



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

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California Community Colleges Chancellor Jack Scott says New Bills Signed by Gov. Brown Will Save Students and Colleges Time and Money

Common assessment system and eTranscript bills become law and remove redundancies, confusion

SACRAMENTO, Calif. - California Community Colleges Chancellor [Jack Scott](#) today thanked Gov. Jerry Brown for signing two bills designed to simplify the educational process for students and create more efficient placement testing within the 112-community college system. The new legislation will save colleges tens-of-thousands of dollars as more modern and efficient services are used, and students will benefit from a streamlined assessment system and will have the ability to request and view their transcripts online.

Chancellor Scott noted that dozens of different standardized assessment tests are currently being used throughout the California community college system to place students into courses. Many campuses only recognize the test they use and require students who take placement exams at a different community college to be reassessed. This creates an additional hurdle for prospective students and results in costly and duplicative testing by campuses.

"These two pieces of legislation go a long way in saving colleges' time and money and allowing us to efficiently and seamlessly serve our students," Scott said. "The centralized assessment system and the new eTranscript infrastructure will help our 2.6 million students achieve their educational goals faster by eliminating redundant practices and using technology to allow our students to access their records online and to share the information quickly with other institutions."

Signed on Oct. 8, [Assembly Bill 743](#), authored by Marty Block (D-San Diego), requires the Chancellor's Office to establish uniform assessment tests for English, math, and English as a second language (ESL). The common assessment tools will be made available to all 112-campuses to use in determining whether individual students should enroll in college-level courses or if they should first take basic skills classes. The use of the common tests will allow students to take their results with them if they enroll at multiple campuses or want to transfer to a different community college.

Assessment is a critical tool for students, many of whom begin their community higher education underprepared for college-level work. Taking an assessment prior to placement in a course is a critical step towards increasing student success. Colleges that use the new common assessment exams will realize a

significant cost savings because the system will purchase the tests in volume and offer them to campuses at little or no cost. This will allow more students to be assessed while the colleges realize cost-savings that they can keep locally and reinvest in other priority programs.

Assembly Bill 743 also allows for the creation of an online pre-test application that students can use to prepare to take the assessments. This will help students to improve their placement scores by allowing them to brush-up on skills they may have forgotten and as a result, enroll in the appropriate classes – thus helping them to succeed faster in degree or certificate completion and/or in transferring to a four-year university.

The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office received a one-time allocation of \$500,000 from the California Assembly for the common assessment project. This funding, in addition to grant money from the Hewlett and Gates Foundations, will combine to provide \$850,000 in necessary start-up costs for the system-wide initiative. The bill was supported by multiple community college campuses and districts, the Community College League of California, and the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges. It will take effect in January 2012.

[Assembly Bill 1056](#), authored by Paul Fong (D-Mountain View), requires community colleges to convert from a paper-based transcript process to an electronic system called eTranscripts that is highly efficient and student-friendly. The conversion to an electronic system will save the colleges \$4 to \$10 per transcript through reduced paper consumption, fewer staff hours, and decreased postage costs. The simplified process will allow students to request, transmit, track, and download their transcripts and have continuous access. It will also shorten the transmittal time from approximately three weeks to 24-hours when transcripts need to be sent from one campus to another. Many community colleges are already using this system or an alternate e-transcript service. The newly signed legislation will make the practice universal.

The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office received a one-time allocation of \$500,000 from the state Assembly to help fund the cost of converting from the paper to an electronic transcript system. This funding is estimated to cover the initial conversion costs as specified in the bill. Maintenance expenses will be addressed through savings generated by the use of a more efficient, electronic system.

Assembly Bill 1056 is an important first step for creating even greater efficiencies in the future. By investing in this statewide technology, California is building the crucial infrastructure to support future automated projects such as degree audits, around the clock counseling, and the ability to quickly send student transcripts to institutions out of the state.

The [California Community Colleges](#) is the largest system of higher education in the nation. It is composed of 72 districts and 112 colleges serving 2.6 million students per year. Community colleges supply workforce training, basic skills courses in English and math, and prepare students for transfer to four-year colleges and universities. The Chancellor's Office provides leadership, advocacy and support under the direction of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges.

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