The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez  
Chair, Assembly Committee on Appropriations  
State Capitol, Room 2114  
Sacramento, CA 95814

May 12, 2021

Assembly Bill 928 (Berman) — SUPPORT  
As Amended April 27, 2021

Dear Chair Gonzalez:

As a coalition of higher education advocates, student leaders, and civil rights organizations we are writing to express our strong support of Assembly Bill 928: The Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act of 2021 by Assemblymember Marc Berman. This bill is an important next step in reimagining the transfer process to be more student-centered by ensuring a simplified and streamlined path to student success.

Today, the transfer pathway is more important than ever. Our economy demands a more highly educated workforce, and a college degree is still the best insurance against unemployment and poverty. Despite progress in improving the transfer process, transfer remains broken in our state. Students hoping to find an affordable pathway to a four-year university instead find a maze of pathways and requirements that creates confusion, leads to unnecessary unit accumulation, and the worst, secures no degree for far too many. Amongst students with stated transfer goals, only 19 percent transfer within four years, and 28 percent within six years. Transfer rates are especially concerning for California’s low-income, first generation, Black, and Latinx students. **Latinx students represent over half of the students who declare a transfer goal, yet only 35 percent transfer within four years. Black students declare transfer goals at a much lower rate, only seven percent, and only five percent successfully transfer.** Existing barriers to transfer for these students have only been heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic. California
Community Colleges are facing enrollment declines at a range of 3.8 to 20 percent systemwide, with high school graduates from low-income schools with higher rates of Black and Latinx students being disproportionately impacted.ii

The Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) has a proven record of success and is the most valuable tool we have at our disposal as California seeks to further simplify the transfer maze. Over ten years ago, the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act of 2010 established the ADT as we know it today and created a streamlined transfer pathway for California Community College students to the California State University (CSU) or University of California (UC) by aligning coursework necessary to transfer to a CSU or UC with the coursework needed to earn an associate degree. The ADT was created with the goal of ensuring community college students earn an associate degree while on their path to transfer, streamlining the transfer requirements across the CCC system, reducing time and excess credit units for the benefit of the student and the state, and guaranteeing a student junior standing at the CSU so they can expect to achieve a Bachelor's degree within two years of transfer.

The Associate Degree for Transfer has proven itself to be a successful and commonly utilized pathway for students in achieving their transfer goals. As of October 2020, over 280,000 CCC students have earned an ADT in over 40 ADT major pathways. These ADT pathways have provided significant financial savings to both students and to the state. With ADT earners accruing an average of six fewer excess credit units and a course fee of $46 per credit at the California Community Colleges, the ADT accounted for over $12 million in savings for students in 2018-2019 alone..iii

AB 928 strengthens the ADT as the central framework around which the transfer process is structured in service of students by:

1. **Establishing an intersegmental implementation committee** that will enhance coordination and communication across higher education segments to enable a statewide focus on simplifying transfer in the state. AB 928 establishes critical infrastructure to ensure all segments of higher education are in lock step as we establish goals to improve racially equitable transfer and improve the ADT program.

2. **Consolidating the two existing pathways for transfer preparation into a singular education pathway** that satisfies the requirements for transfer admission to both the CSU and the UC. AB 928 addresses repeated student concerns around the challenges in receiving accurate academic advising and course placement guidance that will support their transfer goals. By consolidating the two pathways into a singular general education pathway, AB 928 eliminates a significant point of confusion in the transfer preparation process and simplifies the academic advising process for community college students and staff.

3. **Requiring that California Community College students automatically be placed on an ADT pathway where one exists** for their intended major, providing a more accessible reentry to higher education and easier path to completing a bachelor's degree once a student transfers. AB 928 establishes more accessible reentry points to higher education, rather than the current system of degree pathway placement that unintentionally maintains hurdles to reentry. With a default pathway placement that maximizes the probability that a student will enter and complete a four-year university degree in their chosen field, students have a much easier path to completing a bachelor’s degree.

California’s students have faced unexpected hurdles on their path to a college education throughout the pandemic and have shown us that their talent and capacity to succeed will not be impeded. We owe it to all students to ensure that the transfer system we have in place has the capacity to serve them. As we look forward to California’s economic and public health recovery, the state of transfer, streamlined access to complete a bachelor’s degree, and systematic planning for the success of our students is inextricably linked to the success of our state.

For the above reasons, we strongly support AB 928 and urge your AYE vote. For any questions about our support position, please contact Joshua Hagen, Policy and Success Initiatives Manager at the Campaign for College Opportunity at joshua@collegecampaign.org.
Sincerely,

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i Public Policy Institute of California, 2020. *Increasing Community College Transfers: Progress and Barriers.*


iii The Campaign for College Opportunity, 2020. *10 Years After Historic Transfer Reform: How far have we come and where do we need to go?*