

Date of Hearing: April 19, 2016

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

AB 2317 (Mullin) – As Introduced February 18, 2016

SUBJECT: California State University: Doctor of Audiology degrees.

SUMMARY: Authorizes the California State University (CSU) to award the Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) degree. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Finds and declares the following intent of the Legislature:
 - a) Since its adoption in 1960, the Master Plan for Higher Education has served to create the largest and most distinguished higher education system in the nation. A key component of the Master Plan for Higher Education is the differentiation of mission and function, whereby doctoral and identified professional programs are limited to the University of California (UC), with the provision that the CSU can provide doctoral education in joint doctoral programs with the UC and independent California colleges and universities. The differentiation of function has allowed California to provide universal access to postsecondary education while preserving quality; and,
 - b) Because of the need to prepare and educate increased numbers of audiologists, the State of California is granting the CSU authority to offer the Au.D. degree as an exception to the differentiation of function in graduate education that assigns sole authority among the California higher education segments to the UC for awarding doctoral degrees independently. This exception to the Master Plan for Higher Education recognizes the distinctive strengths and respective missions of the CSU and the UC.
- 2) Authorizes the CSU to award the Au.D. degree.
- 3) Specifies that the Au.D. degree offered by the CSU shall be distinguished from doctoral degree programs at the UC.
- 4) Requires the CSU, when granting Au.D. degrees, to comply with all of the following requirements:
 - a) Funding on a per full-time equivalent student (FTES) basis for each new student in the Au.D. programs shall be from within the CSU's enrollment growth levels as agreed to in the annual Budget Act. Enrollments in these programs shall not alter the CUS's ratio of graduate instruction to total enrollment, and shall not diminish enrollment growth in CSU's undergraduate programs. Funding provided from the state for each FTES shall be at the agreed-upon marginal cost calculation that the CSU receives;
 - b) The Au.D. degree offered by the CSU shall focus on preparing audiologists to provide health care services and shall be consistent with the standards for accreditation set forth by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology;

- c) Each student enrolled in an Au.D. degree program shall be charged fees no higher than the rate charged for students in state-supported doctoral degree programs in audiology at the UC, including joint Au.D. programs of the CSU and UC; and,
- d) The CSU shall provide any startup funding needed for the Au.D. degree programs from within existing budgets for academic support, without diminishing the quality of program support offered to CSU undergraduate programs. Funding of the Au.D. degree programs shall not result in reduced undergraduate enrollments at the CSU.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Provides that the primary mission of the CSU is undergraduate and graduate instruction through the master's degree, but authorizes the CSU to offer joint doctoral degrees with the UC, or with one or more independent institutions of higher education, only as specified. Specifies that, in setting forth the missions and functions of California's public and independent institutions of higher education that, among other things, the UC has the sole authority in public higher education to award the doctoral degree in all fields of learning, except that it may agree with the CSU to award joint doctoral degrees in selected fields (Education Code (EC) 66010.4).
- 2) Authorizes the CSU to independently award the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree focused solely on preparing administrative leaders for California public K-14 schools (EC Section 66040, et seq.).
- 3) Authorizes the CSU, until January 1, 2019, to offer the Doctor of Physical Therapy (D.P.T.) degree; and, specifies that the D.P.T. degree programs at the CSU shall be focused on preparing physical therapists to provide health care services, and shall be consistent with meeting the requirements of the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (EC Section 66042, et seq.).
- 4) Authorizes the CSU, until January 1, 2019, to offer the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree programs at up to three campuses chosen by the CSU Trustees; specifies that the CSU shall not enroll any new students in the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree programs on or after July 1, 2018; and, requires the CSU to provide data, as specified, by July 1, 2016, to the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), in order for the LAO to prepare a report to the Legislature on or before January 1, 2017 (EC Section 89281, et seq.).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: *Role of audiologists and shortfall.* Audiologists are health care professionals who provide diagnostic and rehabilitation care for individuals of all ages who have hearing and balance disorders.

According to the California Academy of Audiology (CAA), the Newborn Screening Program typically identifies 1,200 infants per year with severe hearing disabilities in need of treatment. Additionally, a rapidly growing aging population with identified hearing challenges, requiring the treatment of audiologists exists. However, there is a significant shortage of licensed audiologists in the state. According to CAA, approximately 1,600 licensed audiologists reside in California; it appears there is an inadequate in-state pipeline. According to the Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology and Hearing Aid Dispensers Board (SLPAHADB) of California, by

2030, it is estimated that California will need approximately 750 more audiologists in order to keep up with the need of the state's hearing impaired.

Changing standards for audiologists. For many years, the entry level degree audiologists needed in order to practice, was a Master of Science degree. However, in 1991, experts and academicians nationally called for a change in the entry level degree in audiology to be that of a clinical doctorate or the Au.D. The California licensing requirements for audiologists changed in 2008 to mandate that audiology applicants who graduated from an audiology training program after January 1, 2008, must hold an Au.D. degree from an approved institution.

The new national accreditation standards for audiology caused the CSU, with many campuses offering Master of Science degree programs in audiology, to close their programs.

Au.D. degree programs. San Diego State University and UC San Diego are the only public universities to offer a joint Au.D. degree program. According to SLPAHADB, from 2007-08 and 2013-14 academic years, the joint program awarded a total of 61 audiology degrees.

The University of the Pacific (UOP), a non-profit private postsecondary institution of higher learning, launched the first private Au.D. degree program in the state, in Fall 2015. To note, UOP expects to admit approximately 20 – 22 students per year.

Purpose for this measure. According to the author, in order to keep pace with the increasing demand and need for audiologists, this measure allows the CSU to award the Au.D. independently from doctoral degree programs offered at the UC. The author contends that, "Au.D. programs provided by CSU will likely provide more affordable programs that will draw the much-needed student diversity required of today's hearing health care providers."

Scope of the CSU. While it is not the norm for the CSU to be authorized to offer doctoral degrees, as outlined in the "Existing Law" section of this analysis, the Legislature has allowed the CSU to offer professional doctoral degrees that have sought to fulfill a specific needed role for the state, and not typically offered by the UC.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Academy of Audiology
California Speech-Languages Hearing Association
Dean's Office, Graduate College of Education, San Francisco State University
Department of Special Education and Communicative Disorders, San Francisco State University
Hearing Healthcare Providers
Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology and Hearing Aid Dispensers Board (within the State of California Department of Consumer Affairs)
Pacific Hearing and Balance, Inc.
23 Individuals

Opposition

None on file.

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