



NEW JERSEY

Association of State Colleges and Universities

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Senate Budget & Appropriations Committee December 15, 2016 Senate Bill No. 2618

The state colleges and universities support the intent of this legislation to help students attain a postsecondary credential. We oppose this specific proposal, however, because it interferes with our boards of trustees' authority over academic programming, a bedrock principle of institutional governance.

The legislature granted our boards of trustees with the power and duty "to establish admission standards and requirements and standards for granting diplomas, certificates and degrees" (C. 18A:3B-6.d), and "to determine the educational curriculum and program of the college consistent with the programmatic mission of the institution" (C. 18A:64-6b). These provisions have been in place for decades, and have allowed our institutions to flourish.

With regard to reverse-transfer agreements, according to the Education Commission of the States, only seven states have legislation creating reverse transfer. Many other states have reverse transfer policies set in board policy or through institutional agreements.

As the data from ECS indicate, legislation on this complex academic issue is unnecessary. We would prefer to explore the merits of reverse-transfer agreements under the authority granted to our boards of trustees over academic programming.

Allowing each institution to decide to enter reverse-transfer agreements is already succeeding. For example, New Jersey City University (NJCU) and Hudson County Community College (HCCC) signed a reverse-transfer articulation agreement in July 2013 to increase educational opportunity for students in New Jersey. The agreement assists students who earned at least 30 credits towards an associate's degree at HCCC, but did not complete sufficient credits to earn an associate's degree prior to enrolling in NJCU. The agreement is designed to allow these students to transfer credits earned at NJCU to HCCC, providing them with an opportunity to complete their associate's degree.

The NJCU-HCCC reverse-transfer agreement is just one example of the 13 reverse-transfer agreements in place with four-year partner institutions, and an additional five county colleges are in the process of establishing reverse-transfer agreements with four-year institutions. The New Jersey Presidents' Council oversees NJ Transfer, an office that facilitates the ability of students to transfer and for institutions to create reverse-transfer agreements. The office is funded by the members of the New Jersey Presidents' Council, representing the vast majority of the colleges and universities in this state, and employs two full-time staff members. It is considered a model of improving the ease of transfer, further obviating the need for this legislation.

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