

 ICAS

INTERSEGMENTAL COMMITTEE OF ACADEMIC SENATES

August 30, 2021

Re: AB 928 (Berman): Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act of 2021: Associate Degree for Transfer Intersegmental Implementation Committee.

Position: **Oppose**

Dear Governor Newsom,

The Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates (ICAS), the body that represents the faculty of the California Community Colleges, California State University, and University of California, urges you to veto AB 928 (Berman).

We take this position as ICAS, a committee of duly elected faculty and recognized Academic Senate leaders from each of the three segments of public higher education in the State of California. ICAS meets jointly five times a year to address matters of academic importance to all three segments. Central in these discussions, for the past decade, is transfer efficiency, including how to reduce barriers to transfer faced by students. ICAS recognizes the intent of AB 928 to make the transfer process from the CCC to the CSU and UC systems easier for students. However, it is important to understand that the faculty of the three systems of public higher education have worked diligently through ICAS over the past decade to reduce barriers and create greater efficiency in transfer between the segments as well as clearer processes for potential transfer students. ICAS meets regularly throughout the year and engages in communication about and implementation of recommended changes provided by the Intersegmental Curriculum Workgroup (ICW) and Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) Standards Sub-Committee. Not only would the productive work of ICAS regarding transfer be undermined by AB 928, the bill would require the formation of a new intersegmental committee that essentially duplicates ICAS, yet with less faculty representation. Therefore, we find the proposed legislation both unnecessary and, ironically, detrimental to its stated aims.

The legislation would establish a single general education transfer pathway from CCC to both CSU and UC. In addition, it would steer prospective community college transfer students into lower division degree programs developed for CSU, regardless of whether a student aims to attend a Cal State or UC campus. While we recognize the utility of common coursework to prepare transfer students, our segments and respective academic majors have different scholarly orientations, requirements, and strengths. Undergraduate programs reflect a broad range of coverage within major disciplines and these various uses of discipline-based knowledge translate into a diversity of professions that are valuable to students and the state. It is these very differences that potential transfer students take into account when they choose what to study and where, along with the career they aim for after transfer. Thus, this legislation would undermine

the system of preparation we have strived to create that balances common courses across CSU and UC with appropriately tailored requirements so that students can succeed in upper division study after transfer.

The central message we wish to convey in this letter is that the transfer system is not broken; in fact, it works rather well. The California Community Colleges Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) program has seen a steady increase in student's use of ADTs, with approximately 29% of transfer students utilizing an ADT in fall 2016, to 46% of transfer students using an ADT in fall 2020.¹ At CSU, the two-year transfer graduation rate is currently 44%; the four-year graduation rate is 79%. CSU's Graduation Initiative (GI) 2025 goal for two-year transfer graduation rate is 45%; the goal for the four-year transfer graduation rate is 85% (see <https://www2.calstate.edu/csu-system/why-the-csu-matters/graduation-initiative-2025>).

At the UC, enrollment targets codified in the 2018 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the CCC and UC—an agreement designed to enhance student transfer—have been met at all of the UC undergraduate campuses with the exception of UC Merced, which is exempt. The agreement specifies a 2:1 ratio such that for every two freshmen admitted to the UC, one CCC transfer student will be admitted. Transfer students do well at UC. Their GPAs and years to degree are comparable to those of freshmen admits; in fact, they graduate on average just one quarter or semester beyond students admitted as freshman. The success of students who transfer to UC reflects the fact that UC cares not solely about admission, but about student preparation before and success after they enroll. The success of CCC transfers at UC is enabled by the Pathways Plus program, which ensures preparation for study in the student's chosen major following transfer.

In our examination of the transfer process, we have identified one area where potential transfer students often run into difficulty. CCC students who can benefit from the support of academic advisors regarding transfer are not always able to obtain this assistance due to major shortfalls in resources to support the advising programs at CCC. Currently, CCC students considering transfer are provided with, on average, one thirty-minute advising session, and these sessions frequently combine academic advising with other concerns such as student basic needs and mental health. This situation has only gotten worse during the pandemic because many CCC students have been dealing with persistent food and housing insecurities. Thus, to address this problem, ICAS urges the state to provide more funding for student academic advising at the CCC. What is more student-centered than advising?

For all these reasons, we find AB 928 to be unnecessary, detrimental to long term efforts on transfer within and across the segments that are now bearing fruit, and counter to the collective professional judgment of those charged by the state to teach undergraduates. We, the faculty of California's three public segments of higher education, look forward to continued collaborations with the legislature to reduce barriers to intersegmental student transfer. AB 928 will not aid this process; in fact, it could set it back. Accordingly, we respectfully urge a veto on AB 928.

1

https://tableau.calstate.edu/views/FirstTimeFreshmanandCollegeTransfers/SummaryView?iframeSizedToWindow=true&embed=y&:render=true&:showAppBanner=false&:display_count=no&:showVizHome=no

Thank you for considering our views,

Robert Keith Collins, Chair – ICAS & the Academic Senate CSU



Dolores Davison, President – Academic Senate CCC



Mary Gauvain, Chair – Academic Senate UC

