August 2014 Newsletter

Capitol Context

As the Legislature returns from its summer recess on August 4, one of the most important deadlines of the legislative year awaits them. By August 15, 2014, all measures must pass the fiscal (Appropriations) committees in the second house. During the first two weeks of August, the Appropriation committees in the Senate and Assembly will consider bills that have been held in suspense due to cost pressures. Measures that are negotiated out of these committees have a significant chance of being approved by the Legislature and reaching the Governor's desk for signature. Throughout the month, League staff will be working with legislators, legislative staff, and stakeholders on priority legislation to ensure their final outcome is in the best interest of community colleges. In addition, if your College is interested in submitting a position letter, League staff can assist. The following are some of the remaining priority bills tracked by the League:

• **AB 1451 (Holden) Concurrent Enrollment.** The bill removes certain policy barriers to concurrent enrollment. AB 1451, part of the Chancellor's Office sponsored legislation, authorizes a community college district and school district to enter into a formal concurrent enrollment partnership with the goals of developing pathways from high school to community college career technical education (CTE) programs or preparation for transfer.
League Position: Support
Next Steps: Pass in the Senate Appropriations Committee by August 15.

• **AB 2235 (Buchanan) – Education Bond Act.**
This bill authorizes a measure to be placed on the 2014 statewide ballot to raise an unspecified amount of money to fund education facilities. While there is not a specified amount to be raised in the bill, League staff will be working to ensure California's community colleges get their equitable share.
League Position: Support
Next Steps: Must pass out of the legislature and signed by the Governor by mid-August to make it on the ballot.

• **SB 850 (Block) Community College Districts: Baccalaureate Degree Pilot Program.**

SB 850 would authorize the Board of Governors, in consultation with the California State University and the University of California, to establish a BA degree pilot program at up to 15 community college districts which would be determined by the Chancellor and approved by the BOG. Each participating district would be authorized to offer one BA degree program at one campus within the district. BA degrees offered would be limited to degrees not offered by the CSU or the UC. Fees for upper division coursework in a BA degree program shall be set by the Legislature. The program would commence in the 2017-18 academic year and would require degrees to be completed by the end of the 2022-23 academic year.

League Position: Support

Next Steps: Pass in the Assembly Appropriations Committee by August 15.

- **SB 1391 (Hancock) Inmate Education Programs: Computation.**

SB 1391 waives open course requirements for community college courses offered in state correctional facilities and allows attendance hours generated by credit courses at all correctional facilities to be funded at the credit rate instead of the noncredit rate. SB 1391 also requires the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), in collaboration with the Chancellor, to establish the Innovative Career Technical Education Grant Program to provide planning grants to up to 20 community colleges to provide CTE courses to inmates in state correctional facilities. The bill specifies that $2 million, provided in the 2014-15 Budget Act, is appropriated from CDCR for this program.

League Position: Support

Next Steps: Pass in the Assembly Appropriations Committee by August 15.

- **SB 1425 (Block) Community Colleges: Retroactive Awarding of Degree.**

SB 1425 requires each community college district to perform retroactive degree audits to identify those students who have completed degrees, certificates, or transfer requirements in up to 12 of the highest demand fields of study during the past two years. The bill also requires the Chancellor's Office to purchase degree audit software for each district that doesn't already own it.

League Position: Support If Amended, as a pilot program or to complement the existing Education Planning Initiative.

Next Steps: Propose amendments in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

Stay informed about legislation tracked by the League: http://www.ccleague.org/bills.

LAO Highlights Notable Progress on Student Success Act

California Community Colleges: A Progress Report on the Student Success Act of 2012. Legislative Analyst's Office. Sacramento, CA. 2014.

This is an initial status report on implementation of the Student Success Act (Act) of 2012 (SB 1456, Lowenthal). The Analyst finds that "notable progress" has been made in implementing both the Student Success Task Force recommendations and the Act, including the following:

- Priority for classes to students completing assessment, orientation and education plans.
- Requirements that students declare an educational goal early in their time at the college.
- Adoption of academic standards for students receiving fee waivers.

• Formation of regional consortia with school districts to improve delivery of adult education instruction.

• A new accountability "scorecard."

• Augmentation of the Student Success and Support Program from $49 million in 2012-13 to $269 million in 2014-15 and implementation of a district allocation formula for the funds based primarily on actual services delivered to students.

The report also notes that the implementation timeframe (fall 2014) for the new enrollment priority policy is too short due to insufficient student access to counseling and other support services. The Analyst therefore urges the Legislature to direct the Chancellor's Office to allow districts to delay implementation until they can fully comply with the new requirement, which they believe will be possible for the spring 2015 term.

Finally, the report cites areas (including course alignment, basic skills instruction, and professional development) in which much more progress is needed.

Read the full LAO report at: http://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Detail/3044

Must Reads

By Rita Mize, Director of State Policy & Research

The reports we highlight this month include two key areas of interest to the League – student financial aid and transfer to four-year universities. Our research indicates that access to financial aid and effective transfer policies are important drivers of student success.

At What Cost: How community colleges that do not offer federal loans put students at risk.
The Institute for College Access & Success (TICAS). July 2014.

This study of federal loans in three states (North Carolina, California, and Georgia) found that 22 of California's community colleges do not offer federal loans, primarily due to concern about the cohort default rate (CDR) that takes effect in 2014 and the colleges' inability to influence whether students repay their loans.

This report argues that some of the concern of colleges (that they will be found ineligible for ALL federal funds if their students exceed the established default rate) is excessive because colleges with low borrowing rates can appeal any sanctions that would otherwise apply based on their CDR. In addition, the report cites a college with a high default rate which lowered it through implementation of "comprehensive default management strategies" and advises other community colleges to consider either the appeal process or implementation of default management strategies because of the importance of making these federal loans available to preclude students from seeking more costly private loans.

Read the full report at: http://lao.ca.gov/reports/2014/education/ccc-student-success/progress-report-SSA-070114.aspx

Protecting Colleges and Students: Community College Strategies to Prevent Default.
The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS) and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT). July 2014.

This report follows-up *At What Cost* (see previous review above) with additional information on ways that community colleges can continue to provide access to federal aid for students by helping them avoid default. The authors studied nine colleges (none of which were in California) and found that students who left without completing a degree or receiving a certificate were two to five times more likely to default than those who completed their programs of study; however, there was no consistency in the rate at which "higher-risk" students defaulted more than "lower-risk" students.

The report includes recommendations for changes in both federal policy and college operations. The federal policy recommendations suggest that the US Department of Education (Department):
• Issue and disseminate guidance on colleges' options for managing student debt and preventing delinquency and default.
• Make the National Student Loan Data System more user-friendly for college administrators seeking to analyze their students' default patterns.
• Improve entrance and exit counseling.
• Improve and streamline loan servicing which needs simplification.

The report also makes several recommendations for colleges including: embracing default reduction as a campus-wide endeavor; analyzing patterns of borrowing and default; providing counseling and information to borrowers as needed; and participating in the federal loan program.

Read the full report at*:* http://www.ticas.org/pub_view.php?idx=950

Preparing California for its Future: Enhancing Community College Student Transfer to UC*.*

President's Transfer Action Team. University of California. 2014.
This report, the product of a team convened by UC President Janet Napolitano to strategize on ways to strengthen and streamline the transfer pathway between the California Community Colleges (CCC) and the University of California, includes the following recommendations:
> 1) Enhance UC's message to prospective transfer students (especially those from traditionally underserved groups) that they can afford and thrive at UC and create resources that invite and help prepare them for transfer.
> 2) Increase UC's presence at every CCC campus.
> 3) Streamline and strengthen the UC transfer preparation process.
> 4) Create a "Transfer Success Kit" including conducting an inventory of campus transfer services, identifying areas of need and developing a systematic approach to help welcome students to UC. Elements include guaranteed housing, transfer centers, peer-to-peer mentoring and advising programs, enhanced orientation or online student success courses, and a transfer credit evaluation for every CCC transfer applicant who submits a Statement of Intent to Register (SIR).

5) Commit UC to working with CCC and CSU to jointly engage in statewide strategic planning to improve the transfer pathway, present a united voice for higher education in Sacramento and with the California public, and increase the capacity of the segments to accommodate students.

Read the full report at: http://ucop.edu/transfer-action-team/

For more information, contact the League's Government Relations staff:

Theresa Tena, Vice President | ttena@ccleague.org
Lizette Navarette, Legislative Advocate | lizette@ccleague.org
Ryan McElhinney, Legislative Advocate | ryan@ccleague.org
Melodie Smith, Program Associate | msmith@ccleague.org