

**California State University Dominguez Hills**  
**Academic Senate**  
**Sense of the Senate**  
**Resolution Opposing California SB 520 Steinberg (D-Sacramento) Creating the “California Online Student Access Platform” (Amended)**  
**Exec 13-05**  
**M/S/P Unanimously**  
**April 24, 2013**

- Whereas:** The Academic Senate of California State University Dominguez Hills (ASCSUDH) acknowledge that online and hybrid instruction and other innovations yet to come can benefit students when the goal of greater access is partnered with a commitment to high-quality instruction; and
- Whereas:** CSUDH currently offers **326 courses and 15 programs** online for the benefit and convenience of its own matriculating student population;<sup>1</sup> and
- Whereas:** Senate President Pro Tem Darell Steinberg has introduced SB 520 (SB 520, Sec. 1 d and e,) [amended] that would establish the *California Online Student Access Platform*. The platform would provide “an efficient statewide mechanism for **online course providers** to offer transferable courses for credit and to create a pool of these online courses” for CSU credit; (emphasis added) and
- Whereas:** SB 520 [amended] requires that the CSU system administration and ASCSU identify the 50 most impacted lower-division courses “deemed necessary for program completion”, or “deemed satisfactory for meeting general education requirements in areas defined as **high-demand transferable lower-division courses** under the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum” and, “for each of those 50 courses, to promote the availability of multiple high-quality **online** course options, as specified;”<sup>2</sup> [emphasis added] and
- Whereas:** The ASCSUDH concur with the following New York Times Editorial (March 30, 2013), which characterizes SB 520 as an ill-considered search for a legislative “one size fits all” solution to problems created in large measure by the California Legislature’s failure to secure adequate funding for the largest network of public institutions of higher education in the nation: "The same California State Legislature that cut the higher education budget to ribbons, while spending ever larger sums on prisons, now proposes to magically set things right by requiring public colleges and universities to offer more online courses. The problem is that online courses as generally configured are not broadly useful. They work well for highly skilled, highly motivated students but are potentially disastrous for large numbers of struggling students who lack basic competencies and require remedial education. These courses would be a questionable fit for first-time

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<sup>1</sup> Source: California Virtual Campus, <http://www.cvc.edu/students/schools/california-state-university-dominguez-hills/>

<sup>2</sup> SB 520 (amended) would require that matriculated students who complete online courses developed through the *California Online Student Access Platform* achieve a passing score on corresponding course examinations to receive full academic credit for an equivalent course at the University of California, the California State University, or the California Community College, as applicable.

freshmen in the 23-campus California State University system, more than 60 percent of whom need remedial instruction in math, English or both;"<sup>3</sup> and

**Whereas:** SB 520 (amended) continue to promote online course delivery for lower-division *Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum* courses despite the current consensus among professional educators that under-prepared students do not learn effectively in online environments but in environments supporting high impact practices and face-to-face instruction by qualified faculty; and

**Whereas:** SB 520 (amended) ignores the principle, established by the State of California in HEERA (the Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act), that “academic and professional matters” will not be determined legislatively or administratively, but by “faculty shared governance mechanisms” (3561). It bypasses existing campus-based faculty-controlled curriculum approval processes instituted precisely to ensure the quality and integrity of curricula and to address the needs of the specific student populations on each campus; and

**Whereas:** SB 520 (amended) remains ambiguous about the extent to which unaccredited “for-profit” MOOC providers, (e.g. Coursera, Udacity, edX.) interested not in student success but in transforming taxpayer dollars earmarked for public education into a source of corporate profit, would control the delivery and the academic content of individual courses;<sup>4</sup> and

**Whereas:** Without consultation of CSU faculty, SB 520 (amended) establishes a Fall 2014 deadline which does not afford sufficient time for the deliberate and responsible implementation of such a project, ensuring the quality of courses on offer; and

**Whereas:** SB 520 (amended) not only allows but may be read to mandate outsourcing of work performed by faculty and staff under collective bargaining agreements to potentially unqualified vendor employees; therefore be it

**RESOLVED:** That the ASCSUDH adamantly oppose California SB 520 Steinberg (D-Sacramento) creating the “California Online Student Access Platform” [Amended] as a reckless initiative that threatens the integrity of public higher education in California through the encouraged use of pedagogically unsound Massively Open Online Courses provided by for-profit vendors; and

**RESOLVED:** That the ASCSUDH encourage the California Legislature to work collaboratively and directly with faculty and administrators of the three segments of the state’s higher education system to formulate reasonable and concrete solutions to improve degree completion rates; and

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<sup>3</sup> New York Times Editorial, March 30, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> “For each of the 50 courses identified under paragraph (1), solicit and promote appropriate partnerships between online course technology providers and faculty of the University of California, California State University, and California Community Colleges which, by the fall term of the 2014-15 academic year, shall result in the availability of multiple high-quality online course options in which students may enroll in that term” (Sec.2 A).

**RESOLVED:** That copies of this resolution be distributed to Senators Darrell Steinberg, Ellen Corbett, Mark DeSaulnier, Loni Hancock and Assembly members Susan Bonilla, Rob Bonta, Joan Buchanan, Bill Quirk, Nancy Skinner, the Academic Senates and system-wide administrations of all institutions of California public higher education, the California Faculty Association, and to the press (*The Los Angeles Times*, *The Daily Breeze*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Inside Higher Ed*).

Sources:

California Higher Education Employee Relations Act <http://www.perb.ca.gov/laws/heera.asp>

SB520 (Amended):

[http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/13-14/bill/sen/sb\\_0501-0550/sb\\_520\\_bill\\_20130401\\_amended\\_sen\\_v98.html](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/13-14/bill/sen/sb_0501-0550/sb_520_bill_20130401_amended_sen_v98.html)