

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE BILL ANALYSIS

AMENDMENT DATE: June 17, 2010
POSITION: Oppose

BILL NUMBER: AB 2402
AUTHOR: M. Block

BILL SUMMARY: California State University: Admissions

This bill would require that the California State University (CSU) take specific actions to ensure that students and communities are aware of pending changes in its admissions criteria. Specifically, the bill would require a CSU campus to do the following when considering a change in its admissions policy that would affect applicants residing within the local service area of the campus: consult with local stakeholders in the K-12 and community college districts and community organizations in a public meeting; conduct public hearings to solicit comments on the proposed changes; and provide public notice in a broad spectrum regarding pending admissions criteria changes.

The bill would also require that, once the CSU Chancellor approves a change in admissions policy submitted by a campus president, which affects applicants within the local service area, at least one year must elapse before that change would become effective. However, if the change in admissions criteria that affects local applicants is a result of resources, such as the level of state funding support, only six months must have elapsed before the change would go into effect.

FISCAL SUMMARY

The CSU has indicated it would likely incur annual costs of \$100,000 to implement the bill. However, CSU noted that this estimate assumes that only significant modifications to existing admissions criteria would require the steps that this bill would stipulate, and thus, its costs could be much higher. CSU's estimate also assumes that changes taken to rescind previous more restrictive admission policy changes would not be subject to the bill's measures, which again is unclear and could lead to greater costs.

COMMENTS

The Department of Finance (Finance) is opposed to this bill for the following reasons:

- Imposing a time limit of six months before an approved change in admissions criteria can go into effect could limit the flexibility of CSU to manage its enrollments within available state funding. This could be a particular concern in years in which there is a late budget.
Although intended to improve the communication and input between CSU and its students, local educational leaders, and communities as to changes in CSU admissions policy, this bill is overly broad in that it appears to apply to any proposed change in admissions policy, whether minor or substantive, or simply a rescision of a previous admissions policy change. This could result in significantly higher administrative costs for CSU than currently estimated.
Further, the bill's provision requiring a full year to elapse before an approved change in admissions policy affecting applicants within a campus local service area would go into effect could lead to CSU adopting more restrictive enrollment management practices than they might otherwise approve without the bill's time limit restrictions.

In recent years CSU has implemented enrollment management strategies at most of its campuses as a result of decreased state General Fund support. Also, some campuses have adopted supplemental

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Position Disapproved

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admissions criteria for individual programs that have been impacted due to greater student demand and/or budgetary constraints. These strategies include imposing earlier application deadlines and requiring supplemental grade point average criteria.

This bill is primarily a response to San Diego State University's change in admissions policies for various impacted programs for fall 2010. Local students, families, and community education stakeholders claimed they were not notified of the changes in a timely fashion, leading to confusion and disappointment over the resultant admissions decisions. The CSU has noted that it is common practice for CSU campuses to attempt to engage local community stakeholders before adopting a change in their admission criteria, but that no such written CSU policy or regulation currently exists.

Code/Department Agency or Revenue Type	SO	(Fiscal Impact by Fiscal Year)							Fund Code	
	LA	(Dollars in Thousands)								
	CO	PROP	2010-2011		2011-2012		2012-2013			
	RV	98	FC	FC	FC	FC				
6610/CSU	SO	No	----- See Fiscal Summary -----							0001