



August 31, 2015

OVERVIEW

The Legislature is nearing the end of its 2015 calendar with the Interim Study Recess beginning upon adjournment on September 11, 2015; the Legislature will then reconvene on January 4, 2016. The most recent deadline was for bills to pass out of the fiscal (Appropriations) committees by August 28, 2015. The final Appropriations Committee hearing for 2015 was held on August 27, one day before the deadline. A number of our bills of interest passed with amendments in the Appropriations Committees. The chairs of the committees made brief statements describing the amendments; however, specific language for the proposed amendments may not be available for a few days following the committee's actions. Bills making it out of the Appropriations Committees have just a few more steps before being sent to the Governor. After action taken on the house floor, a bill may be sent through the enrolling and engrossing process, the final, administrative step that the Legislature takes before sending a bill to the Governor. All bills must be passed by the Legislature by September 11, 2015, in order to be sent to the Governor during the regular session. The Governor will have until October 11, 2015, to sign or veto all bills in his possession. If the Governor does not act on a measure, it automatically becomes law.

For details and copies of any bill, please contact the Governmental Relations Division of the Chancellor's Office or visit the Legislative Counsel's website at: <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov> or its new website at: <http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>. The new website allows you to compare prior versions of the measure, review proposed changes in the law as amended, etc.

BILLS OF INTEREST

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

- **AB 288 (Holden) Public Schools: College and Career Access Pathways (CCAP) Partnerships.** AB 288 (Holden) encourages a modest expansion of voluntary dual enrollment partnerships by reducing fiscal penalties and policy barriers that currently limit such collaborations. The bill authorizes a community college district and K-12 school district to enter into a formal CCAP partnership with the goal of developing seamless pathways from high school to community college for career technical education or preparation for transfer, helping high school students achieve college and career readiness, and improving high school graduation rates. AB 288 (Holden) passed in the Senate Appropriations Committee with amendments to prevent oversubscribed courses from being offered through the partnership.
 - Position: Sponsor/Support
 - Status: AB 288 (Holden) passed in the Assembly and the Senate Committees and is headed to the Senate Floor.

- **AB 542 (Wilk) Community Colleges: Early and Middle College High Schools.** AB 542 (Wilk) exempts Early College High School (ECHS) and Middle College High School (MCHS) students from the lowest priority enrollment consideration. The bill allows a community college to claim state apportionments for MCHS and ECHS students enrolled in physical education courses beyond the 5 percent statutory cap and exempts these students from the 10 percent cap regarding enrollment in community college summer courses.
 - Status: AB 542 (Wilk) passed in the Assembly and the Senate Education Committee but was "held" in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

- **AB 770 (Irwin) Community Colleges: Basic Skills and Innovation Strategies.** The Budget Act included language from earlier versions of AB 770 (Irwin) to create the Community Colleges Basic Skills Innovation Program. Following enactment of the State Budget, AB 770 (Irwin) was amended to add clarifications to this new program regarding application criteria, administration, and technical assistance.
 - Status: AB 770 (Irwin) passed in the Assembly and the Senate Education Committee but was “held” in the Senate Appropriations Committee.
- **SB 172 (Liu) Pupil Testing: High School Exit Examination: Suspension.** SB 172 (Liu) suspends the requirement to pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) as a condition of receiving a high school diploma through the 2017-18 school year. This action was necessary because the CAHSEE exam is not aligned with the new Common Core State Standards. The CAHSEE contract was suspended as of July 1, 2015, which left approximately 5,000 high school “graduates” for the 2015 school year with no opportunity to take the test. This outcome resulted in questions about the impact of SB 172 (Liu) on admission to community colleges, access to the BOG Fee Waiver, and access to the Cal Grant and Pell programs.

The Chancellor’s Office recently distributed guidance to community college personnel regarding these issues. A related bill, SB 725 by Senator Hancock, offers a solution for the 5,000 students who graduated in 2015 and are affected by the suspension of CAHSEE exam. SB 725 (Hancock) removes the requirement that students pass the CAHSEE exam if they have met all other high school graduation requirements. SB 725 (Hancock) contains an urgency clause which allows the bill’s provisions to take effect immediately with the governor’s signature. SB 172 (Liu) passed in the Senate Appropriations Committee with amendments to authorize local education authorities to award degrees without the exam requirement, and to add a sunset date.

- Status: SB 172 (Liu) passed in the Senate and Assembly Committees and is headed to the Assembly Floor.
- **SB 725 (Hancock) Pupil Testing: High School Exit Examination: Exemption.** SB 725 (Hancock) applies to the 2015 high school graduating class and removes the requirement that seniors pass the California High School Exit Examination as a condition of graduation from high school if they have met all other requirements for high school graduation. The bill contains an urgency clause allowing the provisions of this bill to take effect immediately.
 - Status: SB 725 (Hancock) was signed into law by the Governor.
- **SB 786 (Allen) Adult Education: Regional Consortia.** SB 786 (Allen) provides that specified joint powers authorities which provide adult career technical education be eligible for Maintenance of Effort funding through adult education.
 - Status: SB 786 (Allen) was “held” in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

CAMPUS CLIMATE/CAMPUS SAFETY

- **AB 340 (Weber) Postsecondary Education: Campus Climate Report.** AB 340 (Weber) declares the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation requiring governing bodies of the higher education systems to submit a report once every two years to the legislature on campus climate. The Chancellor's Office report is contingent on information received from colleges.
 - Position: Support
 - Status: AB 340 (Weber) passed in the Assembly and the Senate Committees and is headed to the Senate Floor.
- **AB 636 (Medina) Student Safety.** AB 636 authorizes postsecondary education institutions to disclose the identity of a student or employee who is accused of a violent crime, sexual assault, or hate crime to local law enforcement if the institution determines that the alleged assailant represents a serious and ongoing threat to the safety of persons or the institution and if the

immediate assistance of police is necessary to contact or detain the assailant. AB 1433 (Gatto), signed into law last year, requires colleges to report serious crimes to local law enforcement if the crimes occur on campus or involve students or employees. While AB 1433 (Gatto) included language prohibiting the disclosure of the accused assailant's identity to local law enforcement if the victim declined to be identified, AB 636 (Medina) allows colleges to identify the accused (not the victim) if the college determines that the accused assailant poses a serious and ongoing threat to campus safety.

- Status: AB 636 (Medina) passed in the Assembly and the Senate Education and Public Safety Committees and is on the Senate Floor.
- **AB 767 (Santiago) Community Colleges: Emergency Preparedness Standards.** AB 767 (Santiago) requires the Chancellor's Office to update emergency preparedness standards by January 1, 2017 and every 5 years thereafter and to consider including an active shooter response plan.
 - Status: AB 767 (Santiago) was signed into law by the Governor.
- **AB 913 (Santiago) Student Safety.** AB 913 (Santiago) expands written agreements between each college and local law enforcement agency that clarify operational responsibilities for investigations to include sexual assault and hate crimes. It also requires that these agreements be reviewed by July 1, 2016 and every five years thereafter. SB 913 (Santiago) passed in the Senate Appropriations Committee with amendments to allow colleges to add information when agreements are updated.
 - Status: AB 913 (Santiago) passed in the Assembly and the Senate Committees and is headed to the Senate Floor.
- **AB 967 (Williams) Sexual Assault Case Procedures.** AB 967 (Williams) requires the governing board of each community college district to adopt and carry out a uniform process for disciplinary proceedings relating to any claims of sexual assault. This uniform process would be required to include a two-year minimum suspension for specified violations. Recent amendments added an implementation date of April 1, 2017 and a sunset date of December 31, 2021. The bill would additionally require the governing board of each community college district to report data relating to cases of alleged sexual assault, including:
 - The number of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking complaints received by the institution.
 - The number of complaints investigated by the institution and the number that were not investigated.
 - The number of investigations in which the respondents were found responsible at the disciplinary proceedings of the institution and the number of investigations in which the respondents were not found responsible.
 - The number of disciplinary sanctions imposed on respondents who were found responsible disaggregated by following categories: expulsion, suspension of at least two years, suspension of fewer than two years, probation.
 - Position: Neutral
 - Status: AB 967 (Williams) passed in the Assembly and the Senate Committees and is headed to the Senate Floor.
- **AB 968 (Williams) Transcripts: Expulsion Note.** AB 968 (Williams) requires the governing board of each community college district to indicate on a student's transcript when the student is ineligible to reenroll due to suspension or expulsion for the period of time the student is ineligible to reenroll.
 - Status: AB 968 (Williams) passed in the Assembly and the Senate Committees and is headed to the Senate Floor.

- **AB 969 (Williams) Community College: Removal, Suspension, Expulsion.** AB 969 (Williams) authorizes a district to deny or permit conditional access to a student found responsible for sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking. The bill would also allow a district to require a student seeking admission to disclose any past expulsions for sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence or stalking; failure to do so may be considered by the community college district in determining whether to grant admission.
 - Position: Support
 - Status: AB 969 (Williams) passed in the Assembly and the Senate and is back in the Assembly for a vote of concurrence with amendments taken in the Senate.

- **SB 186 (Jackson) Community College Districts: Removal, Suspension, or Expulsion.** SB 186 (Jackson) clarifies that state law does not prohibit districts from taking disciplinary action against students for off campus behavior if the district is doing so to comply with federal law, such as the Clery Act, Title IX, Violence Against Women Act, etc. SB 186 (Jackson) also adds sexual assault to the list of “good cause” reason to remove, suspend, or expel a student and defines sexual assault for those purposes. The definitions used in this bill are those provided by the White House’s Task Force on Campus Sexual Assault.
 - Position: Support
 - Status: SB 186 (Jackson) passed in the Senate and the Assembly and is in the enrollment process to be sent to the Governor.

FACULTY

- **AB 626 (Low) Community College: Employees.** AB 626 (Low) requires the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office to convene a group of stakeholders on or before July 1, 2016, and every four years thereafter, to develop recommendations on funding strategies to enable the community colleges to achieve the 75 percent standard and increase district participation in the support of part-time faculty. The bill requires the Chancellor’s Office to report these recommendations to the Legislature.
 - Status: AB 626 (Low) passed the Assembly and was sent to the Senate Education Committee but was not heard in time to meet legislative deadlines.

- **AB 1010 (Medina) Community Colleges: Part-Time, Temporary Employees.** AB 1010 (Medina) specifies minimum standards for the treatment of part-time, temporary faculty to be met by community college collective bargaining agreements. The bill urges community college districts without a collective bargaining agreement in effect as of January 1, 2016 to negotiate with the exclusive representatives for part-time, temporary faculty regarding the terms and conditions required by the bill.
 - Status: AB 1010 (Medina) passed in the Assembly and the Senate Education Committee but was “held” in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

FINANCE AND FUNDING

- **SB 605 (Gaines) Community Colleges: Nonresident Tuition Exemption for Nevada Students.** SB 605 (Gaines) exempts up to 200 students in any academic year from paying non-resident tuition fees if they attend the Lake Tahoe Community College (LTCC) and reside in certain communities in Nevada and permits the LTCC to count these persons as resident full-time equivalent students (FTES) for purposes of determining apportionment funding. This bill makes these provisions contingent upon the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges entering into an interstate attendance agreement with the Nevada System of Higher Education providing reciprocal rights to California residents attending Western Nevada College.
 - Status: SB 605 (Gaines) passed in the Senate and the Assembly Committees and is on the Assembly Floor.

GOVERNANCE

- **AB 404 (Chiu) Community Colleges: Accreditation.** AB 404 (Chiu) requires the California Community College Chancellor's Office to survey all 113 community colleges, regarding the evaluation of the current regional community college accrediting agency. The survey will be used by the Chancellor's Office to develop a report that reflects a systemwide evaluation of the regional accrediting agency based on the criteria used to determine an accreditor's status. The report will be sent to the U.S. Department of Education and the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity.
 - Status: AB 404 (Chiu) passed in the Assembly and the Senate Committees and is headed to the Senate Floor.

- **AB 986 (Gipson) Community Colleges: Compton Community College District.** AB 986 (Gipson) requires the Chancellor to report to the Legislature concerning the priorities identified in each Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team report and to provide a response on how the Chancellor intends to resolve the issues identified in the report in a timely manner.
 - Status: AB 986 (Gipson) passed in the Assembly and was sent to the Senate but was not heard in a policy committee in time to meet legislative deadlines.

- **AB 1385 (Ting) Community College: Accreditation.** AB 1385 (Ting) prohibits the accrediting agency from imposing a special assessment on community colleges to pay for the accrediting agency's legal fees for any lawsuit unless there has been an affirmative vote of the majority of the chief executive officers, or their designees, of all of the community colleges. The bill would excuse compliance with this prohibition if the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges determines that the accrediting agency's compliance would violate federal law.
 - Status: AB 1385 (Ting) passed in the Assembly and the Senate Education Committee and is on the Senate Floor.

- **AB 1397 (Ting) Community College: Accreditation.** AB 1397 (Ting) enacts the California Community Colleges Fair Accreditation Act of 2015. It requires that at least 50 percent of each visiting accreditation team from the accrediting agency for the California Community Colleges be composed of academic personnel as defined in the bill. The bill prohibits persons with a conflict of interest from serving on a visiting accreditation team. The bill requires the accrediting agency to conduct the meetings of its decision-making body to ensure the ability of members of the public to attend those meetings. AB 1397 (Ting) also requires the accrediting agency to preserve all documents generated during an accreditation-related review. AB 1397 (Ting) requires the agency's accreditation-related decisions to be based on written, published standards in accordance with state and federal statutes and regulations.
 - Status: AB 1397 (Ting) passed the Assembly and the Senate Committees and is on the Senate Floor.

- **SB 42 (Liu) Commission on Higher Education Performance.** Although Governor Brown deleted funding for the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) years ago, statutes referring to CPEC remain. SB 42 (Liu) revises these statutes and creates the California Office of Higher Education Performance and Accountability. The executive director of the proposed office would be appointed by the Governor and subject to confirmation by the Senate. A six-member advisory board would be established with three members each appointed by the Assembly Speaker and Senate Rules Committee. SB 42 (Liu) excludes representatives from postsecondary institutions from serving on the advisory board. SB 42 (Liu) passed out of the Assembly Appropriations Committee with amendments that stipulate the advisory board members will not be paid; that the Assembly Higher Education Chair and Senate Education Committee Chair be appointed to the advisory board; that require an annual report to the governor

on higher education; that require an annual performance review of the executive director; and that require the office to review cross segmental initiatives for future study.

- Position: Concern
 - Status: SB 42 (Liu) passed in the Senate and Assembly Committees and is headed to the Assembly Floor.
- **SCA 1 (Lara) University of California: Legislative Control.** SCA 1 proposes an amendment to the State Constitution to repeal the constitutional provisions relating to the University of California and the regents. This measure subjects the university and the regents to legislative control as may be provided by statute. SCA 1 prohibits the Legislature from enacting any law that restrains academic freedom or imposes educational or curricular requirements on students. A Senate Constitutional Amendment, or SCA, is a measure that places an initiative on the statewide ballot to change the California Constitution and it is not subject to the same legislative deadlines as Assembly or Senate Bills.
 - Status: SCA 1 has been referred to both the Senate Education and Elections and Constitutional Amendments Committees.

MISCELLANEOUS

- **AB 176 (Bonta) Data Collection.** AB 176 (Bonta) requires the segments of higher education to post specified data on Asian and Pacific Islander (API) subgroups by July 2016 and to expand the number of subgroups after the 2020 Census. The bill also imposes specified data collection requirements on the Department of Managed Health Care. AB 176 (Bonta) passed out of the Senate Appropriations Committee with amendments to remove the Department of Healthcare Services.
 - Position: Support
 - Status: AB 176 (Bonta) passed in the Assembly and the Senate Committees and is headed to the Senate Floor.
- **AB 653 (Levine): Intersegmental Coordination: Information Technology.** AB 653 (Levine) makes contracting practices among the segments of higher education more efficient by improving the ability of community college districts to share contracts with University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU). Specifically, AB 653 (Levine) adds clarifying language to statute which specifies that districts can share, or “piggyback,” onto contracts with UC and CSU for the purchase of goods and services. This will provide for more efficient contracting practices and potential cost savings to all three segments.
 - Position: Support
 - Status: AB 653 (Levine) passed in the Assembly and Senate Committees and is on the Senate Floor.
- **AB 798 (Bonilla): College Textbook Affordability Act.** AB 798 (Bonilla) seeks to lower textbook expenses for students by creating incentives for campuses to use Open Educational Resources (OER). AB 798 (Bonilla) provides that the California OER Council may utilize its funding as designated in SB 1052 of 2012 to provide grants in the amount of \$10,000 to community college and CSU campuses which, with their local academic senates, develop and submit plans to increase the use of OER. Campuses that receive grant awards would also be eligible for bonus grants of \$10,000 for up to 3 subsequent years if they reach specified benchmarks. The program would be administered by the California OER Council, composed of representatives of academic senates from all three segments. AB 798 (Bonilla) passed out of the Senate Appropriations Committee with amendments to eliminate ongoing cost pressure and make clarifying changes.
 - Position: Support

- Status: AB 798 (Bonilla) passed in the Assembly and the Senate Committees and is headed to the Senate Floor.
- **AB 963 (Bonilla) Teachers' Retirement Law.** AB 963 (Bonilla) revises the definition of creditable service for purposes of the Defined Benefit Program and the Cash Balance Benefit Program.
 - Status: AB 963 (Bonilla) passed the Assembly and the Senate Public Employment and Retirement Committee and is on the Senate Floor.

STUDENT SERVICES

- **AB 801 (Bloom) Success for Homeless Youth in Higher Education Act.** AB 801 (Bloom) establishes priority enrollment for homeless students and makes them eligible for a Board of Governors fee waiver. A homeless student must be verified as being without a residence in the last six years. The bill also establishes a liaison for homeless students that can be a current employee, rather than requiring colleges to hire a new staff person. AB 801 (Bloom) passed in the Senate Appropriations Committee with amendments to remove ongoing cost pressure.
 - Status: AB 801 (Bloom) passed in the Assembly and the Senate Committees and is headed to the Senate Floor.
- **AB 1016 (Santiago) Public Postsecondary Education: Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act.** AB 1016 (Santiago) would require the Chancellor's Office to report to the Legislature on the status of each community college's compliance with statutory requirements related to creating Associate Degrees for Transfer.
 - Position: Support
Status: AB 1016 (Santiago) passed the Assembly and the Senate and has been enrolled to the Governor.
- **AB 1366 (Lopez) Public Postsecondary Education: Dream Resource Centers.** AB 1366 (Lopez) authorizes the governing boards of community college districts to designate a Dream Resource Liaison on each campus to assist AB 540 students with information about financial aid and academic opportunities. AB 1366 (Lopez) passed in the Senate Appropriations Committee with amendments to remove the mandate.
 - Status: AB 1366 (Lopez) passed the Assembly and the Senate Education Committees and is headed to the Senate Floor.

TUITION, FEES, FINANCIAL AID

- **AB 25 (Gipson) Financial Aid: Cal Grant Program: Renewal.** AB 25 (Gipson) requires the Student Aid Commission to establish an appeal process for an otherwise qualified institution that fails to satisfy the 3-year cohort default rate and graduation rate requirements under the Cal Grant program.
 - Status: AB 25 (Gipson) passed in the Assembly and in the Senate Committees and was sent to the Senate Floor.
- **AB 82 (Garcia) US Selective Service: Financial Aid Ineligibility.** Similar to last year's AB 2201 (Chávez), AB 82 (Garcia) establishes a program through the Department of Motor Vehicles to register males between 18 and 26 years old for Selective Service when they submit an application for an original or a renewal of a driver's license. AB 82 (Garcia) passed out of the Senate Appropriations Committee with amendments to allow the registrant to "opt-in."
 - Position: Support
 - Status: AB 82 (Garcia) passed in the Assembly and the Senate Committees and is headed to the Senate Floor.

- **AB 449 (Irwin) Income Taxation: Savings Plans: Qualified ABLÉ Program.** AB 449 (Irwin) modifies state tax law to conform to the federal Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act of 2014. ABLE programs help students with disabilities and their families save money to pay for college costs. In contrast to the existing state program for college savings accounts, called "Scholarshare" or "529 accounts," California's ABLE program would significantly expand the definition of a qualified education expense for students with disabilities, thereby, ensuring that ABLE account earnings and withdrawals for qualified expenses are not included in a student's income for state tax purposes. This bill would benefit disabled students attending community colleges and improve degree, certificate, and transfer completion by reducing education costs.

 - Status: AB 449 (Irwin) passed in the Assembly and the Senate Committees and is headed to the Senate Floor.

- **AB 573 (Medina) Student Financial Aid: Corinthian Colleges, Inc. (CCI) Closures.** AB 573 (Medina) provides financial and other educational assistance to students affected by the April 27, 2015 closure of CCI campuses in California, including Heald, Everest, and WyoTech campuses. The bill authorizes a CCI student with demonstrated need as determined by a community college to receive a Board of Governors Fee Waiver through July 1, 2018. This benefit applies to CCI students who were unable to complete their education program due to school closures or who withdrew within 120 days prior to CCI campus closures. AB 573 (Medina) provides an additional \$100,000 to the Chancellor's Office to support a statewide media campaign to inform CCI students of educational opportunities at community colleges. Heald College students would have two years of eligibility restored for the Cal Grant program and the California National Guard Education Award Assistance program. AB 573 (Medina) adds new requirements regarding BPPE grant disbursements to legal aid organizations that serve CCI students, and specifies the type of legal aid assistance to be provided. Recent amendments replace the proposed closed school task force with a dedicated single point of contact within the Attorney General's Office for students harmed by for-profit school closures and remove CCI distance education programs from the bill. .

 - Position: Support
 - Status: AB 573 (Medina) passed the Assembly and Senate Committees and is headed to the Senate Floor.

- **AB 721 (Medina) Student Financial Aid: Private Student Loans.** AB 721 (Medina) requires community colleges to comply with federal student loan disclosure requirements, including notifying students if a college does not participate in the federal loan program, advising students that they may be eligible for federal loans at other community colleges, and providing students with information regarding the California Student Aid Commission's website and the Federal Student Aid web link on the United States Department of Education's website.

 - Position: Neutral
 - Status: AB 721 (Medina) passed the Assembly and Senate and has been enrolled to the Governor.

- **AB 1091 (E. Garcia) Student Financial Aid: Cal Grant Program.** AB 1091 (E. Garcia) authorizes the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) to require public schools and school districts to electronically submit verification of high school graduation. AB 1091 (E. Garcia) would also require CSAC to develop a standardized form for electronic submission of GPA information. AB 1091 (E. Garcia) builds upon previous legislation, AB 2160 (Ting, 2014), that required all public schools and districts to electronically submit student GPA information to CSAC. If AB 1091 (E. Garcia) becomes law, the electronic verification of high school graduation would be added to the same standardized form used for GPA information. Recent research confirms that these practices are highly effective and would allow many more students to complete their financial aid applications in a timely manner.

 - Position: Support

- Status: AB 1091 (E. Garcia) passed the Assembly and the Senate Committees and is headed to the Senate Floor.
- **SB 150 (Nguyen) Personal Income Tax: Exclusion: Student Loan Debt.** SB 150 (Nguyen) would amend the state personal income tax code to exclude from gross income in the amount of student loans that are forgiven for eligible students who were enrolled at Corinthian schools on or after January 1, 2015. Because SB 150 (Nguyen) is a “tax levy” it does not have the same deadlines as other measures.
 - Position: Support
 - Status: SB 150 (Nguyen) passed in the Senate Governance and Finance Committee and the Senate Appropriations Committee and is headed to the Senate Floor.
- **SB 324 (Pavley) Income Taxation: Savings Plans: ABLE Program.** SB 324 (Pavley) modifies state tax law to conform to federal tax law regarding the California Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act of 2014. SB 324 (Pavley) would ensure that ABLE account earnings and withdrawals for qualified expenses are not included in a student’s income for state tax purposes. The bill also directs the State Treasurer to administer ABLE accounts on behalf of qualified Californians. ABLE account withdrawals would not be counted as income as long as funds are used to pay for qualified expenses and do not exceed the cost of qualified expenses. Consistent with the ABLE Act, SB 324 (Pavley) would impose a 10 percent tax on distributions that exceed qualified expenses. This bill would benefit disabled students attending community colleges and improve degree, certificate, and transfer completion by reducing education costs. In contrast to the existing state program for college savings accounts, called “ScholarShare” or “529 accounts,” the ABLE Act significantly expands the definition of a qualified education expense. For example, students would be able to claim the following new items as qualified expenses: the full cost of housing and food; transportation; employment training and support; computers, assistive technology and personal support services; health prevention and wellness; financial management and administrative services; legal fees; oversight and monitoring; and funeral and burial services.
 - Position: Support
 - Status: SB 324 (Pavley) passed in the Senate and Assembly Committees and is headed to the Senate Floor.

VETERANS

- **AB 1361 (Burke) Student Financial Aid Cal Grant Program: Veterans.** AB 1361 (Burke) eliminates the age limit of 28 years old for veterans applying for the California Community College Transfer Cal Grant Entitlement Program. It is sponsored by the California Student Aid Commission.
 - Position: Support
 - Status: AB 1361 (Burke) passed in the Assembly and the Senate Committees and is headed to the Senate Floor.
- **AB 1401 (Baker) Veterans Student Financial Aid.** AB 1401 (Baker) reinstates expired provisions of state law that requires financial aid information, including the Board of Governors (BOG) fee waiver and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to be made available to each member of the California National Guard, the State Military Reserve, and the Naval Militia who do not have a baccalaureate degree.
 - Position: Support
 - Status: AB 1401 (Baker) passed in the Assembly and the Senate and has been enrolled to the Governor.

- **SB 81 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review) Postsecondary Education: Budget Trailer Bill.** During this legislative session, two bills by Assembly Member Chávez, **AB 13** and **AB 27**, were introduced to align state law with the federal law known as the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (VACA). VACA requires the state's public postsecondary educational institutions to exempt qualifying nonresident veterans and covered individuals from paying nonresident tuition and fees. Because the University of California (UC) has autonomy through the state Constitution and authority to set its fees, UC was able to address compliance with VACA by amending their Educational Policy through the UC Board of Regents. The California Community Colleges (CCC) and the California State University (CSU) do not have the same authority to set fees. Therefore, while the CCC Board of Governors supported prior legislation to provide instate tuition to veterans and continued that precedent by supporting AB 13 and AB 27, without a change in state law VACA would have prevented the US Veterans Administration from providing GI Bill education benefits to veterans attending CCC and CSU.

While AB 13 and AB 27 were going through the legislative process, SB 81 was introduced as a budget trailer bill. SB 81 included an addition to Education Code to address the issue of aligning state law with VACA to authorize and require districts to charge instate tuition to individuals covered by VACA. SB 81 also allows the colleges to count students affected by VACA as California residents for the purposes of state funding. SB 81 was signed by the Governor as part of the budget bill package on June 24, 2015 and was effective immediately upon signature. However, as stated in VACA, SB 81 applies for terms beginning on or after July 1, 2015. Assembly Member Chavez will now use AB 13 and AB 27 for other purposes.

- Position: Support
- Status: SB 81 was signed into law by the Governor.

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