

February 23, 2010



**Academic Senate  
for California Community Colleges**

LEADERSHIP. EMPOWERMENT. VOICE.

**Background for Referred Resolutions from F09 Relating to AB 440: “Transfer Degree”**

*Dear Local Senate President –*

*The Academic Senate Executive Committee is in need of direction from the field relating to resolutions from the Fall 2009 Plenary. One resolution that was adopted (4.02) directed us to actively avoid the introduction of a California community college degree options in legislation. A second resolution (4.03 and its amendment 4.03.01) was referred and had, as its goal, the same intent as 4.02 – it defined an action that sought to prevent our degrees from being legislated. It called for Title 5 language to be drafted that would accomplish the same thing as the proposed legislation, effectively making the legislation moot and delineating a degree option in Title 5 that colleges currently can offer. A third resolution, 4.04 and its amendment 4.04.01, was referred and also addressed this topic.*

*Due to the legislative cycle, if we wait until Spring 2010 to reconsider resolution 4.03, any action we might take would likely be too late to prevent legislation from being passed. Senate Bill 1440 has been introduced by Senator Padilla and is comparable to the bill discussed at the Fall 2009 Plenary. The current text of the bill (as of February 23, 2010) has been provided to you as an attachment and its status can be checked at any time by going to [http://www.aroundthecapitol.com/Bills/SB\\_1440/](http://www.aroundthecapitol.com/Bills/SB_1440/). If we are to take effective action, we need to act soon, as the bill is already moving through the legislative process. Therefore, the Executive Committee tasked a subcommittee to develop materials informing the field about the issues surrounding the idea of a transfer degree and to provide an opportunity for field discussions and, ultimately, direction to the Executive Committee. We encourage you to read the information provide below and invite you and/or your delegate to join us on one of the following calls:*

*Monday, March 1, 1:30 – 3:00pm*

*Tuesday, March 2, 9:00 – 10:30am / Tuesday, March 2, 3:00 – 4:30pm*

*Wednesday, March 3, 12:30 – 2:00pm / Wednesday, March 3, 4:00 – 5:30pm*

*Thursday, March 4, 10:00 – 11:30am*

**CCCConfer Call-in number: (888) 886-3951**

**Pass Code: 932646**

*Following these informational meetings, the Executive Committee will distribute a short survey to determine the will of the field. Please expect to receive the survey no later than March 8. We will need your response by March 12. You are encouraged to discuss this topic with your local senate in order to arrive at a consensus as to how you believe the ASCCC should proceed.*

*We look forward to exploring this topic with you further,*

*ASCCC Executive Committee*

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## Overview and FAQs

(a modified version of the background document provided at the ASCCC Fall Plenary)

Referred resolution 4.03 calls for the Academic Senate to "... work with the Chancellor's Office to change Title 5 regulations such that colleges would be permitted to offer associate degrees in a major or area of emphasis designated for transfer to students who complete GE (IGETC or CSU GE) and 60 transferable semester units with a minimum of 18 semester units in a major or area of emphasis, and require the colleges that do so to refrain from requiring additional local requirements that are not included in the GE package or the major/area of emphasis." As noted above, this resolution was referred. While this resolution was originally crafted to address AB 440, we are now faced with SB 1440.

1. Why/how is this resolution and potential course of action a response to SB 1440?

SB 1440, a bill currently being considered, seeks to put a community college degree into law. It intends to introduce a degree option for community colleges through legislation. However, legislation is often not the best way to improve higher education. Although the proposed language is **permissive**, meaning that it would not mandate any individual college to change, the idea of placing a degree into **law** could set a dangerous precedent. It could lead to all of our degrees being legislated, removing faculty control of our degrees. No other segment of higher education has its degrees legislated. In contrast, resolution 4.03 and its amendment recommend placing the language in Title 5 regulation rather than in law--- so the community colleges may *elect* to make this change. Note that the language is **permissive** in nature and does not mandate that local degrees be modified in any way; it merely states explicitly that this is an option that colleges have. **It should be noted, however, that while the language regarding the degree option is permissive, if a college chooses to offer such degrees, then waiving local requirements for those degrees is mandated.**

2. I thought we opposed AB 440 – why was there ever a proposal to place its contents into Title 5?

The ASCCC took a strong oppose position to AB 440 early on in the process during the 2009 legislative session because the bill had many flaws. It was only in the final hours that AB 440 took its current form and reflected our degree structure (i.e., general education and a major or area of emphasis). Even though the final form of the language (July 2009) was far less problematic than early versions and the original intent language, the bill still sought to put a degree into law, which is what remains problematic.

3. How does this course of action differ from what SB 1440 proposes? Why do we need to take any action?

Keeping degrees out of law is the goal. The momentum behind SB 1440 is reportedly strong. If 4.03 and 4.03.01 had been adopted, we **might** have been able to "preempt" legislation and make Title 5 changes that would make legislation unnecessary. There is still a possibility that this course of action could work. But waiting until spring session to take a position and to act would be too late. Realistically, it may already be too late. This is why it is critical that direction be obtained from the field before plenary in April. We now have a firm position

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against our degrees being legislated and need to establish what means ASCCC may employ to prevent legislation being passed related to our degrees.

4. Can't we already offer these kinds of degrees?

We certainly can. There is nothing to preclude colleges from not imposing local graduation requirements on students who complete a transfer general education pattern and major or area of emphasis.

5. Don't colleges already do this?

Yes. In the past few years, as colleges sought to modify existing non-compliant degrees and expand the options for students, some colleges integrated their local requirements into their local general education pattern and established degrees that achieve just what this resolution suggests.

6. Is this kind of degree good for students?

It is likely that when colleges offer degrees that are expressly designed for the transfer-bound student and do not impose additional requirements, the number of degrees awarded increases, and most would agree that earning a degree is a good thing, as long as students complete the appropriate requirements.

7. Would this resolution **require** local changes?

No. The language is permissive. Colleges *may* choose to offer these kinds of degrees as one option among their degrees - or not. But, *if* a college does locally opt to exercise this option, *that college is then mandated* not to impose local graduation requirements.

8. What would such a degree be called?

It would be, for example, an "A.A. in history for transfer" or an "A.S. in natural sciences for transfer." Such a degree would satisfy those who call for a "transfer degree" but would not compromise the Title 5 and Academic Senate requirement for a major or area of emphasis.

9. But many colleges just removed the word "transfer" from their degree titles. How do we reconcile this?

This proposed degree title is different because it indicates the major or area of emphasis where the student focused his or her study. That is very different from a degree with no major or area of emphasis. Students don't major in "transfer," but rather they study one or more *disciplines*. As long as the discipline is in the title, designating that it was designed with transfer in mind would be very different from holding an "A.A. in transfer". Nevertheless, this is inconsistent with the position established by ASCCC resolution 9.02 in Fall 2006 that called for the removal of the word "transfer" in all degree titles. One justification for changing that position, however, would be removed here if all courses for the degree were transferable. An issue that would still remain, however, is that completion of such a degree does not guarantee transfer.

10. What impact would adding this language to Title 5 have?

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If the proposed language is added to Title 5, it may lead to local pressure to reconsider local graduation requirements. It may have the effect of increasing local pressure to waive such requirements for students completing transfer general education patterns.