Assembly Bill No. 928: The Associate Degree for Transfer Intersegmental Implementation Committee

Meeting 8 Minutes

January 25, 2024
10 am - 4 pm PST
Long Beach City College, Liberal Arts Campus
Building W – Room 201
4901 E. Carson Street
Long Beach, CA 90808

The agenda, materials, and slide deck for this meeting are available at this website:
https://www.ab928committee.org/

Order of Agenda

1. **Standing Orders of Business**

   1.1. **Welcome from the Chair, Call to Order, Determination of Quorum, Housekeeping and Roll Call of Committee Members**

   Chair Aisha Lowe provided a welcome to Committee members and called the meeting to order. Sova conducted roll call and a quorum was present.

   The Committee roster, including titles and appointing/designating entitles, can be found at https://www.ab928committee.org/committee-membership

   1.2. **Reminder of the Arc of the Work, Review of Agenda and Meeting Objectives**

   Sova provided an overview of the arc of the work for the 2024 meetings (January, March, June, September, and November) including the key themes and how they link to the final 2023 recommendations. Sova and Student-Ready

Strategies (SRS) will hold office hours and 1:1 meetings with the Committee members to advance the work in 2024. Draft recommendations will be posted for public comment and discussed during the full Committee meetings, with a final vote in November. Sova then provided an overview of the January 2024 meeting objectives and agenda.

2. Consent Calendar

2.1. Review and Approval of November 2023 Meeting Minutes

The Committee did not have any questions about or changes to the November 2023 meeting minutes.

Committee member David Ramirez moved to accept the consent calendar; Committee member Laura Massa seconded the motion. All Committee members present in-person and virtually voted in favor of accepting the consent calendar.

3. Information and Reports

3.1. Review of the Transfer Student Experience

Chair Lowe began the session by challenging the Committee members, in 2024, to think about the totality of the systems, processes, and infrastructures in place for transfer, and to be innovative and daring as they work to improve these structures and processes. Chair Lowe then described a new website called TransformTransfer.org, which describes key intersegmental barriers to transfer and the policies and practices that create the current conditions. TransformTransfer.org describes "Five Barriers to Transfer for California Students: Why Coordination is the Path Forward," weaving together a number of sources and reports. A few of the highlights included:

1) Transfer pathways are not standardized across California's higher education systems. Students need to prepare for multiple pathways and there is a great deal of uncertainty in the process; the website provides testimonials from students.

2) Transfer pathways are not standardized across campuses within systems. The website includes an example of what a student might see when navigating the process across campuses, even within the same system.

3) Current transfer tools cannot simplify this complex process enough for most students to navigate independently. We have to simplify the process so students can navigate it independently, with support from counselors. Right now, there are far too many websites and conflicting information sources.

4) Limiting credit mobility significantly impacts costs for students and the state. On average students are not able to apply 13 credits toward their degree when they transfer. This makes a college education longer and more expensive for students.

5) There is no unified process across systems to help students map out a complete path to a bachelor's degree with financial aid. Students must make decisions about their educational pathway without knowing what type of aid they might receive.

The AB928 Committee members then had an opportunity for discussion. Key discussion points included:

- The presentation was a reality check about how complex this process is, and how we expect/burden students to navigate such a transfer maze. The Campaign for College Opportunity has written several relevant reports on this topic.
- A key point made is that there is confusion with the process; though it isn't possible to eliminate all confusion, can we create a better balance in service to improving equity and access? How do we minimize the practices that contribute to this complexity?
- How might Cal-GETC change the complexity? A key goal of Cal-GETC is to simplify the competing academic requirements, and thereby increase transfer rates and improve student outcomes. Cal-GETC will also require fewer units to complete general education requirements. Whether or not Cal-GETC achieves its intended impact will depend on how it is implemented.

- Students are not required to complete the Cal-GETC but the institutions will all accept it as fulfilling lower division general education requirements.
- Systemic upgrades will necessitate strong and pioneering recommendations to change these structures to truly streamline this process.

A period of public comment was provided for agenda item 3.1. No public comments were made.

3.2. Expert Input on 2024 Legislative Requirements

Chair Lowe began the session and then Sova provided a reminder of the AB928 legislative language related to the first two key areas of work that the Committee must complete before December 31, 2024.[1] At a high-level they are:

(1) "Establish timelines and reporting deadlines for the existing regular review of declaring or matching transfer model curricula similar to the California State University majors for admissions purposes."

(2) "Develop a plan for the periodic analysis and creation of additional transfer model curricula for the [Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT)] to respond to evolving workforce demands, including STEM degree pathways, and degree pathways that will aid in the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, such as nursing and cybersecurity."

Sova then introduced the speakers:

- Krystinne Mica, Executive Director, Academic Senate for California Community Colleges
- Marci Sanchez, Assistant Director, Undergraduate Transfer Programs, California State University Office of the Chancellor

Mica and Sanchez provided a presentation titled, "Transfer Model Curriculum within the Course Identification Numbering System (C-ID) Network" (see

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[1] California State Legislature. (2021). *Assembly Bill No. 928, Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act of 2021: Associate Degree for Transfer Intersegmental Implementation Committee*. Retrieved April 18, 2023, from https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB928

https://www.ab928committee.org/ for their slides). The speakers explained how the existing process for Transfer Model Curriculum (TMC) development aligns with the goals of AB928 and provided an overview of the transfer and articulation landscape in California, with an eye toward Course Identification (C-ID) projects. Key points from the presentation included:

- The C-ID network is more than the C-ID Numbering System. It includes the California Community Colleges (CCC) Model Curriculum, Intersegmental Model Curriculum, Associate Degree for Transfer, and the Transfer Alignment Project in addition to the work of creating the C-ID Descriptors for the numbering system.
- The Intersegmental Curriculum Council (ICC) has to use certain criteria to approve the need for a new TMC, such as student and faculty demand.
- The typical Faculty Discipline Review Group (FDRG) includes three faculty members from CCC and three from California State University (CSU).
- Currently, after a TMC template is created or revised in a major, each CSU campus determines if there is a baccalaureate degree in a similar major to the TMC. This determination of "similarity" ensures that students who earn the Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT), that is created under the parameters of that TMC, are guaranteed admission in that similar major at one of the CSU campuses offering that major and will be required to complete no more than 60 units after transfer to earn the baccalaureate degree that is deemed "similar" to the major of the ADT if the student stays on that ADT pathway.
- TMCs are reviewed in a distinct five-year review process to make sure students are succeeding, the curriculum is up to date, etc.
- California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) is responsible for reviewing and approving all local transfer degrees developed to align with the TMC. They publish any new ADTs on September 1 and February 1. Colleges must create an ADT within 18 months of TMC template posting, if they currently have a corresponding program.

Mica and Sanchez shared the following considerations for the Committee:

- Utilize the existing infrastructure of creating, reviewing, and updating transfer model curriculum to address the goals of AB928.
- Continue to rely on faculty experts to provide curricular review and recommendations.
- Strengthen connection with Intersegmental Curriculum Council and AB928 implementation committee.
- Provide additional resources to support the work of the transfer model curriculum and model curriculum.

The Committee then engaged in a question and answer session. Key discussion points included:

- A key intention of AB928 is to ensure that there are reporting deadlines for CSUs to accept TMCs as similar, as some say that process can feel like a "black box."
- What level of oversight can the CSU Chancellor's Office (CO) engage to oversee determinations of similarity? CSU CO encourages campuses to determine similarity and they do encourage all to do a thorough examination of how the ADT can fit within the current 60 unit pathway. The CSU CO cannot force the faculty to determine a pathway is similar, but they do encourage the effort.
- The CSU CO is looking at ways to update the public TMC information related to removals of similarity.
- The CCCCO is often surprised when they receive emails saying a TMC is no longer deemed similar.
- Not all CSU campuses will have a major that feels like a fit for every TMC.
- C-ID is working on an analysis of adequate compensation for faculty to engage in the FDRGs and C-ID reviews.
- The Committee would like to look into how changes in workforce needs for the state of CA and nationally trigger the need for a new TMC.

Sova then continued with a reminder of the AB928 legislative language related to the second two key areas of work that the Committee must complete before December 31, 2024. At a high-level they are:

(3) (A) "Develop a comprehensive communications plan and guidance on student-centered outreach to inform students about the ADT pathway and to ensure prompt and accurate information is communicated across four-year postsecondary educational institutions, the California Community Colleges, and elementary and secondary education."

(4) "Provide feedback for the regular review and identification of updates needed to the ADT internet website maintained by the California Community Colleges to ensure current information and updates are communicated to students, families, and student support staff engaged in educating students about their college options, participating four-year postsecondary educational institutions, and degree options."

Sarah Ancel, Founder and CEO, Student-Ready Strategies presented "Communicating Transfer: Framing the 2024 work of the AB928 Committee." Alyssa Nguyen, Senior Director of Research and Evaluation, The RP Group presented "Through the Gate Transfer Initiviate: What Students Say Support Their Transfer Success." Key points of the combined presentation included:

- Communication can only be as simple and straightforward as the system it describes.
- It's relatively easy to find some information (e.g., a two-year and four-year campus match for a given program, admissions applications).
- Other information is harder to find (e.g., courses to take for ADTs and UC transfer pathways are not readily available online; while guarantees (e.g., the ADT) are well promoted, it is less obvious that there are limitations on those guarantees).
- Among 875,630 transfer-bound students, more than 50% exit without credentials.
- Math is a barrier for transfer-bound students.
- Hispanic/Latine students are more likely than their peers to earn an ADT and not transfer.
- Timely and accurate information is critical for students. It is also critical that the messages and language used be inclusive.

- Missteps in course-taking can have a profound impact on financial aid eligibility.
- Community colleges can't do this work alone; intersegmental collaboration is a must.
- Efforts to communicate need to close social and financial capital gaps that impede transfer – not just information gaps.

Key discussion points from the Committee included:

- Online resources such as Assist.org must be kept up to date.
- Assist.org was set up to be a back office resource; but the reality is students are using it, and Google searches bring students to Assist.org. Resources would be required to make it more student friendly.
- Dual admissions programs are a good example of how enhanced intersegmental collaboration can better serve students.
- CSU has a new Transfer Planner resource.
- An area of potential focus is on high schools to easily display a scope of options for their students.
- As the Committee looks forward to its work in 2024, is there an overarching super tool that the Committee could recommend – one central communications platform designed for students that serves as their one-stop shop for all things transfer?

A period of public comment was provided for agenda item 3.2. No public comments were made.

3.3.   Discussion of the AB928 Committee in 2024

Election of a New Chair

Chair Lowe introduced the session. Then, Sova reviewed the 2024 election process for a new Committee chair, based on the legislative requirements. Sova reviewed the overall timeline for chair nominations, voting, and transition from the current to the newly elected chair. Nominations are opening today and an online form will be shared with Committee members following today's meeting. In the March 28, 2024 meeting the Committee will vote on a new chair, who will serve a two-year term from July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2026.

Chair Lowe discussed the description of the chair role and detailed the chair's responsibilities, as thought leader, in addition to the collaboration with and support from Sova, as facilitator. Administrative and staff support is not supplied by the state; such resources are the responsibility of the chair. The Committee had an opportunity to ask additional questions and Chair Lowe was thanked for her exceptional leadership and work to date.

Approach to the Committee's 2024 Work

The Committee interrogated the 2024 legislative requirements to identify what they feel the work of the Committee needs to look like, given the information discussed and shared today.

Key discussion points related to TMC development included:

- There are already processes in place to conduct many of the tasks called for in the 2024 legislative language. However, there are also opportunities for more cohesion across the segments, and there are gaps and issues that need to be improved. This is about creating overarching systems and structures where none exist, and it aligns well with building out Recommendation 1 from the Committee's 2023 Final Recommendations, which calls for an Intersegmental Course Articulation and Pathways Development infrastructure.
- To move forward, the Committee needs to start with documenting what exists, and then identify where we can make improvements to the process. Questions include: What is the volume? How much time do reviews take? What would timely responses look like?
- Current processes can be expedited, but that will likely require additional resources. Of note, this type of work is already included in compensation for the University of California (UC) faculty.
- Some key gaps currently:
    - There is not currently a specific requirement that once a TMC is developed, all of the campuses have to declare similarity on a timeline/deadline.
    - What would it look like to look at workforce demands and catalyze the process with the necessary faculty to develop the

TMCs? We need a process for triggering the creation of new degrees when workforce demand calls for them.

- CCCs and CSUs are required to participate in ADTs but the UCs and members of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities are not.

Key discussion points related to student communications included:

- There are a lot of websites already; students would benefit from coordination across the systems.
- The committee's work should not be focused only on online tools; the goal should be a comprehensive communication plan for student outreach.
- How can students see customized information that maps out a pathway that is relevant for them? Can they search by geography, etc?
- The Committee needs to learn from students more about what they say they need. What are the gaps faced by adult students? Those coming from K-12? Students without internet access?
- Are students being discouraged from attending a CCC? How can we tell a positive story about transfer?

A period of public comment was provided for agenda item 3.3. No public comments were made.

4. Public Forum

4.1. Public Forum on Non-Agenda Items

Members of the public wishing to comment on subjects not on the agenda were provided two minutes each to share comments. There were no public forum comments.

5. Adjournment