

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, ACADEMIC SENATE

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August 17, 2023

The Honorable Anthony Portantino
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee

RE: Assembly Bill 1749 (McCarty), as amended on May 18, 2023
Scheduled for hearing in the Senate Appropriations Committee on August 21, 2023
Position: OPPOSE

Dear Chair Portantino:

The University of California (UC) Academic Senate respectfully opposes Assembly Bill 1749 by Assemblymember Kevin McCarty. In its current form, the bill would require UC to give priority undergraduate admission to Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) completers with a 3.0 GPA.

This approach to UC transfer will not serve California Community College (CCC) students well in terms of preparation and time to degree. Further, it will substantially increase costs to students and the state. ADTs were created as 60-semester-unit associate degrees tailored to mesh with majors offered by the California State University (CSU); these degrees guarantee CSU admission but not to a particular CSU campus or major. Transfer students with an ADT can expect to graduate from the CSU after finishing an additional 60 semester units. UC seeks the same outcome and has designed models for transfer that more readily accomplish this goal.

ADTs will increase time to degree for many UC transfers and increased time to degree is increased cost. UC commonly advises potential transfer students to prioritize preparation for the junior year of a given UC major over general education (GE) requirements to ensure timely graduation. The majority of ADTs do not follow UC major preparation pathways. Further, ADTs require students to complete their lower-division GE requirements prior to transfer. For many CCC students, completing GE courses entails putting off courses needed for the intended UC major. Delaying major preparation can impede timely progress in the major after transfer and, crucially, has a negative impact on student success.

Increased time to degree significantly raises costs for transfer students and the State of California.

Currently most students, even those who earn an ADT, transfer to UC having completed a UC-based pattern of preparation. Under AB 1749, UC would have to guarantee admission to ADT earners whether full major preparation for UC has been completed or not. When students matriculate without UC major preparation, they must remedy what is missing before they can take junior-level coursework. For many majors, especially those in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics), the missing coursework is required before enrolling in key course sequences normally beginning in junior year. Following the ADT pathway thus prevents these students from graduating two years after UC transfer.

For example, a student completing an ADT alone in biology, will be missing one year of organic chemistry with a lab. If the course is taken post-transfer, it will delay UC graduation by up to one full year and **cost an extra \$41K for a California resident living on campus (\$37.3K living off campus)**. For students receiving state financial aid, this burden will be shared by the state. Further, **UC received \$10.8K in 2021-22 for each FTE student. A student who could have completed their degree one year earlier with appropriate major preparation represents extra expenditure for the state.**

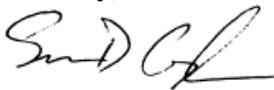
ADTs reduce capacity for new admissions to UC because an ADT guarantee program will admit some students without sufficient UC preparation. If UC is required to admit students who are not as well prepared and therefore require more time to degree, then fewer students can be admitted.

The legislation's guarantee structure will reduce the diversity of UC's transfer cohort. By UC Regental policy, the University uses comprehensive review to weigh several criteria in undergraduate admissions. However, the proposed ADT admission guarantee relies only on GPA and ADT completion. Student GPA strongly correlates with family income, which means the ADT admission guarantee structure will run counter to our inclusivity goals and will ultimately affect the diversity of our transfer student body. The bill also requires granting “a student priority admission to the student’s local University of California,” as is currently the case with ADT admissions into the CSU. CSU campuses are more numerous and located across the state; UC campuses are fewer and concentrated in southern and central coastal regions and metropolitan areas. Whereas local prioritization for CSU might serve to increase diversity and inclusivity, for UC the impact will be the opposite.

Finally, we would like to correct a misconception that has been prominent in discussions of this bill and note that students who complete an ADT are already eligible for transfer admission to UC and that those who do so with sufficiently high grades are admitted through comprehensive review. This has been the case for over a decade (see [UC Academic Senate Regulation 476.C.2](#)). UC faculty have developed UC Transfer Pathways that are carefully designed to prepare transfer students for specific UC majors so they can graduate on time and reduce costs to students, their families, and the state. Although some of the current ADTs align well with UC Transfer Pathways, most ADTs do not. If CCC students with ADTs are given priority over others who have completed Transfer Pathways, UC will be compelled to admit students who are less prepared, less able to integrate seamlessly, and less likely to graduate in two years after transfer.

Given these collective concerns, UC has proposed a systemwide guarantee of admission that will strengthen our partnerships with community colleges throughout the state, including those colleges with historically lower UC transfer rates. This guarantee is based on the UC Transfer Pathways and accomplishes the aim of the proposed legislation without forcing UC and CSU to adopt identical transfer requirements and without the negative financial impacts. We offer this alternative proposal with the intent to achieve shared goals of ensuring equitable access to UC, expanding the quality of students’ preparation, increasing undergraduate admissions, and supporting student success—pre-transfer through baccalaureate degree attainment.

Sincerely,



Susan Cochran, Chair
Academic Council

Cc: Academic Council Members
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