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AB-1291 University of California Associate Degree for Transfer Pilot Program. (2023-2024)

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Assembly Bill No. 1291

CHAPTER 683

An act to add Section 66749.9 to the Education Code, relating to public postsecondary education.

[Approved by Governor October 10, 2023. Filed with Secretary of State October 10, 2023.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1291, McCarty. University of California Associate Degree for Transfer Pilot Program.

Existing law, the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act, requires a student who earns an associate degree for transfer to be deemed eligible for transfer into a California State University baccalaureate degree program if the student meets certain requirements. The act also requires the California State University to guarantee admission with junior status to a community college student who meets those requirements, and provides that admission to the California State University under these provisions does not guarantee admission for specific majors or campuses. A student admitted to the California State University pursuant to the act is entitled to receive priority over all other community college transfer students, excluding community college students who have entered into a transfer agreement between a community college and the California State University before the fall term of the 2012–13 academic year.

Provisions of the Donahoe Higher Education Act apply to the University of California only to the extent that the Regents of the University of California act, by resolution, to make them applicable.

This bill would create the University of California Associate Degree for Transfer Pilot Program in the Donahoe Higher Education Act. The bill would require the University of California, Los Angeles to declare at least 8 majors by the 2026–27 academic year, and at least 12 majors by the 2028–29 academic year, as similar to the transfer model curricula from select community colleges chosen by the University of California, Los Angeles and would require, by the 2028–29 academic year, the University of California to designate at least 5 campuses to declare at least 12 majors as similar to the transfer model curricula from select community colleges chosen by the applicable campus, except that the 12 major minimum would not apply to the University of California, Merced if designated. The bill would require the applicable campus to prioritize admission of a student who earns an associate degree for transfer and meets the requirements of one of the transfer model curricula and to determine the appropriate admissions preference. The bill would require, for a student who meets those requirements and other University of California admission requirements but is not granted admission to the applicable campus, that campus to redirect the student to other campuses of the University of California and the student to be offered admission to at least one other campus of the University of California.

The bill would require the Legislative Analyst's Office to review the pilot program and submit an interim and final report on the pilot program, each with specified content, by February 1, 2027, and June 1, 2030, respectively, to certain legislative committees and subcommittees. The bill would require the Legislative Analyst's Office to make the final report publicly available and would require the Regents of the University of California to consider and discuss the final report during an open session of a regularly scheduled meeting of the regents.

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

SECTION 1. Section 66749.9 is added to the Education Code, immediately following Section 66749.8, to read:

66749.9. (a) This section shall be known, and may be cited, as the University of California Associate Degree for Transfer Pilot Program.

(b) (1) The University of California, Los Angeles shall do both of the following:

(A) By the 2026–27 academic year, declare at least eight majors at the University of California, Los Angeles as similar to the transfer model curricula from select community colleges chosen by the University of California, Los Angeles and prioritize admission of a student who earns an associate degree for transfer and meets the requirements of one of the transfer model curricula.

(B) (i) 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 the University of California, Los Angeles as similar to the transfer model curricula from select community colleges chosen by the University of California, Los Angeles and prioritize admission of a student who earns an associate degree for transfer and meets the requirements of one of the transfer model curricula.

(ii) The University of California, Los Angeles shall 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, the University of California, Los Angeles shall provide a written justification to the Legislature detailing what attempts were made to adhere to the limit and demonstrate how the transfer model curricula can be completed in no more than 66 semester units or the equivalent of two additional courses above 60 semester units.

(2) By the 2028–29 academic year, the University of California shall designate at least five campuses of the University of California to declare at least 12 majors at the applicable campus as similar to the transfer model curricula from select community colleges chosen by that campus, except that the 12 major minimum shall not apply to the University of California, Merced if designated, and prioritize admission of a student who earns an associate degree for transfer and meets the requirements of one of the transfer model curricula.

(c) The applicable campus of the University of California shall determine the appropriate admissions preference for a student who earns an associate degree for transfer and meets the requirements of one of the transfer model curricula described in subdivision (b).

(d) For a student who earns an associate degree for transfer and meets the requirements of one of the transfer model curricula described in subdivision (b), in addition to other University of California admission requirements, but is not granted admission to the applicable campus of the University of California, that campus shall redirect the student to other campuses of the University of California and the student shall be offered admission to at least one other campus of the University of California.

(e) (1) By February 1, 2027, the Legislative Analyst's Office shall review the pilot program and submit an interim report to the Assembly Committee on Higher Education, the Senate Committee on Education, and the respective education finance budget subcommittees of the Assembly and the Senate on the pilot program that includes relevant information on admissions and redirection outcomes.

(2) By June 1, 2030, the Legislative Analyst's Office shall review the pilot program and submit a final report on the pilot program to the Assembly Committee on Higher Education, the Senate Committee on Education, and the respective education finance budget subcommittees of the Assembly and the Senate. The Legislative Analyst's Office shall make the final report publicly available and the Regents of the University of California shall consider and discuss the final report during an open session of a regularly scheduled meeting of the regents. The final report shall include additional information on admissions, redirection, student demographics, and student completion outcomes, and recommendations on whether and how the pilot program can or should be extended or expanded. The recommendations shall 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 University of California.

(B) The pilot program's impact on streamlining transfer pathways for community college students.

(C) Best practices from other similar programs, such as the University of California, Merced Transfer Project.

(f) It is the intent of the Legislature that, by the 2031–32 academic year, each undergraduate campus of the University of California will declare at least 12 majors, and evaluate the possibility of declaring at least 16 majors, at the respective campus as similar to the transfer model curricula from select community colleges chosen by the campus and prioritize admission of a student who earns an associate degree for transfer and meets the requirements of one of the transfer model curricula. However, these 12 and 16 major minimums do not apply to University of California, Merced.