



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

OVERVIEW

September 15, 2017

On Friday, September 15, 2017, the Legislature adjourned for Interim Recess. In the weeks leading up to this deadline, the Legislature took final action on hundreds of bills. For bills approved by the Legislature and pending on the Governor's Desk on September 15, 2017, the Governor has until October 15, 2017 to sign or veto. If the Governor does not act on a measure it automatically becomes law.

The Division of Governmental Relations (Division) worked diligently to ensure policies advanced by the Legislature aligned with the system's goals of increasing on-time student certificate/degree attainment and reducing achievement gaps. The Division is pleased to report that many of the Chancellor's Office top policy priorities were approved by the Legislature, and many of those priorities have been enacted or are pending on the Governor's desk. Our Division also expressed policy and/or cost concerns on a number of proposals that have been shelved for this year.

The information that follows represents the policy areas and bills that the Governmental Relations Division strategically prioritized to advance the Vision for Success. For details and copies of any bill, contact the Division or visit the Legislative Counsel's website at <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>.

PRIORITY ADVOCACY AREAS

***Improving College Access and Completion.** By 2025, California is estimated to face a certificate, associate degree, and baccalaureate degree shortfall of 2.4 million. California Community Colleges have a significant role to play in closing this gap through preparing more students for college-level coursework and increasing transfer and completion rates. The Governmental Relations Division focused efforts on aligning the following bills with overarching system completion goals:*

AB 705 (Irwin): Assessment and Placement Policies.

AB 705 requires community college districts to maximize the probability of students entering and completing transfer-level coursework in math and English within a one-year timeframe by using multiple measures to achieve this goal. The bill requires community colleges to use high school performance information when determining a students' readiness for college-level English and math. It also prohibits community colleges from requiring students to enroll in remedial coursework unless research proves the students are highly unlikely to succeed in college-level.

Status: Governor's Desk. Passed in the Assembly (79-0) and the Senate (40-0).

Position: Support. The Division worked closely with the author's staff and advocates to develop amendments providing the Board of Governors the authority to establish regulations governing the use of evidence-based assessments. The Division continues to work with the California Department of Education and the California Student Aid Commission to establish and advance data sharing agreements that will enable the use of high school performance data. The Division

will play a supporting role to the Educational Services Division on the implementation of this bill, should AB 705 be signed into law by the Governor.

AB 19 (Santiago): California College Promise Framework.

As introduced, AB 19 focused on a “free tuition” program, and would have waived the enrollment fees for first-time community college students who enroll in 12 or more semester units, or the equivalent, and complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid application or a California Dream Act application, regardless of their level of financial need. Recent amendments strike the previous version of this bill, and instead require the Chancellor to establish a statewide California College Promise, based on the successful Long Beach College Promise, and focused on providing students with support and a clear transition from high school through community college. The bill does not contain funding for the program.

Status: Governor’s Desk. Passed in the Assembly (61-16) and in the Senate (31-7).

Position: Neutral. The Division negotiated the final amendments to AB 19, and believes that the amendments ensure the California College Promise framework largely aligns with the goals of increasing completion rates and closing achievement gaps. However, in the absence of a clear funding source, the Chancellor’s Office has an official position of *neutral* at this time.

SB 478 (Portantino): Transfer of Community College Students.

SB 478 requires community colleges to automatically provide an associate degree for transfer (ADT) to eligible students, and electronically report ADT student data to the Chancellor’s Office. The bill requires the Chancellor’s Office to maintain a data system that shares the data with CSU and UC by allowing them to have direct access to the data system. Students may opt out of these provisions. Implementation is subject to an appropriation in the annual Budget Act.

Status: Governor’s Desk. Passed in the Senate (30-10) and Assembly (70-6).

Position: Support. California Community College students who take the coursework pattern to complete an ADT, but do not receive the actual degree, are not entitled to the “guarantee” that the ADT provides when transferring to the CSU system. The Chancellor’s Office has recognized this challenge and is working to include a “degree audit” system as a part of the Educational Planning Initiative (EPI). The Chancellor’s Office worked closely with the Author’s staff to align the bill with the existing scope of EPI.

Making College Affordable. *Financial aid is a key component of student success, research shows that students who receive grants and scholarships are more likely to stay in school and graduate. With the lowest tuition rate in the nation and the most generous need-based fee-waiver program, the challenges our students face with regard to college affordability is often masked. For low-income students, tuition is not the barrier to access and success. Too few of our students receive financial aid to help cover their non-tuition educational costs, such as textbooks, transportation and housing. The Governmental Relations Division focused efforts on increasing need-based financial aid that offsets the total cost of attendance for California Community College students. Two of our priority policies were funded in the 2017-18 Budget Act.*

AB 214 (Weber): Student Food Security.

AB 214 assists students facing food insecurity by making the CalFresh application process easier. The Student Aid Commission is required to notify Cal Grant recipients of their eligibility for CalFresh benefits. The Department of Social Services (CDSS) is required to maintain a list of programs that qualify for the employment training exemption in federal regulation. This exemption allows full time students to receive CalFresh benefits if they are in one of these programs. The list of programs were developed under prior legislation by way of consultation with the Chancellor's Office.

Status: Chaptered. AB 214 was passed by the Senate (33-0) and the Assembly (76-0).

Position: Support. The Chancellor's Office participated in a workgroup led by CDSS, which helped form the basis for AB 214. The Division will continue to support the Educational Services Division in implementing programs, such as the Hunger Free Campus program, which was funded in the 2017-18 Budget Act that aims to respond to student food insecurity.

SB 15 (Leyva): Cal Grant C Award Program.

As introduced, SB 15 would have increased the maximum amount of the Cal Grant C award, which covers non-tuition access costs for career education students, from \$547 to \$2453 for California Community College students. The bill was subsequently amended to remove the award amount increase and make various program operation changes that would ease the process for community college students to apply for the award.

Status: Held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

Position: Support. SB 15 was introduced in response to a recommendation from the California Community College Strong Workforce Task Force. Unfortunately, the bill was ultimately held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. However, due in part to the successful advocacy of the California Community Colleges, the Assembly put forward a proposal in the 2017-18 Budget Act, which was subsequently adopted to increase the Cal Grant C award amount to \$1,094.

SB 539 (De León): Community College Student Completion Grant Awards.

SB 539 proposed, commencing with the 2017-18 academic year, to establish the California Community College Completion Grant Program for the purpose of establishing guided pathways and a new grant award for community college students (limited to students who receive a Cal Grant B award), to assist students in the completion of an associate degree, certificate program or transfer to a four-year university in a timely manner.

Status: Held in the Senate. However, the Completion Grant program was incorporated into the Budget Act and approved by the Legislature and Governor as a part of the Budget Act Education Trailer Bill (SB 85).

Position: Support. The Division collaborated with the Finance and Facilities Division to ensure that limited financial aid dollars would be focused on students who face the most financial need. Ultimately, the 2017-18 Budget Act included an increase in the Full Time Student Success Grant, from \$600 to \$1000, and the creation of the Completion Grant program to provide students who take 30 units per year (up to) an additional \$2000 to offset the total cost of attendance.

Closing Equity Gaps. *California Community Colleges proudly serve one of the most diverse student bodies in any higher education system, not only in race and ethnicity, but also in terms of age and background. Forty-two percent of our students are first-generation college students, about a quarter of our students are first-time students, and 16% of students are over the age of 40. While our colleges exceed in providing equality in access, we face persistent achievement gaps. In 2017, the Government Relations Division advocated on behalf of the following policies, which advanced system goals of reducing and closing achievement gaps:*

AB 504 (Medina): Community College Student Equity Plans.

Under current law, as a condition of receiving SSSP funding, the governing boards of each community college district must maintain a Student Equity Plan for addressing disparities among student groups, including low-income students, current and former foster youth, students with disabilities, and veterans. AB 504 modifies the current criteria for the development of Equity Plans by requiring the Chancellor to establish a standard methodology for measurement of student equity. The bill requires community college districts to use the standard methodology in campus-based research regarding student equity.

Status: Governor's Desk. Passed in the Senate (40-0) and Assembly (77-0).

Position: Support. The Division worked closely with the author's staff to incorporate recommendations from the Legislative Analyst's Office progress report on the Student Success Support Program and Student Equity Program. The Division also successfully advocated for amendments to align the Student Equity Plans reporting structure with Board regulations and Integrated Plans.

AB 1018 (Reyes): Community College Student Equity Plans.

AB 1018 adds homeless and LGBT students to the categories of students required to be addressed in the Student Equity Plans. The bill further requires the CCCCO to share data, if available, to support college implementation of this bill.

Status: Governor's Desk. Passed in the Assembly (67-0), and in the Senate (35-1).

Position: Support. As introduced, AB 1018 applied only to homeless students. In collaboration with the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, the Division worked with the Author to secure amendments to also include LGBT students in the scope of the bill and to incorporate technical changes to ensure data is provided to districts to support disproportionate impact research.

SB 12 (Beall): Foster Youth in Higher Education.

SB 12 requires every county child welfare agency to assist foster youth in the financial aid application process; requires the Student Aid Commission to work with the State Department of Social Services to develop an automated system to verify a student's foster youth status for applying for federal Pell Grants; and expands Cooperating Agencies Foster Youth Educational Support (CAFYES) program from the current level of 10 community college districts to 20 districts.

Status: Governor's Desk. Passed in the Senate (40-0), and in the Assembly (77-0).

Position: Support. The Division worked closely with the John Burton Foundation on amendments that will ensure that CAYFES expansion occurs if funding is available, and provides additional clarity to colleges to ensure that CAFYES funds can be used to provide outreach and education to foster youth about program eligibility.

***Protecting and Supporting California's Dreamers.** California is home to 223,000 people who are participating in the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. The California Community Colleges serve an estimated 61,000 undocumented immigrants and just over 14,000 DACA/California Dream Act recipients. The community college commitment to these students is unwavering. Throughout 2017, the Division has worked to advance policies that support and protect our Dreamers, including:*

AB 21 (Kalra): Access to Higher Education for Every Student.

AB 21 requires, to the fullest extent of federal law, the CCC, CSU, AICCU colleges, and requests the UC, to refrain from releasing personal information about students, faculty, and staff. The bill requires an institution to provide guidance concerning local policies under state and federal immigration laws, including campus responses to a federal immigration order. For purposes of verifying administrative warrants or subpoenas, the bill requires students, faculty, and staff to notify the president or his/her designee if immigration enforcement officers enter the campus. It requires the college administration to assign staff who can serve as a point of contact for individuals who are subject to an immigration order. AB 21 also requires the colleges to allow undocumented students who dropped out due to immigration enforcement issues to re-enroll, continue to receive financial aid, exemption from nonresident tuition fees, housing stipends or services, or other benefits if they are able to return to campus.

Status: Governor's Desk. Passed in the Assembly (58-19), and the Senate (29-8).

Position: Support. The Division worked closely with the author's staff and UC, CSU, and AICCU advocates to minimize implementation costs whenever possible, while protecting the rights of undocumented students, faculty, and staff.

AB 134 (Committee on Budget): Emergency Assistance for Dreamers

On September 12, 2017, California legislative leadership and Governor Brown announced a deal to provide \$30 million to support California's undocumented immigrants. The proposal provides \$20 million in additional funding for immigration legal services under the One California program, and an additional \$10 million in financial aid for Dreamers in the California Community Colleges, CSU, and UC systems. CSU will receive \$2 million and UC will receive \$1 million to support the existing Dream Loan Program. The California Community Colleges will receive \$7 million; this funding will be made available to local colleges to provide emergency financial aid resources to students affected by President Trump's decision to rescind the DACA program.

Status: Governor's Desk. Passed in the Assembly (58-19), and in the Senate (28-9).

Position: Support. The Division provided technical assistance and support to Senate and Assembly Leadership in developing the California Community College framework for emergency funding to Dreamers.

SB 68 (Lara): Public Postsecondary Education: Exemption from Nonresident Tuition.

SB 68 expands the population of students at community colleges and CSU campuses exempt from paying nonresident tuition, to include any student who has attended California schools or community colleges for three years and graduated from California high school, or the equivalent, attained an associate degree, or met UC or CSU transfer requirements. The bill requests the UC enact these provisions.

Status: Governor's Desk. Passed in the Senate (29-10) and in the Assembly (54-19)

Position: Support. The Division successfully advocated for the inclusion of adult education programs in the scope of this bill.

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