

Zero-Textbook-Cost Associate Degree Grant Program Z-Degree – Trailer Bill Language:

SUMMARY: The Trailer Bill adds Article 4 (§78050) to the Education Code, the ZeroTextbook-Cost Associate Degree Grant Program, to reduce the overall cost of education for students. A “zero-textbook-cost degree” is defined as an associate’s degree or CTE certificate that can be earned without conventional textbook costs. The program calls for the Chancellor’s Office to distribute grants of up to \$500,000 for each zero-textbook-cost degree (Z-degree) it develops. The Chancellor may distribute both planning and implementation grants. This language implements the Governor’s proposed \$5 million, one-time grant proposal to reduce student textbook costs.

Analysis: The Administration hopes to address college affordability by eliminating the reliance on traditional textbooks. Textbooks have become one of community college students’ highest educational expenses. It is likely that the development of Z-degrees will be an extensive process; therefore, the two-year period of fund availability makes the program more promising. The Academic Senate of California Community Colleges is engaged in this effort and will encourage colleges to work collaboratively with their local academic senates in the development of these degrees. The focus on increasing college affordability is consistent with League policy priorities.

Conditions for Receiving Funds: 1. Develop and implement a Z-degree from an existing associate degree for transfer (ADT) or existing CTE certificate, or develop a certificate with high market value as a Z-degree. 2. Give priority to developing Z-degrees from existing degrees for transfer. 3. Develop model Z-degrees and post them on the California Digital Open Source Library. 4. Ensure that Z-degrees are clearly identified in college catalogs and course schedules. 5. Provide the Chancellor’s Office with planning and outcome information. 6. Consult with the college’s academic senate. 7. Include faculty, administrators, and other content-focused staff. Up to 10% of the funds allocated in the Budget Act of 2016 for this program can be allocated to a college for administration of the program. By June 30, 2019, the Chancellor’s Office shall report to the Legislature and DOF on: 1) the number of degrees developed, 2) the estimated annual savings by students, 3) the number of students who completed Zdegrees, and 4) recommendations to increase or improve the program. Funds not awarded in 2016-17 may be awarded in 2017-18.

ASCCC 2016 Spring Plenary Resolution Approved 9.09 S16 Z-Degrees and Faculty Primacy

Whereas, The Department of Finance has introduced budget trailer bill language to incentivize California Community Colleges to develop “Z-Degrees” designed so that students can complete a degree with zero costs for textbooks;

Whereas, The development and review of curriculum and degree programs, as well as the selection of textbooks and other instructional materials, are items of faculty primacy under the 10+1; and

Whereas, The trailer bill language calls for consultation with the local academic senate but fails to recognize the primacy of faculty in these types of decisions;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges encourage and support local and statewide discussions regarding degree paths, known as Z-Degrees, with zero text book cost to students;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges assert the primacy of faculty in curricular decisions regarding degree and program developments, including Z-Degrees, and communicate the assertion to the legislature and others evincing interests;

and Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges recommend that the 2016 budget trailer bill language ensure that the primacy of faculty is retained by including the local academic senate's approval of the development of Z-Degrees as well as participation in any kind of incentive program related to Z-Degrees.

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