
- Marian Bergeson, Former California State Secretary of Education

OPPOSITION

- Academic Senate of California Community Colleges