

Rachel Baker (rachelbb@uci.edu)
FHDA Research Memo

The effects of SB1440—associate degrees for transfer

Background: In the fall of 2012, California Community Colleges started offering Associate Degrees for Transfer—degrees created jointly with the California State University system. ADTs follow a set curriculum at every CCC and are accepted at all CSUs that offer a similar degree. Students who successfully earn an ADT are guaranteed admission to a CSU (though not necessarily their first choice campus), are granted junior standing, and only need to complete an additional 60 credits to earn a BA. In impacted programs at impacted campuses, ADT students earn an admission advantage. The goal of this program is to increase the number of students earning AAs on their way to a BA, to increase efficiency in the system (students had previously been picking up far more credits than needed), and to increase the number of students who transfer.

Data: For this study I used publically available data from the CCC Chancellor's office to examine the number of AAs granted and the number of students who successfully transfer. To examine if certain groups of students take advantage of this program at higher rates than others, I used student-level transcript data from FHDA.

Research Design: I leveraged the phased roll-out of ADTs across departments, across schools, over time to identify the effect of the program. This allows me to account for secular trends (unrelated trends in enrollment and degree granting that were happening at particular colleges, in particular departments, or in particular years).

Findings: I found that the introduction of ADTs had large effects on the number of degrees granted in departments that offer the degrees. ADT departments granted, on average, 40% more degrees per year than they had before the introduction of ADTs (this is for the third year of the program—the effect grew over time). As of fall, 2013, there is not a significant effect on the number of students who transfer. Data for the 2014-2015 school year should be available from the CSU system in August, 2015. Using data from FHDA, I found evidence of student demand for these degrees—enrollment in classes that count for ADTs became more difficult (the spots were taken by students with higher enrollment priority). I also found evidence that Asian students, the highest performing subgroup at FHDA, were enrolling at higher rates than their peers.