
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Josh Newman, Chair

2023 - 2024 Regular

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| Bill No: | AB 1291 | Hearing Date: | September 12, 2023 |
| Author: | McCarty | | |
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Subject: University of California Associate Degree for Transfer Pilot Program.

NOTE: This bill has been amended to replace its contents and this is the first time the bill is being heard in its current form.

SUMMARY

This bill establishes the University of California Associate Degree for Transfer Pilot Program commencing with the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and phases-in an expansion of the pilot program to no less than five additional campuses by the 2028-29 academic year. The bill requires UCLA and selected University of California (UC) campuses to prioritize admission of a student who earns an associate degree for transfer (ADT) from selected community colleges and to redirect a student who meets those requirements but is denied admission to the applicable campus and offer admission to at least one other campus. Lastly, the bill requires the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) to review the pilot program and submit an interim and final report on the pilot program, each with specified content, on February 1, 2027, and June 1, 2030, respectively, to the Legislature

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Under the California Constitution, establishes the UC as a public trust to be administered by the UC Regents; and, grants the Regents full powers of organization and government, subject only to such legislative control as may be necessary to insure security of its funds, compliance with the terms of its endowments, statutory requirements around competitive bidding and contracts, sales of property and the purchase of materials, goods and services. (Article IX, Section (9)(a) of the California Constitution).
- 2) Under the California Constitution, states that the university be entirely independent of all political or sectarian influence and kept free therefrom in the appointment of its regents and in the administration of its affairs. (Constitution of California, Article IX, Section 9 (f))
- 3) Provides that statutes related to UC (and most other aspects of the governance and operation of UC) are applicable only to the extent that the Regents of UC make such provisions applicable. (Education Code (EC) § 67400)

- 4) Declares the UC as the primary state-supported academic agency for research. (EC § 66010.4 (c))
- 5) Requires the segments of higher education to develop an intersegmental common core curriculum in general education for the purpose of transfer. This common core curriculum is known as the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC). Any student who completes the IGETC course pattern is deemed to have completed the lower division coursework required for transfer to the UC or the California State University (CSU). (EC § 66720)
- 6) Requests the UC to identify commonalities and differences in similar majors across all UC campuses and provide California Community College (CCC) students with the information in at least the top 20 majors. (EC § 66721.7)
- 7) Requests the UC Regents, on or before March 1 in each year from 2017 to 2022, inclusive, to submit an annual report to the Legislature, on the UC's data on student transfers and to beginning on or before March 1, 2019, in its report to include the same data points, on transfer students with a UC Transfer Pathway. (EC § 66721.9)
- 8) Requires the governing board of each public postsecondary education segment to be accountable for the development and implementation of formal systemwide articulation agreements and transfer agreement programs, including those for general education or a transfer core curriculum, and other appropriate procedures to support and enhance the transfer function. (EC § 66738)
- 9) Requires the Chancellor of CSU, in consultation with the Academic Senate of the CSU, to establish specified components necessary for a clear degree path for transfer students, including specification of a systemwide lower division transfer curriculum for each high-demand baccalaureate major. (EC § 66739.5)
- 10) Establishes the STAR Act, which, in part, requires, commencing with the fall term of the 2011-2012 academic year, a student that receives an ADT to be deemed eligible for transfer into a CSU baccalaureate degree program when the student meets specified requirements. Requires a granting of this degree when a student accomplishes both of the following:
 - a) Completes 60 semester or 90 quarter units eligible for transfer to the CSU and that includes the CSU General Education Breadth program for IGETC, and a minimum of 18 semester or 27 quarter units in a major area of emphasis as determined by the district.
 - b) Obtains a minimum grade point average of 2.0. (EC § 66745, et seq.)
- 11) Requires the CSU and UC to jointly establish a singular lower division general education (GE) pathway for transfer admission into both segments, and also requires the CCC to place students who declare a goal of transfer on an ADT pathway for their intended major. Establishes the ADT intersegmental implementation committee to serve as the primary entity charged with oversight of the ADT [also referred to as the STAR Act of 2021]. (EC § 66749.8)

- 12) Requires the CSU Chancellor's Office to implement articulated nursing degree transfer pathways for Associates Degree in Nursing (ADN) students at CCCs seeking a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing (BSN) at CSU prior to the 2012-2013 academic year. (EC § 89267.5)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Establishes the University of California Associate Degree for Transfer Pilot Program.

For UCLA

- 2) Requires UCLA to do both of the following:
 - a) By the 2026-27 academic year, dedicate at least eight majors at UCLA as similar to the transfer model curricula from UCLA-selected community colleges and prioritize admission of a student who earns an ADT and meets the requirements of one of the transfer model curricula.
 - b) By the 2028-29 academic year, declare at least 12 majors, with at least 4 of those 12 majors in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, at UCLA as similar to the transfer model curricula from UCLA-selected community colleges and prioritize admission of a student who earns an ADT and meets the requirements of one of the transfer model curricula. The bill requires UCLA to make every effort to ensure that the transfer model curricula declared similar to the STEM majors do not require the completion of more than 60 semester units, and if one or more of the transfer model curricula do not meet this limit, UCLA is required to provide a written justification to the legislature as specified.

For other UCs

- 3) Requires, by the 2028-29 academic year, that the UC designate at least five campuses to declare at least 12 majors at the applicable campus as similar to the transfer model curricula from campus-selected community colleges (12 major minimum does not apply to UC, Merced) and prioritize admission of a student who earns an ADT and meets the requirements of one of the transfer model curricula.

For UCLA and other UCs

- 4) Requires that the applicable campus of the UC determine the appropriate admissions preference for a student who earns an ADT and meets requirements of one of the transfer model curricula prescribed in the bill.

- 5) Requires a campus to redirect a student who otherwise meets the requirements of the pilot program but is not granted admission to other UC campuses, where the student is to be offered admission to at least one other campus.

LAO review and reports

- 6) Requires, by February 1, 2027, the LAO to review the pilot program and submit an interim report to the relevant policy and fiscal committees of the legislature on the pilot program that includes relevant information on admissions and redirection outcomes.
- 7) Requires, by June 1, 2030, the LAO to review the pilot program, and submit a final report on the pilot program to the relevant policy and fiscal committees of the Legislature, and make the final report publicly available that includes additional information on admissions, redirection, student demographics, and student completion outcomes, as well as recommendations on whether and how the pilot program can or should be extended or expanded. These recommendations are to take into consideration relevant information, including but not limited to all of the following:
 - a) Factors such as negative impacts on student diversity or the freshman-to-transfer student ratio, as determined by the UC.
 - b) The pilot program's impact on streamlining transfer pathways for community college students.
 - c) Best practices from other similar programs, such as the UC, Merced Transfer Project.
- 8) Requires the UC Regents to consider and discuss the final report during an open session of a regularly scheduled meeting of the regents.
- 9) States that it is the intent of the Legislature that, by 2031-32 academic year, each undergraduate UC campus declare at least 12 majors and evaluate the possibility of declaring at least 16 majors at the respective campus as described.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) **Need for the bill.** According to the author, "AB 1291 delivers on a long-standing goal in California: to simplify and streamline transfer paths for hardworking, qualified community college students wishing to attend a UC or a CSU. Creating a universal transfer path will increase economic opportunity and prosperity for all Californians and help our state economy thrive."
- 2) **How would it work?** Implementation of the proposed pilot program would commence at UCLA and grow to five other UC campuses over a period of three years for the purposes of extending priority admissions for students who have earned a community college ADT degree. UC campuses would select which majors (no less than 12) align with transfer model curricula from select

community colleges. UCLA is additionally required to declare at least four of the 12 STEM majors required. Students who are not granted admission will be redirected to other UC campuses and offered admission to at least one of those campuses. Students are subject to meeting other admission requirements. The bill limits the pilot program to majors that fit with transfer model curricula from UC-selected community colleges. It is unclear how students will learn about the pilot program, the selected community colleges or the participating UCs in order for them to take advantage of it. The LAO is tasked with the responsibility of conducting a comprehensive review and offering informed recommendations to the legislature in order to guide subsequent actions on the policy.

- 3) **ADT benefits for students.** Since the enactment of SB 1440 (Padilla, Chapter 428, Statutes of 2010), the STAR Act, the ADT has made significant strides in streamlining the transfer process for students and has become a successful pathway to earning a bachelor's degree. Specifically, the Act requires CCC districts to develop and grant a transfer associate degree that deems the student eligible for transfer into the CSU when the student meets certain course requirements. Completion of an ADT guarantees a student:
- a) Admission with junior status to a CSU campus but not to a specific campus or major.
 - b) No additional lower-division CSU coursework.
 - c) No more than 60-semester units of upper-division CSU coursework to complete a bachelor's degree, in addition to the 60 units completed at community college, results in a 120-unit pathway to a bachelor's degree.
 - d) Priority admission at CSU.

On a lesser scale, this bill attempts to nudge UC in a similar direction. However, the California Constitution declares the UC an independent body governed by the UC Regents and retains the authority to manage all academic affairs (as noted in the background of this analysis). It's unclear to what extent UC can be compelled to comply with the provisions of this bill.

- 4) **ADT participation.** Since developing the ADT, the CCC system has also entered into transfer agreements with private nonprofit universities, some of which now also guarantee admission and junior standing to students with an ADT.

As of October 2020, over 280,000 CCC students have earned an ADT and over 40 ADT (now 41) pathways exist at CCC. Since 2012, the percent of students transferring with the ADT has grown from 3 percent to 42 percent. In fall 2020, transfer students entering the CSU with an ADT represented nearly half of new community college transfers. More than half of ADT transfer students graduate from the CSU within two years and 83 percent within four years, compared to 76 percent who transferred with a traditional associate degree.

- 5) **UC Transfer Admission Programs.** UC has several transfer admission programs for CCC students, with more than 60 percent of transfer-students

graduating from UC within two years and close to 90 percent in four years. These programs include:

- a) *Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG)*. The TAG program guarantees CCC students admission to a specific major at the UC campus of their choice, provided they meet certain course and GPA requirements. Campuses offering TAG agreements are Davis, Irvine, Merced, Riverside, Santa Barbara, and Santa Cruz. By submitting a TAG agreement, students can confirm their admission to a particular UC campus and may receive an early review of their academic records, early admission notification, and individual guidance about major preparation and general education coursework. The conditions for a TAG often include major preparation requirements and a requisite GPA in those courses.
- b) *UC Transfer Pathways*. The Transfer Pathways are a common set of major-based preparatory courses offered across all nine UC undergraduate campuses for twenty of the majors most sought-after by CCC transfer applicants. As a clear roadmap for prospective transfers, a Transfer Pathway guides CCC students by identifying a single set of CCC courses aligned with their chosen major that will transfer to UC campuses. CCC students can follow one of UC's Transfer Pathways to start preparing for their major at a community college and keep their UC campus options open.
- c) *Pathways+*. Pathways+ is the most recent transfer guarantee policy based on the UC Transfer Pathway majors. CCC students complete one of the UC Transfer Pathways, which includes major-preparatory coursework accepted across all nine UC campuses, as well as a TAG for the major. By completing a UC Transfer Pathway and a campus-based TAG in the same major, Pathways+ students are prepared for competitive admission across all nine of UC's undergraduate campuses, while simultaneously securing guaranteed admission to one of the TAG campuses.
- d) *UC Transfer Pathway (UCTP) Degrees*. The UCTP Associate Degrees in Chemistry and Physics are pilot community college degree programs that build on UC's Pathways+ program.
- e) *Associate Degree for Transfer*. Students who complete an ADT are eligible for transfer admission to UC and are admitted provided they meet other UC admission criteria and GPA requirements.
- f) Other local transfer agreements.

This bill would presumably add to the list of programs.

- 6) **Promising UC Merced pathway aligned with ADT**. The collaboration among regional leaders in the CCC, CSU, and UC systems has resulted in a streamlined pathway to a bachelor's degree for students in the Central Valley. This initiative is led by the Central Valley Higher Education Consortium (CVHEC) and is aimed at simplifying and streamlining transfer pathways between community colleges and

universities. The ultimate goal of this initiative is to create 2+2 pathways that builds upon the ADT. This will enable students at any CCC in the region to prepare for transfer and complete a bachelor's degree at either UC Merced or one of the three CSU campuses in the Valley (Stanislaus, Fresno, and Bakersfield). This development is expected to have a positive impact on the educational attainment of students in the region. The proposed reporting criteria provides a chance to highlight lessons learned from programs like the UC Merced Transfer project and perhaps apply them to future ADT pilot expansions.

7) **Prior and related legislation**

AB 1749 (McCarty, 2023) would have expanded, commencing with the 2025–2026 academic year, provisions the STAR Act to additionally require that a student who earns an ADT be deemed eligible for transfer into a UC baccalaureate degree program if they meet certain requirements; requires the UC to guarantee admission with junior status to a CCC student who has earned an ADT, as specified; and, provides that a student admitted to the UC pursuant to this Act is entitled to receive priority over all other CCC transfer students, excluding CCC students who have entered into a transfer agreement between a CCC and the UC before the fall term of the 2025–2026 AY. AB 1749 was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee suspense file.

AB 928 (Berman, Chapter 566, Statutes of 2021), the STAR Act of 2021, in part, required the CSU and UC to jointly establish a singular lower division GE pathway for transfer admission into both segments, and also required the CCC to place students who declare a goal of transfer on an ADT pathway for their intended major.

SB 440 (Padilla, Chapter 720, Statutes of 2013), required, prior to the 2014-2015 AY, a CCC create an ADT in every major that has an existing transfer model curricula (TMC). Specifies that once a TMC is approved by faculty, community colleges use it to design an ADT in that particular major.

AB 2302 (Paul Fong, Chapter 427, Statutes of 2010), made changes to existing law regarding transfer admissions to support the transfer pathway proposed by SB 1440 (Padilla) (as described below).

SB 1440 (Padilla, Chapter 428, Statutes of 2010) created the STAR Act, which, in part, created the ADT; a two-year 60-unit associate degrees for transfer that are fully transferable to CSU. These degrees require completion of: (1) a minimum of 18 units in a major or area of emphasis, as determined by each community college; and, (2) an approved set of general education requirements. Students who earn such a degree are automatically eligible to transfer to the CSU system as an upper-division student in a bachelor's degree program and need only complete two additional years (an additional 60 units) of coursework to earn a bachelor's degree.

SUPPORT

None received.

OPPOSITION

None received.

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