



This year, FACCC proposed legislation that would grant students the agency to enroll in standalone pre-transfer level math or English classes. The proposed change to AB 1705 (Irwin, 2022) would have allowed community colleges to meet students where they are by offering support beyond the corequisite model to struggling students.

FACCC opposes mandatory placement into pre-transfer coursework and instead supports additional

Advocating for Student Choice in Pre-Transfer Coursework

By Anna Mathews, FACCC Government Relations Director

Due to eliminating most pre-transfer standalone coursework at the California Community Colleges, equity gaps in access to transfer-level math and English have ostensibly been eliminated. Yet, equity gaps in achievement persist. According to the Public Policy Institute of California, between fall 2019 and fall 2023, only 44% of Latino men and 40% of Black men completed transfer-level math on their first attempt. Over 30% of Black and Latino men who do not complete transfer-level math (with or without corequisites) in their first attempt do not re-enroll, and over 20% leave community college altogether. We cannot let this many students fall through the cracks. It is imperative that we understand the barriers to success for our students and provide them with the support they need.

One of FACCC's proposed solutions to this issue is student choice— give students the ability to access a standalone pre-transfer course if they want it.

In February, the California State Assembly Higher Education Committee held an AB 1705 Implementation Oversight Hearing. With over 200 letters submitted and compelling testimony from students and faculty, it was a successful demonstration of why a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't work for the state's diverse student body.

Despite immense support from faculty and students, including cosponsorship by the Student Senate for California Community Colleges, the official representative body of all two million students, mounting political pressure from special interest groups and certain Legislators prevented the advancement of FACCC's proposed legislation.

Despite the legislative setback, FACCC has made immense progress in the last six months. The implementation of a February 2024 Chancellor's Office memo, which would eliminate precalculus and trigonometry for STEM students by fall 2025, was halted. We secured a revised memo, ensuring that students who had not completed these courses previously would retain access to them. Over 100 faculty and students shared their support for the new memo at a Board of Governors meeting. Twenty-six organizations have signed onto FACCC's AB 1705 Resolution, insisting that students should have the choice to enroll in standalone pre-transfer coursework and that authority over curricular matters should be returned to faculty and students.

Moving forward, we must build on this momentum and continue advocating for AB 1705 reform, even as new challenges arise. FACCC remains committed to flexibility and student choice as we continue to advocate for access to pre-transfer coursework. ■



options for students who are not successful under the current model, which has entirely eliminated pre-transfer coursework. While students would still be placed into transfer-level coursework, they would have the option to access a standalone pre-transfer course to reinforce their skills.

The original goal of AB 1705's (Irwin, 2022) implementation was to increase academic outcomes and accelerate degree completion for marginalized students. As open-access institutions, the California Community Colleges must make every effort to meet students where they are. This requires trusting students to express their need for support, even if it is beyond what the corequisite model can provide. It is crucial to recognize that mandatory equal enrollment into transfer-level coursework doesn't lead to equal outcomes or student success for all.

