



California State University East Bay Academic Senate

Resolution Opposing California SB 520 (Steinberg) Unless Amended

- Whereas:** The Academic Senate of California State University East Bay (CSUEB) acknowledges that online and hybrid instruction and other innovations yet to come can continue to flourish and benefit students when the goal of greater access is partnered with a commitment to high-quality instruction; and
- Whereas:** The Academic Senate of CSUEB supports the laudable goal of SB 520 to pursue a “faculty-led process that places the highest priority on educational quality through which online courses can be subjected to high-quality standards and review” (SB 520, Sec. 2.b.3) while objecting, at the same time, to the mechanism that the bill sets in place, one that, in fact, would bypass or, at best, duplicate the very curricular review processes that already exist to ensure such quality; and
- Whereas:** CSUEB has been an acknowledged leader in the field of online instruction and continues to support faculty development in offering online instruction at both graduate and undergraduate levels, providing models of student success in online (and hybrid) courses over many years, courses which have been subjected to the established processes of curriculum review; and
- Whereas:** The Academic Senate of California State University affirms the principle established under the California Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act (HEERA) that “academic and professional matters be determined by faculty shared governance mechanisms” (Sec. 3561) rather than legislatively or administratively; therefore be it
- Resolved:** That the Academic Senate of CSUEB urge that SB 520 and any similar legislation abide by several key principles, recognized nationally as best practices, among which are:
1. All classes offered for credit in California public higher education should be taught by faculty-of-record who have been hired and evaluated according to professional standards established by the three segments’ shared governance systems.
 2. All classes offered for credit in California public higher education should be approved by the offering campus according to the curricular standards established by the shared governance bodies on that campus.

3. All classes accepted for transfer in California public higher education should originate in or be formally approved through established curricular review processes in accredited institutions of higher education.
4. In order to maintain the quality of coursework used to satisfy degree requirements, students wishing to substitute coursework from non-accredited institutions/entities for requirements in California's institutions of public higher education, should be advised to use existing mechanisms for credit by exam (or an institution's alternative such as a portfolio) to demonstrate satisfactory attainment of course/program learning objectives; and further be it

Resolved: That copies of this resolution be distributed to Senators Darrell Steinberg, Ellen Corbett, Mark DeSaulnier, Loni Hancock and Assembly members Susan Bonilla, Rob Bonta, Joan Buchanan, Bill Quirk, Nancy Skinner, the Academic Senates and system-wide administrations of all institutions of California public higher education, the California Faculty Association, and to the press (*The San Francisco Chronicle, The Oakland Tribune, The Chronicle of Higher Education, Inside Higher Ed*).

RATIONALE

Since 1999 when California State University, East Bay first offered an M.S. degree in Online Teaching and Learning, the campus has taken a leadership role in the field of online instruction. As described in CSUEB President Leroy Morishita's white paper "Transforming Higher Education: How Online Education Fosters Engaged Learning at California State University, East Bay," February 2013, (https://www20.csueastbay.edu/about/files/pdf/CSUEB_EngagedLearning.pdf), the campus's commitment to online instruction goes deep, and is, in fact, as the President avers "woven into the University's DNA." In Fall 2012, 35% of CSUEB's 14,000 students took at least one of their classes online. One-quarter of all classes offered in Fall 2012 were delivered online or as hybrids (mixing both online and on-ground instruction). Like any on-ground course, an online course is subject to curriculum review. Thus, CSUEB faculty do not object to online delivery; rather, what faculty are concerned about is their ability to ensure quality in all online offerings. Such insurance could well be compromised when, as the current language of SB 520 would allow, students would be able to satisfy lower-division degree requirements by having taken courses through unaccredited entities. While the bill, in its current form, does establish a faculty review structure through the California Open Education Resources Council (a group of nine faculty who, originally under 1052, were to be charged with soliciting, reviewing, and approving requests for open-access texts for 50 of the most in-demand courses in the California's public higher education) the Council's mandate has been changed. It was never meant to extend to the review of courses offered online by private institutions outside of the three segments of public higher education and could not possibly muster the disciplinary expertise necessary to do so.