

# Transfer Reform

## Moorpark College

### BACKGROUND

In 2010, Governor Schwarzenegger signed into law historic legislation to reform the transfer process from California Community Colleges (CCC) to the California State University (CSU) system. For decades, transfer has been a confusing process for students marked by myriad challenges, including 1) coursework requirements that differed from campus to campus, and sometimes changed from year to year, 2) that frequently required students to take courses they didn't need or that they had to retake after transferring, and 3) that did not result in an associate degree for students at the time of transfer. SB 1440 (Padilla) sought to change all of that by creating an Associate Degree for Transfer comprised of 60 units, 18 of which would be focused in a major or area of emphasis—all of which would be fully transferrable to the California State University—that guaranteed students admission into the CSU system with junior standing, and that ensured that students would only need an additional 60 units to complete their bachelor's degree (for a fuller description of the legislation and benefits to students, please see *Meeting Compliance, but Missing the Mark* found at [www.collegecampaign.org](http://www.collegecampaign.org)).

At the heart of implementation are templates (called Transfer Model Curricula, or TMCs) for developing Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADT), which have been created by leaders from both the California Community College and California State University systems. From these TMCs, community colleges create Associate Degrees for Transfer while CSU campuses report back for which of their existing degrees a student earning an ADT would be prepared to enter as a junior.

In May 2012, former Community College Chancellor Jack Scott put forth a goal that, by fall 2013, community colleges would be 80% complete with creating ADTs based on locally-determined implementation goals; by fall 2014, colleges would be at a 100% implementation level. Now nearing the end of the spring semester of 2014, campus progress is uneven ranging from some colleges at 100% implementation to others with unacceptably low implementation rates of 17%; systemwide, implementation is at 73%.

**One especially bright spot in providing a strong Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) pathway to its students is Moorpark College, one of three colleges in the Ventura Community College District. Through strong leadership and faculty dedication, they identified 19 Associate Degrees for Transfer pathways possible for their campus and have already put all 19 in place for their students. Additionally, Moorpark College has been among the top performers when it comes to awarding ADTs to students, with ADTs representing almost 6% of the associate degrees awarded in 2011-12 and comprising more than 14% the following year (2012-13), a statistic likely to continue to grow in the coming years.**

### SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES

- **Faculty-led effort.** Faculty from multiple disciplines have taken ownership to create the Associate Degrees for Transfer in a timely fashion. Strong leadership by the curriculum committee co-chairs helped faculty understand the importance of the ADTs and to support faculty efforts to review and revise curriculum to meet ADT requirements.
- **District-wide priority.** In September of 2011, the board of trustees for the Ventura County Community College District adopted three broad goals for the three colleges in their district: 1) provide access and student success, 2) maintain instructional quality within budgetary limits, and 3) prudent fiscal stewardship. There was strong support for faculty development of ADTs by the board of trustees and the Chancellor as an important activity to support the goal of student success.

- **A culture of collegial support.** While this was a campus-level effort lead by faculty, a culture of collegial support throughout the district and on campus contributed greatly to the success seen at Moorpark and all of the colleges in the Ventura County Community College District. In addition to teamwork shown by each college curriculum committee, a district-level committee that reviews curriculum shared common values that put students' needs first and prioritized transfer reform implementation. At the campus level, administrative leaders provided faculty with mileage reimbursement and authorized time away from class in order to participate in statewide Discipline Input Groups (DIGs), which were responsible for developing the initial drafts of the TMCs in a given discipline.

- **Outreach to students.** A host of degrees means nothing if students don't know about them. As a result of Moorpark's outreach efforts, thousands of community college and high school students have learned about the benefits of the Associate Degree for Transfer program.

The Career and Transfer Center Director makes classroom presentations, upon invitation from faculty, about the ADT program. Many faculty members are also presenting information about the degree program during their classes and discipline-faculty are working together to develop materials to share with their students. Information on each degree and required courses is easily available in the Transfer Center and, soon to be available, will be 2-year plans for each major that clearly outlines which classes a student will need to take each semester to complete their degree.

One of the college's strategies to improve student success on campus is to intentionally develop cohorts of students who feel a part of a community, a difficult task for a commuter campus. Some of this work is being done by hosting a Career & Majors Week, during which information about the ADT program is shared with students for their specific major.

Moorpark College also engages in outreach to middle- and high-school students, making sure they understand the opportunities they have at Moorpark, including the ADT. Some of this outreach includes presentations at high schools and middle schools, hosting summer camps at the college for middle school students, holding a breakfast for area high school counselors and career center coordinators so that they are armed with the information to give to their students, and having "preview days" for local high school students—all of which feature information about the ADT program.



Each brightly-colored sheet contains information specific to a different Associate Degree for Transfer available to students at Moorpark College.

## THE TOUGH WORK

This is no easy work. In some cases, faculty have had to reduce the unit count for their existing degrees, and in others, curriculum for long-standing courses has had to be reworked. It has taken some sacrifice and shifts in thinking about what students need in order to succeed, but faculty have been driven by the belief that these transfer pathways create more opportunity for their students.

- **From 5 units to 4 units.** Statistics at Moorpark College, prior to SB 1440 implementation, was traditionally a 5-unit course and is a lynchpin course for several disciplines to create ADTs. In order to stay within the 60 unit threshold for the ADTs at the community college, faculty at Moorpark needed to turn this 5-unit course into a 4-unit course. Faculty worked to create a solution that ensured students were still learning what they needed to know to be successful in future coursework. They asked themselves if there was an alternative way for them to present the content to students and how they could allow for the varying rates at which students absorb the material. Their solution was to trim some of the multiple reviews of content that had been built into the course for the minority of students who needed it, and then provide a supportive process for those students to still receive extra one-on-one instruction,

- **Making better informed decisions.** Business was another degree that required restructuring to meet the 60-unit limit. In particular, the accounting course had to be reduced from 6 units to 4 units. Rather than doing this in an uninformed manner, faculty surveyed nearby CSU campuses to determine the content students need to have studied before transfer to be prepared for the upper-division coursework they would encounter.
- **Streamlining processes.** When new degrees are created on a community college campus, they must be approved by the local Curriculum Committee. This can often be a bottleneck for degree development, depending upon the meeting schedule of the committee; at some campuses, the committee only meets twice per year. At Moorpark, however, the Curriculum Committee meets twice a month and, during peak times of ADT development, they met more frequently in order to make the degrees available to students as quickly as possible.

## OTHER FORCES AT WORK

While SB 1440 was designed to create a clearer pathway for students, outside factors have contributed to producing benefits for the campus as well.

- **Budget cuts.** Significant cuts to higher education budgets during the Great Recession had a huge impact on the ability of colleges to fulfill the many missions with which they are tasked. As a result, there was a call to refocus resources on the core missions outlined in the Master Plan of 1960, which include certificates, associate degrees, and transfer. The disciplines selected for the development of TMCs—which covered nearly 80% of the most commonly-transferred majors in the state—helped Moorpark to schedule classes focused on these core completion missions.
- **CSU spring admission freeze.** Due to the budget cuts, the CSU Board of Trustees voted to freeze admissions in the spring semester of 2013 to all students, except to those transfer students who had earned an Associate Degree for Transfer. This provided a great incentive for Moorpark faculty to maintain their commitment to SB 1440 implementation because this was the only way that their students would have year-round opportunity to transfer into the CSU system.
- **Replacing prior associate degrees.** For the most part, new Associate Degrees for Transfer have replaced the prior associate degrees that Moorpark College had once offered. In a few instances, however, their previous associate degrees had more of a Career Technical Education focus (example: a degree in Criminal Justice leading to a career as a police officer), and these degrees have been retained. New ADTs in these majors allow Moorpark to strengthen the transfer function in these disciplines and create more specific pathways for students to reach their goals.



*A student uses the computers in the Career & Transfer Center on campus.*

**Reform at this scale is not easy, particularly for systems as large and diverse as California Community Colleges and the CSU. Yet, when focused on creating opportunity for students and having a willingness to reconsider what has been in place for a long time, reform and increased student success is possible.**

For more information regarding Moorpark College's implementation of SB 1440, please contact:  
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