MORE STUDENTS USE TRANSFER DEGREES

STATE REPORT FINDS MORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFERS TO CSU THROUGH NEW PROGRAM

By Gary Warth 4:30 p.m. Feb. 4, 2015

San Diego City College, one of three campuses in the San Diego Community College District. SDCCD

SAN DIEGO — A growing number of community college students in San Diego County and across the state are pursuing advanced degrees under a new program that makes transfers smoother, according to a recent report.

The state Legislative Analyst’s Office released a report this week that found almost 12,000 students in the 2013-14 school year earned new associate degrees for transfer, also known as AD-Ts, which made the graduates first in line to transfer to California State University schools.
More than half already are enrolled at CSU campuses.

The new degrees were earned by about twice as many students as in the preceding year. About 800 students earned the degrees in 2011-12.

The students were taking advantage of the **2010 Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act**, which makes it easier for community college students to transfer to CSU schools by reducing the number of excess units required to fulfill four-year graduation requirements.

Community college districts in San Diego County are doing better at meeting the act's goals than many other districts in the state, and all have seen a steady increase in the number of students earning the new 60-unit degrees.

Statewide, however, the report found room for improvement. Counselors at several community colleges said most incoming students were unaware of the program, while other students who thought they were working toward an AD-T were in fact earning a regular associate degree.

The Legislative Analyst's Office recommended using broader marketing and providing more information to high school and community college counselors.

Students who earn AD-Ts are guaranteed admission to a CSU bachelor's degree program that can be completed with another 60 units.

The degrees do not guarantee admission to a particular CSU campus or program, but students receive priority to their local university and to a degree program similar to their associate degree major.

Locally, North County community college students have priority at Cal State San Marcos University and students at other community colleges in the county have priority at San Diego State University.

**Lynn Neault**, vice chancellor of student services at the San Diego Community College District, said the program has been working well at the district's three campuses — City, Mesa and Miramar — although many students still confuse AD-Ts with regular associate degrees.

Despite the confusion, the number of students participating in the program is increasing.

In 2011-12, only two AD-Ts were awarded in the San Diego Community College District. The number of degrees grew to 146 the following year and shot to 483 last year for a total of 631 transferable degrees.

MiraCosta College spokeswoman Cheryl Broom also said an increasing number of students also are earning AD-Ts at her school. Only 24 MiraCosta students earned one of the degrees in 2012-13, and 119 students earned a degree in 2013-14.
In the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District, communications Director Anne Krueger said 32 AD-Ts were awarded in 2012-13 and 362 were awarded in 2013-14.

At Southwestern College, public information officer Lillian Leopold said 13 AD-Ts were awarded in 2012-13 and 176 were awarded in 2013-14.

The number of students who have earned AD-Ts and then enrolled in CSU schools statewide also has rapidly grown. In the fall of 2012, 161 students with the degrees enrolled in CSU schools. By 2013, that number had grown to 3,000.

The report did not have data for 2014-15, but CSU reported nearly 7,000 new AD-T graduates were enrolled in the fall term.

In creating criteria for the Transfer Achievement Reform Act, state community college and CSU leaders agreed the AD-Ts would be offered in 25 fields such as business administration, history, music, chemistry and computer science, with eight more added later. If a community college already offered a degree in that field, it was required to make it an AD-T.

All San Diego County community colleges have complied or are near their targets. Cuyamaca offers 15 AD-Ts, Grossmont 14, Mesa offers 16 and has one in development, MiraCosta nine, Miramar 15, Palomar offers 11 and has two in development, San Diego City 17 and Southwestern offers 19 with three in development.