

FACT SHEET

Senate Bill 1425 (Senator Marty Block) As amended on May 27, 2014 Degree Tracking and Retroactive Awarding of Degrees for Community College Students

THE ISSUE:

No community college student should leave campus without receiving the degree they have earned. The reality is that many are unaware of where they stand on the path to obtain an associate degree or certificate. As a result, they leave community college with nothing to show for their work, unaware that they have actually qualified for a degree. SB 1425 provides a pivotal roadmap to success. This pragmatic policy ensures that community college students who complete the requirements for an associate degree or certificate actually receive it; it also ensures that students have access to real-time information about progress toward their educational goal.

SB 1425 builds on national and local momentum to improve college completion. The bill recognizes that significantly improving student success is critical to California's long-term economic well-being. Serving over 2.2 million students at 112 colleges across California, the state's community college system plays a vital role in meeting future workforce needs. The California Community Colleges Student Success Scorecard reports that fewer than half of community college students earn a certificate, degree, or transfer after six years, and these rates were even worse for historically underrepresented groups, such as African American and Latino students. SB 1425 has tremendous potential to help more students cross the finish line and enter California's workforce with increased opportunity.

THE SOLUTION:

By creating a degree tracking system, Senate Bill 1425 will keep current and future students on track to successfully reach their college goals, as well as awarding retroactive degrees to former students who have earned a degree. *Specifically, SB 1425 works to:*

- **Create a Degree Tracking System:** A degree tracking system will provide real-time information about progress towards degree/certificate that students and counselors can access; and
- **Award Retroactive Degrees:** Community colleges will be required to perform a one-time identification of students who have completed the requirements for an associate degree or certificate, but have since left a community college with nothing to show for their work.

BACKGROUND:

A national initiative, Project Win-Win, has proven in nine states and 61 institutions that degree tracking and retroactive degree awarding are highly effective approaches to improving student success.

Currently, only 21 of 112 California community colleges have degree audit systems in place. SB 1425 would ensure all colleges have the ability to integrate this powerful tool to help empower students with real-time information about their progress toward obtaining a degree, and award degrees to students who may otherwise have left the system with nothing to show for their work.

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