The CCC Chancellor’s Office has elicited input from various student service groups to develop a common understanding of key terms present in SB 1456 related to the provision of core matriculation services to entering students. The following summary synthesizes that input along with existing, related terminology in federal guidelines, title 5 regulations, accrediting standards and/or the CCC MIS Data element dictionary, as well as the newly revised and adopted CCC Academic Senate paper on The Role of Counseling Faculty and Delivery of Counseling Services in the California Community Colleges. Please note that this is a “living” document that will evolve as ongoing discussions with stakeholder groups occur.

### Educational Goal

**How is a student’s educational goal defined?**

The current understanding of the term “education goal” in the CCC’s is informed by accrediting standards, federal financial aid and Perkins Act policy, title 5 and in practice, by the MIS and CCCApply data element dictionaries.

In general, a student **education goal is defined as a degree, certificate, employment or career advancement, ESL, or transfer**. Detail on the CCC MIS Data element options for an uninformed, initial student education goal can be found on page 6. Revising the MIS data elements and definitions, as well as the development of definitions in title 5, will occur through stakeholder workgroup discussions if SB 1456 is signed into law.

Based upon stakeholder input received to date, the following are considerations regarding a student “education goal:”

1. **A student’s education goal should reflect the continuum of student learning and progression in college.** In defining “education goal,” stakeholders recommend that the Chancellor’s Office recognize that a student’s education goal upon entry may change as they progress through their coursework at a community college and perhaps change several times during their educational experience.
   - “Uninformed education goal” upon entry (at the time of application), that captures the student’s broad intent.
   - “Informed education goal” after the student has had an opportunity to take classes at the college and participate in student services.
   - The ability and opportunity to change their informed education goal if the student’s interest changes

2. **Identify a student’s initial educational and career goal:** Systems developed should allow students to indicate what their educational goal is, as well as their career goal. Goal definitions should include educational and career goals that may be a few single courses to support career advancement.
3. **A student should have the ability to update their “informed educational goal” at any time, but should be prompted to do so at key points in their educational career and should not be penalized for doing so.** Stakeholders have suggested the following key points (some reflect current college practices, which vary across the state):
   - At the beginning of each term, or
   - Once a year, or
   - After the accumulation of a certain number of units or upon the completion of predefined milestones.
   - Automated flags in college student information systems could be set to require students to report changes in education goal each term. Those flags could instruct students to meet with a counselor, advisor, or be prompted to update their goal on an online education plan.

4. **The ability to allow a student to identify multiple goals.** Students may have multiple goals—both a transfer goal and goal of earning an AA, or employment and goal of earning a certificate.

5. **Direct students to various services based on needs identified in application process and through other tools and services.**
   - First time students entering community college have a broad array of needs and require differing levels of guidance and support.
   - It is important to maintain flexibility for students who are self-directed and to allow for a structured process for students who need more direction.
   - Basic skill students should be able or required to meet with their advisor.
   - Tools should help students stay informed of changes in major/transfer requirements.

6. **Students often progress towards their goals at differing rates, as part- or full-time students, at multiple colleges, with occasional breaks in enrollment.**
   - A Statewide definition of new student and first-time student would be helpful, since students take classes over a period of time at many different community colleges. The definition would impact exemption criteria for participating in mandatory services.
   - CCCApply currently has a definition of first-time within the statewide system, but that may be incomplete.
   - The definition must take into account students in non-credit courses who begin taking credit courses.

### Upon Application

**How should “upon application” be defined for the purposes of a student declaring an initial academic and career goal?**

Recently amended language in SB 1456 references student identification of an academic and career goal “upon application.” Title 5 requires students to declare an education goal “upon admission.” Stakeholders described current practice as declaring an education goal upon “application”.

For the following, the assumption is made that “education” and “academic” in reference to a student’s goal can be used interchangeably:

- Educational goal upon admission or upon application is collected once, at the student’s first application to the college. A student should select an educational goal at completion of an application, when they become a student and/or have a student ID number. Colleges currently do collect this information once on the application.
• Education goal has implications for the Student Success Report Card and accountability. The student education goal in the MIS data base may affect student success outcomes and how they are counted.

### Course of Study

**What is a course of study?**

Recently amended language in SB 1456 changed the SSTF term “program of study” to “course of study.” From Taskforce discussions, a “program of study” was intended to be a student’s major, degree, certificate or transfer. While defining “course of study” will be done through discussions with advisory committees and workgroups as title 5 regulations are drafted if SB 1456 is passed, stakeholders raised the following considerations:

- How to capture students who enter community college only to complete basic skills or take ESL courses?
- What about students who declare a beginning level of a program, but then decide to continue in community college after they’ve completed their initial course of study and would like to move on to another goal?
- However “course of study” is defined, the term should be broad enough to apply to noncredit, as well as credit programs.
- Similar to the process for defining a broad educational objective, students need support and time to research and assess needs, values, interests and career information to define a specific course of study.
- Exemption criteria can be used to identify groups of students who are only interested in taking one or two courses, and who are not interested in a course of study.
- The Chancellor’s Office may want to consider changing the MIS Data Element gathering “major” to be course of study and to have it updated/linked to CCCApply and any statewide student educational plan developed.

### Specified Time Period or Unit Accumulation After Enrollment

**What considerations need to be taken into account in defining the “specified time period or unit accumulation” for a student to declare a “course of study”?

- Considerations for how the Board of Governors might define the “specified time period or unit accumulation” for a student to declare a course of study:
  - Should be expressed in terms of either a certain number of units, terms or milestones, whichever comes first, to accommodate part-time students. For example, after completing 15-30 semester units (or 22.5-45 quarter units), two terms, or transfer-level Math or English, whichever comes first.
  - For degree and transfer students, possibly develop a 15 transferable semester (or 22.5 quarter) units requirement to declare an informed academic goal on a student education plan and 30 transferable semester (or 45 quarter) units for declaring a specific course of study. A similar concept should be developed for certificate and noncredit students as well.
  - Should align with current regulations for declaring an academic goal.
  - Could start counting after a student has successfully completed basic skills courses.

- Similar to the process for defining a broad educational objective, students need support and time to research and assess needs, values, interests and career information to define a specific course of study.

- Students should be asked for their “course of study” upon application and each term thereafter. If unknown, they should be given more information to test various ideas, and be given
recommendations such as attending a career planning course. Colleges should provide options for students to re-energize the process if students remain undecided.

- The CCC system needs to identify what steps the colleges need to take before students get to the cutoff point, and what the consequences are if students do not declare a “course of study” by the determined cut-off point.

### Academic Progress

**How should academic progress be defined?**

- Existing college definitions and processes related to academic progress or progress probation could be adapted and broadened to address lack of declaration of a course of study.
- Academic progress should include consideration of specific unit milestones, program progression, e.g., completion of basic skills, and within a certain minimum amount of terms or units.
- Academic progress should include a certain number of units of residency at a college, possibly 12 units.
- Consider developing a “progress to degree” policy such as that used in the University of California which focuses on what students do when they reach the end of a course: earning notations, W, credits, etc.
- Colleges must consider what they are doing pre-emptively before a student gets on academic progress or progress probation.

### Student Education Plans

**What considerations need to be taken into account in developing a definition of and criteria for student education plans (SEP)?**

In general, a comprehensive student education plan (SEP) maps the courses needed to complete the student’s educational goal. It takes into account a student’s interests, skills, future career goals, major, potential transfer institution(s), the steps to take during a students’ college experience, etc.

The revised 2012 CCC Academic Senate Paper, *The Role of Counseling Faculty and Delivery of Counseling Services in the California Community Colleges*, describes the ideal content and factors that should be addressed in a comprehensive student education plan:

- Consideration of and planning for multiple layers of student goals, e.g. associate degree to transfer to professional school.
- Recommended course sequencing that reflects a balanced course load based on a student’s strengths, scheduling patterns, and course requirements with prerequisites built in.
- Student support referrals to services both on and off campus.
- Information about auxiliary requirements to meet a student’s educational goals, e.g. testing, Advanced Placement (AP) scores, minimum GPA, and deadlines.
- Planning for and prioritizing multiple transfer institutions.
- Recommendations of courses to increase a student’s competiveness for admission, if transfer is intended.
- Distinction of catalog rights and options for selecting a catalog year.
- Professional knowledge of programs, e.g. the difference between Photo Journalism as a Bachelor of Fine Arts under “Art” or as a Communications/Journalism “photojournalism” degree; differences between programs at different institutions (Psychology at a UC vs. CSU).
- Evaluation of transcripts from other institutions.
Stakeholder input received to date on the principles and considerations for SEPs:

**SEP Principles:**
- **Flexibility:** To allow students to change goals and update plans if their course of study changes.
- **Tailored to meet student needs depending on where the student is on their educational path:**
  Develop different SEPs for students who are first time students (undecided major or who’ve declared a major) versus for students who are continuing and have reached specific milestones. Education planning should be different for various student groups at different stages of their education, whether part-time or full-time:
  - **Initial SEP for Undeclared FTS:** New and undeclared students could have an initial education plan for first term based on an assessment results. Undeclared students should be required to take a counseling course or engage in a series of workshops of career exploration in their first semester to assist in declaring a major or specific course of study.
  - **Initial SEP for Declared FTS:** If the student has declared a goal, the plan could map out a student’s first semester or year to help them progress towards their specific goal.
  - **Comprehensive SEP for Continuing Students:** Continuing students with more than 15 semester or 22.5 quarter units attempted (or other milestone, for example, completion of basic skills courses after 24-30 semester units or 36-45 quarter units) could be provided a comprehensive plan. A comprehensive education plan should be updated when students change their major or course of study.
- **A student’s SEP should reflect this continuum of student learning and progression in college.** We need to focus on the “planning” process, not just on the final product. Ideally, planning should be “informed” by assessment results, career counseling, transfer counseling, academic progress, educational workshops, etc. The SEP process should be a learning experience for students so that they can learn to define goals, plan and be effective advocates and learners on their own behalf.
  - **Students should be involved in creating education plans, not just “receiving” them.** Any software application developed should enable students and/or train students to choose the courses needed to complete his/her educational goal.
- **Meaningful:** A student education plan should be meaningful and useful for students and not simply be done to meet compliance requirements. Stakeholders will be involved in discussions to help shape how this might be accomplished within existing resources.

**General Considerations**
- Districts and colleges need some flexibility in defining education plans. Education plan elements in law and Title 5 regulation should be broad to allow local colleges to define some aspects of SEP.
- Community colleges should observe the catalog rights of students who transfer from other community college students won’t get caught between Title 5 changes.
- In addition to an informed educational goal and declared major or program, SEPs should also include a student’s career and transfer objectives. Systems developed should allow for easy monitoring of student progress towards their goals and major/program. Students who are off track should be identified and encouraged to see a counselor or advisor.
- Consider having SEP templates for first time students who declare a major or program, and allow for flexibility in the template to make changes based on student needs, attitudes, and other factors (i.e., work schedule).
- All education plans should be reported and counted as a service provided for funding purposes. The Chancellor’s Office should update the MIS data definitions to capture various types of education plans, for example those for new students versus continuing students.
- Colleges should be surveyed to determine their current use of existing electronic student education planning software applications, and their advantages and disadvantages and potential usefulness
for any state supported system(s). Look at the Integrated SEP from Los Rios District, DegreeWorks and other software solutions.

- Students receiving financial aid are required to declare an education goal to continue receiving aid, but will often choose those goals only in order to comply. Engaging in student education planning, receiving Financial Aid and declaring a goal, course of study should be linked.
- Data collected from SEP may inform scheduling/enrollment management.
- Education plans should be able to be tailored to the specific needs of special populations of students, for example, part-time students, transfer students, veterans, athletes, career technical education students, non-credit students, basic skills students, etc.
- SEP must take into consideration those non-academic roles and responsibilities that can impact success, e.g., work, parenting, care-taking, etc.
- SEP should capture whether student in continuing career pathway started in high school or earlier.
- An educational plan is more than just a list of courses and sequence but an evaluation of skills/deficiencies, formulating goals and addressing personal barrier and personal experiences.
#1: The CCC MIS Data element dictionary lists the choices for an uninformed, initial student education goal as:

A- Obtain an associate degree and transfer to a four-year institution
B- Transfer to a 4-year institution without an associate degree
C- Obtain a 2-year associate's degree without transfer
D- Obtain a 2-year vocational degree without transfer
E- Earn a vocational certificate without transfer
F- Discover / formulate career interests, plans, goals
G- Prepare for a new career (acquire job skills)
H- Advance in current job / career (update job skills)
I- Maintain certificate or license (e.g. Nursing, Real Estate)
J- Educational development (intellectual, cultural)
K- Improve basic skills in English, reading or math
L- Complete credits for high school diploma or GED
M- Undecided on goal
N- To move from noncredit coursework to credit coursework
O- 4-year college student taking courses to meet 4-year college requirements
X- Uncollected / unreported