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AB-404 Community colleges: accreditation. (2015-2016)

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Assembly Bill No. 404

CHAPTER 623

An act to amend Sections 70901 and 72208 of the Education Code, relating to community colleges.

[Approved by Governor October 08, 2015. Filed with Secretary of State October 08, 2015.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 404, Chiu. Community colleges: accreditation.

(1) Existing law establishes the California Community Colleges, under the administration of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, as one of the segments of public postsecondary education in this state. Existing law imposes numerous duties on the board of governors with respect to these administrative responsibilities, including a requirement to review the accreditation status of community colleges in certain circumstances.

This bill would add to the duties of the board of governors by requiring it to conduct a survey of the community colleges, including consultation with representatives of both faculty and classified personnel, to develop a report to be transmitted to the United States Department of Education and the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity that reflects a systemwide evaluation of the regional accrediting agency based on the criteria used to determine an accreditor's status.

(2) Existing law requires the accrediting agency for the community colleges to report to the appropriate policy and budget subcommittees of the Legislature upon the issuance of a decision that affects the accreditation status of a community college and, on a biannual basis, to report any accreditation policy changes that affect the accreditation process or status for a community college.

This bill would require the regional accrediting agency for the community colleges to report to the board of governors as soon as practicable after the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity has notified the regional accrediting agency of the date by which the agency's application for continued recognition is due.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 70901 of the Education Code is amended to read:

70901. (a) The Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges shall provide leadership and direction in the continuing development of the California Community Colleges as an integral and effective element in the structure of public higher education in the state. The work of the board of governors shall at all times be directed to maintaining and continuing, to the maximum degree permissible, local authority and control in the administration of the California Community Colleges.

(b) Subject to, and in furtherance of, subdivision (a), and in consultation with community college districts and other interested parties as specified in subdivision (e), the board of governors shall provide general supervision over community college districts, and shall, in furtherance of those purposes, perform the following functions:

(1) Establish minimum standards as required by law, including, but not limited to, the following:

(A) Minimum standards to govern student academic standards relating to graduation requirements and probation, dismissal, and readmission policies.

(B) Minimum standards for the employment of academic and administrative staff in community colleges.

(C) Minimum standards for the formation of community colleges and districts.

(D) Minimum standards for credit and noncredit classes.

(E) Minimum standards governing procedures established by governing boards of community college districts to ensure faculty, staff, and students the right to participate effectively in district and college governance, and the opportunity to express their opinions at the campus level and to ensure that these opinions are given every reasonable consideration, and the right of academic senates to assume primary responsibility for making recommendations in the areas of curriculum and academic standards.

(2) Evaluate and issue annual reports on the fiscal and educational effectiveness of community college districts according to outcome measures cooperatively developed with those districts, and provide assistance when districts encounter severe management difficulties.

(3) Conduct necessary systemwide research on community colleges, and provide appropriate information services, including, but not limited to, definitions for the purpose of uniform reporting, collection, compilation, and analysis of data for effective planning and coordination, and dissemination of information.

(4) (A) Provide representation, advocacy, and accountability for the California Community Colleges before state and national legislative and executive agencies.

(B) In order to wholly engage in the recognition review process of an accrediting agency pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 72208, conduct a survey of the community colleges, including consultation with representatives of both faculty and classified personnel, to develop a report to be transmitted to the United States Department of Education and the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity that reflects a systemwide evaluation of the regional accrediting agency based on the criteria used to determine an accreditor's status.

(5) Administer state support programs, both operational and capital outlay, and those federally supported programs for which the board of governors has responsibility pursuant to state or federal law. In so doing, the board of governors shall do the following:

(A) (i) Annually prepare and adopt a proposed budget for the California Community Colleges. The proposed budget shall, at a minimum, identify the total revenue needs for serving educational needs within the mission, the amount to be expended for the state general apportionment, the amounts requested for various categorical programs established by law, the amounts requested for new programs and budget improvements, and the amount requested for systemwide administration.

(ii) The proposed budget for the California Community Colleges shall be submitted to the Department of Finance in accordance with established timelines for development of the annual Budget Bill.

(B) To the extent authorized by law, establish the method for determining and allocating the state general apportionment.

(C) Establish space and utilization standards for facility planning in order to determine eligibility for state funds for construction purposes.

(6) (A) Establish minimum conditions entitling districts to receive state aid for support of community colleges. In so doing, the board of governors shall establish and carry out a periodic review of each community college district to determine whether it has met the minimum conditions prescribed by the board of governors.

(B) In determining whether a community college district satisfies the minimum conditions established pursuant to this section, the board of governors shall review the regional accreditation status of the community colleges within that district.

(7) Coordinate and encourage interdistrict, regional, and statewide development of community college programs, facilities, and services.

(8) Facilitate articulation with other segments of higher education with secondary education.

(9) Review and approve comprehensive plans for each community college district. The plans shall be submitted to the board of governors by the governing board of each community college district.

(10) Review and approve all educational programs offered by community college districts and all courses that are not offered as part of an educational program approved by the board of governors.

(11) Exercise general supervision over the formation of new community college districts and the reorganization of existing community college districts, including the approval or disapproval of plans therefor.

(12) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, be solely responsible for establishing, maintaining, revising, and updating, as necessary, the uniform budgeting and accounting structures and procedures for the California Community Colleges.

(13) Establish policies regarding interdistrict attendance of students.

(14) Advise and assist governing boards of community college districts on the implementation and interpretation of state and federal laws affecting community colleges.

(15) Contract for the procurement of goods and services, as necessary.

(16) Carry out other functions as expressly provided by law.

(c) Subject to, and in furtherance of, subdivision (a), the board of governors shall have full authority to adopt rules and regulations necessary and proper to execute the functions specified in this section as well as other functions that the board of governors is expressly authorized by statute to regulate.

(d) Wherever in this section or any other statute a power is vested in the board of governors, the board of governors, by a majority vote, may adopt a rule delegating that power to the chancellor, or any officer, employee, or committee of the California Community Colleges, or community college district, as the board of governors may designate. However, the board of governors shall not delegate any power that is expressly made nondelegable by statute. Any rule delegating power shall prescribe the limits of delegation.

(e) In performing the functions specified in this section, the board of governors shall establish and carry out a process for consultation with institutional representatives of community college districts so as to ensure their participation in the development and review of policy proposals. The consultation process shall also afford community college organizations, as well as interested individuals and parties, an opportunity to review and comment on proposed policy before it is adopted by the board of governors.

SEC. 2. Section 72208 of the Education Code is amended to read:

72208. (a) The regional accrediting agency for the community colleges shall report to the appropriate policy and budget subcommittees of the Legislature upon the issuance of a decision that affects the accreditation status of a community college and, on a biannual basis, report any accreditation policy changes that affect the accreditation process or status for a community college.

(b) The Office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges shall ensure that the appropriate policy and budget subcommittees of the Legislature are provided the information required to be reported pursuant to subdivision (a).

(c) The regional accrediting agency shall report to the board of governors as soon as practicable after the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity has notified the regional accrediting agency of the date by which the agency's application for continued recognition is due.