

Fast Enough on Transfer in California

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Community colleges in California have been trying to devise a plan to help students have a guaranteed pathway to Cal States and are finally reaching some progress in making this guarantee a reality for transferring students. So far community colleges have created more than 800 new "associate degree for transfer" in 25 various majors, but none have the assurance in being admitted to a Cal State. With the impact of students enrolling to college, many students feel discouraged when trying to transfer. Less spots are available for transfer students and being admitted, even to a Cal State, has become more competitive.

Inside Higher Ed relayed a message that a bill has been in development that would require the Cal State system to accept transfer degrees in a broad subject vs. a major and will work on a marketing campaign to spread the good news for transfer students (Fain, 2013). The article explains this bill was recently passed and community colleges declined to speak upon it, while Cal States remained neutral about the issue and faculty opposed it. Faculty felt the new transfer degrees that allow students to receive degrees in different areas of emphasis rather than specific majors undermined the actual degree. Although the students are now able to get a degree without a declared major, it can help the student in reaching his/her goal in a timelier manner. According to newly released research from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, 60 percent of students who transferred to a four-year institution received their bachelor degree where 72 percent of students who completed a degree or certificate before transferring earned their bachelor degree. This indicated if a student actually finishes her/his associate degree she/he has a higher percentage of completing a bachelor degree. With this research faculty may want to reconsider this new bill as "undermining" the education system.

Community colleges currently have 9 associate degrees with a guarantee admission to Cal State colleges. If a student completes their degree in one of these 9 majors they will be

assured a spot at one of the 23 California State College Institutions. The only concern for this new bill is making sure the Cal State colleges have enough room to guarantee the students enrollment. Students are already having a difficult time registering for the classes needed to complete their bachelor degrees at Cal State Colleges. The influx of transfer students may create a wealth of opportunity for the community college student but will potentially cause more chaos to the schools admitting the students.

A solution definitely needs to be made for community colleges and maybe this bill is a part of the larger remedy to this transfer problem. According to Campaign for College Opportunity, only 23 percent of degree-seeking community college students transfer within six years. This could be due to various elements such as impacted enrollment at community colleges, students have to work which prevents them to go to school full time, or lack of financial or academic guidance and support. This new bill may help the students earn their associate degree faster, as the new degrees create more class options for students with various emphasis than majors. It also may deter the problem of actually completing the bachelor degree in a specific major to the four year institutions.

## References

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