

Recommendations for the Implementation of a No-Cost Designation in Course Schedules

Whereas, Resolution 13.01 (Spring 2019) asked that the “...Academic Senate for California Community Colleges develop suggested guidelines, policies, and practices for implementation of SB 1359 (Block, 2016) no later than Spring of 2020.”;

Whereas, Most California community colleges have overcome the technical challenges associated with implementing a “no-cost” designation in their online course schedules and are now seeking to perfect this implementation by ensuring consistency in the criteria used to determine which sections are marked with this designation and establishing procedures to ensure that no qualifying sections are missed;

Whereas, The details of the legislation (i.e., the requirement that sections marked with the no-cost designation be those “that exclusively use digital course materials”) is inconsistent with how “zero textbook cost” (ZTC) had been defined by the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office and does not address how courses that have never required a text (as documented in the course outline of record) should be treated; and

Whereas, Consistency and transparency across the colleges is beneficial to students, faculty, and anyone with an interest in assessing the impact of efforts to reduce text book costs;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges recommend that colleges implement both:

1. a no-cost designation for course sections that require a text but no-cost is passed on to students and
2. a separate designation to recognize those courses that do not require a text and, consequently, have no associated costs for instructional resources;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges recommend that the no-cost designation be used to recognize those sections that use digital resources (consistent with SB 1359[Block, 2016]) and those sections that require a text yet are “no-cost” due to something other than a digital alternative;

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges recommend integration of identification of a course section as being no-cost into the existing textbook selection process; and

Resolved, That the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges provide additional guidance and resources related to SB 1359 no later than the fall 2020 plenary.

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