

## Politics and Legal Issues Summary of Trends and Findings

### **Trend 1: More legislative/state intervention to increase productivity or affect the operations of the community colleges.**

- States are seeking approaches to improve college performance statistics. For example, West Virginia is using a “carrot” approach, tying receipt of enhanced state funding to performance outcomes such as graduation rates, course completion, and college retention rates; Indiana is using a “stick” approach, cutting funding for colleges that don’t measure up (Williams, 2010).
- Arizona, Florida, North Carolina and Oregon have successfully implemented transfer degree programs that serve and graduate more students (Padilla, 2010).
- In September 2010 then-Governor Schwarzenegger signed SB-1440 (sponsored by Senator Alex Padilla), the Student Transfer Achievement Reform (STAR) Act, which:
  - Mandates that California Community Colleges (CCCs) create Associate degrees (AA/AS) for transfer to a CSU with areas of emphasis;
  - Guarantees that students who earn the transfer degree are admitted to the CSU with upper division junior-year status
  - Prohibits the CCCs from requiring additional courses for these transfer degrees (and non-collegiate, basic skills-level coursework may not be counted toward the units required);
  - Ensures that transfer students graduate with a Bachelor’s degree with 120 semester units or 180 quarter units, certain majors excepted.

An established general education transfer curriculum (either CSU GE Breadth or IGETC) will serve as the foundation of each transfer AA/AS degree program, with an additional eighteen units of coursework designated as lower-division preparation for the major. SB 1440 is expected to increase efficiency by simplifying the transfer process and to generate approximately \$160 million annually in cost savings, which are expected to provide access to about 40,000 additional community college students and nearly 14,000 California State University students each year (CCCCO, 2010).

- Assembly Bill 2302 is a complementary bill to BS 1440 that encourages the University of California to also develop a transfer degree. AB 2302 was also signed by the Governor in September 2010.
- In late March 2011, California’s Assembly Higher Education Committee approved Assembly Bill 620 (“AB-620”), which would require CSU and CC campuses to adopt anti-harassment student conduct codes based on gender, provide awareness training for faculty and staff, and assign a campus ombudsperson. The Bill’s provisions would be optional for UC universities. As of June 15, 2011, this bill was under review by the Legislature. The CSU system opposes the Bill citing the expense to implement it (Gardner, 2011).

**Trend 2: More Federal attention to community colleges includes expectations for increased productivity and accountability for student outcomes. However, to date new federal funding for community colleges has been concentrated in workforce training programs.**

- The American Graduation Initiative (AGI), a landmark proposal to provide new federal support for community colleges, did not survive the federal legislative process. The 10-year plan announced by President Obama in July 2009 included funds to develop new and improved workforce training and other related programs, funds to support innovative efforts to increase college graduation and close achievement gaps, federal funding for facilities construction and renovation, and an "Online Skills Laboratory" that would support the development of open, free courses for high school and college career-oriented curricula. Although it was passed by the House of Representatives in fall 2009 as part of the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act (SAFRA), the AGI was eventually dropped from the reconciliation bill (which included national health care reform) passed in March 2010.
- Two parts of the SAFRA did pass: significant changes to the federal student loan program (moving from private, subsidized lending to direct federal lending and using the savings to expand Pell Grant tuition assistance for low- and moderate-income students) and \$2 billion to help dislocated workers access training programs through the Community College and Career Training Initiative.
- The White House Summit on Community Colleges, held in October 2010, highlighted federal support through the Community College and Career Training Initiative and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which increases Pell grants and Work Study funds and provides funding for workforce training programs.
- Several new commitments from foundations and educational organizations to invest in strengthening community colleges were discussed at the White House Summit on Community Colleges, including:
  - The Gates Foundation *Completion by Design* initiative, which will invest \$35 million over 5 years to develop educational pathways that make the educational process more responsive to students' needs and educational goals.
  - The *Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence*, a \$1 million annual prize to recognize, reward and inspire outstanding outcomes in community colleges.
  - *Skills for America's Future*, an initiative to build high-impact partnerships with industry, labor unions, community colleges and other training providers to support the President's goal of 5 million more community college graduates and certificates by 2020.

**Potential Impacts:**

- Faculty, staff and administration will be affected by transfer curriculum changes. Programs may need to be modified to accommodate standardization, and will be subject to more external control.

- Student achievement should be increased as programs of study are streamlined and organized to provide and reflect CSU upper-level course prerequisites. Students will be less like to take courses not required for their degree.
- GCCCD may need to provide more sensitivity training for faculty and staff about G/L/T individuals and provide more clearly identified policies and procedures to prevent harassment.
- The local community will need to pay the costs of the development and improvement of district facilities.

**Changes in Portfolio Assignments for Several Articles:**

Moved to Education:

Antonucci: CA Teachers Association's May 9-13 protests in Sacramento.

Ravitch: Dictating to the Schools

Moved to Environment:

Johnson: Renewable Energy