

Date of Hearing: March 14, 2017

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

AB 422 (Arambula) – As Introduced February 9, 2017

**SUBJECT:** California State University: Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree Program

**SUMMARY:** Repeals provisions relating to the Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree Pilot program, and instead authorizes the California State University (CSU) to establish Doctor of Nursing Practice degree programs, as specified. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Repeals existing provisions governing the Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree Pilot Program and would authorize the CSU to establish Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree programs that offer Doctor of Nursing Practice degrees, subject to specified program and enrollment requirements.
- 2) Requires the CSU to provide initial funding from existing resources, and would express the Legislature's intent that the CSU seek private donations or other non-state funds to fund startup costs for the programs.

**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) Section 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 66040, et seq.).
- 3) Authorizes the CSU to offer the Doctor of Audiology (Au.D) degree; and, specifies that the Au.D degree programs at the CSU shall be focused 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 (EC 66041, et seq.).
- 4) 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 66042, et seq.).
- 5) Authorizes the CSU, until January 1, 2019, to offer 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 DNP 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 89281, et seq.).

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown

**COMMENTS:** *Background.* AB 867 (Nava, 2010) granted the CSU the authority to establish a Doctor of Nursing practice (DNP) degree pilot program. The DNP is an applied doctoral degree for nursing professionals that, as stipulated in EC Section 89281, is required to be distinct from nursing programs offered at, or in conjunction with, the University of California (UC). The original legislation resulted from a study by the CSU Nursing Doctorate Advisory Committee (comprised of CSU representatives and a research consultant) to determine how best to address California's nursing faculty shortage.

At that time, CSU found that their existing nursing programs were full and unable to expand, in part because there was not enough nursing faculty available to meet the low student-to-faculty ratios required by accreditors and licensing boards for these programs. In addition, the CSU believed that higher entry to practice requirements for advanced practice nurses were imminent, and the DNP would give the system the ability to train more advance practice nurses. Ultimately, the CSU was authorized to operate DNP pilot programs for the specific purposes of:

- 1) Preparing clinical faculty to teach in postsecondary nursing education programs
- 2) Training nurses for advanced nursing practice or nurse leadership, or both.

The CSU was authorized to establish a DNP degree pilot program at three campuses chosen by the Board of Trustees. Authorizing legislation required the CSU to cap enrollment at 90 full-time equivalent students at all three campuses combined (the CSU has noted that they believed this number to be per cohort); specified that initial funding was to come from existing budgets without diminishing the quality or enrollment of undergraduate programs; and required the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) to evaluate the pilot program and report the results to the Legislature.

*Pilot program and outcomes.* Two CSU pilot DNP programs were developed through campus consortia with a designated administrative campus: The Northern California CSU DNP Consortium involved a partnership of CSU Fresno (administrative) and San José State; The Southern California CSU DNP Consortium linked CSU Fullerton (administrative campus), CSU Long Beach, and CSU Los Angeles. Both programs designed consistent curricula, were nationally accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) after their first year of operation, and were approved by the CSU Chancellor's Office and the Senior Commission of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

In fall 2012 the Northern California CSU DNP Consortium and the Southern California CSU DNP Consortium enrolled their first DNP student cohorts. To date, five cohorts of students have been served by the program. Additionally, Kaiser Northern California, The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation, and the California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) have awarded grant funding that supported DNP student doctoral projects, which are required in CSU DNP programs.

*Graduation rate.* To date, three cohorts of students have had enough time to complete the program. The overall graduation rate for these cohorts is 93 percent.

*DNP alumni.* Approximately one-third of CSU DNP graduates have accepted nursing teaching positions. According to the CSU, 37 alumni (23 percent of graduates) are currently teaching in the system, and nine graduates have accepted tenure-track nursing positions in the CSU. In 2014, CSU DNP graduates represented 17.4 percent of nursing tenure-track hires made across the system for that year.

The LAO's analysis of the DNP pilot program takes a close look at the 162 CSU DNP graduates to date. At the time of publication in January 2017, most of the 37 faculty members serving at CSU (29 faculty) were in non-tenure lecturer positions. Seventeen of these faculty members were already lecturers at CSU when they enrolled in the DNP program. The remaining eight faculty hires have tenure-track positions at CSU. Of these eight tenure-track hires, three were already lecturers at CSU when they enrolled in the DNP program.

*LAO analysis.* In January of 2017, the LAO submitted the statutorily required evaluation of the program, titled "Evaluation of CSU's Doctor of Nursing Practice Pilot Program." The major findings of the report were that:

- 1) The state is no longer facing a nursing shortage;
- 2) The CSU continues to report trouble attracting doctorally-prepared nursing faculty;
- 3) Only eight graduates have taken tenure-track positions in the CSU, a small overall percentage;
- 4) The more direct way for the CSU to address regular recruitment challenges is to offer more competitive salaries;
- 5) Expectations About Higher Entry-to-Practice requirements for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses have not materialized (except for nurse anesthetists); and
- 6) There are increased options available for individuals seeking a DNP.

The LAO recommended that the pilot program be allowed to sunset.

*Is there a nursing shortage?* Various studies and reports indicate that the demand for nurses is strong and/or project that the demand for nurses will be greater than supply.

The California Employment Development Department EDD projected in January 2017 that between 2014 and 2024, California will have 105,000 openings for registered nurses.

The Bureau's Employment Projections 2012-2022, released in December 2013, notes that registered nursing is among the top occupations for job growth and will require an increase of 19 percent by 2022. Between workforce growth and the need for replacements due to retirements and attrition, the Bureau estimates 1.05 million nurses will be needed by 2022.

According to the LAO analysis, an October 2015 study by UC San Francisco and the Board of Registered Nursing is the basis for the conclusion "...the large number of nursing

graduations in the state (which has held reasonably stable at about 11,000 per year) likely is sufficient to ensure an adequate nursing workforce in the state for decades to come. Some hospital officials still report difficulty, however, with recruiting experienced RNs for certain specialized positions and attracting nurses to work in certain regions of the state (such as the Inland Empire and rural areas).”

However, that study concludes with the following caution to policymakers:

“Policymakers should be cautioned that the 2015 BRN forecasts represent the long-term and are not intended to reflect rapidly changing economic and labor market conditions. They also are based on the most currently available data; the factors that affect RN supply and demand are unlikely to remain static. The most important possible changes include: (1) the number of graduates from RN education programs; (2) inter-state migration; and (3) employment rates of both newly-graduated and older RNs. These factors and any other potential influences on California’s nursing shortage, such as the limited pool of faculty, limited availability of clinical education placements, and faculty salaries that are not competitive with clinical practice positions, should be monitored continuously.”

*The CSU continues to experience a nursing faculty shortage.* CSU campuses report considerable difficulties with recruiting tenure-track faculty. According to CSU, applications for CSU nursing faculty positions hovers around six or seven, fewer than for other disciplines. For example, the Chancellor’s Office recently queried three CSU nursing programs concerning their ability to hire tenure-track faculty. In 2015-16, these programs advertised for a total of eight tenure track positions, but had to cancel six of these searches for lack of a sufficient pool of candidates. The difficulties in hiring tenure track nursing faculty experienced by these three campuses provides a snapshot of what typically occurs at the other 16 nursing campuses.

In addition to difficulty filling nursing tenure-track positions, the CSU has an impending wave of tenured nursing faculty retirements. Of CSU’s nursing tenure track faculty, two-thirds are age 55 or older and only 20 percent are younger than age 50.

*Effectiveness of CSU DNP Program?* Two CSU consortia pilot programs have graduated 162 students to date. One-third of these graduates are now employed in nursing faculty positions in California, including 23 percent at the CSU. CSU DNP graduates represented 17.4 percent of nursing tenure-track hires made across the system in 2014.

Given that the nursing faculty shortage is a nationwide problem and that the CSU has fewer resources than many other higher education institutions to either compete with other nursing colleges or with the workplace that offers high salaries, the system contends that the ability to be able to grow their own faculty through their own DNP program is the best option for ensuring that CSU nursing programs have the highly-qualified faculty members necessary to teach.

Per the pilot authorization in AB 867 (2010), the CSU was required to design programs for working professionals. The LAO report states that advanced practice clinicians such as nurse practitioners earned an average of \$105,000 in 2014 and senior nursing administrators averaged more than \$150,000. The average starting salary of an entry level tenure-track nursing faculty positions in the CSU is \$80,000.

As noted in the LAO analysis, “...the starting salary for CSU tenure-track faculty is more than \$10,000 higher in nursing departments than in history departments (and about \$25,000 lower in

nursing departments than in business departments). A more direct way for CSU to confront its faculty recruitment problem would be to pay more competitive salaries. CSU nursing programs also could mitigate their hiring problems by modifying somewhat the proportion of overall faculty openings that are tenure-track.”

DNP graduates have utilized their advanced training to work in many capacities throughout the state, with nearly one in five alumni working with medically underserved populations or regions. Alumni hold positions such as: cardiovascular clinical nurse specialist at Fresno Heart Hospital, family nurse practitioner in primary care at Riverside Medical Clinic, director of the nurse practitioner program at Fresno Pacific University and chief of patient care services at the Long Beach VA hospital.

*Are there other DNP providers?* In 2014-15, ten California universities offered DNP programs and graduated a total of 193 students. The CSU graduates accounted for 28 percent of these graduates. In California, the number of DNP programs has increased from one in 2006 (at the University of San Francisco) to ten in 2017 including, the CSU pilots. Three UC campuses (San Francisco, Irvine, and Los Angeles) are seeking to offer DNP degrees by 2018, though these programs will be primarily delivered online.

*What happens if the program is allowed to sunset?* Without permanent authority, the CSU contends that its ability to grow its own nursing faculty, maintain key industry partnerships and graduate highly qualified healthcare professionals into the workforce will be eliminated.

Since 2000, a CSU Fullerton and Kaiser Permanente partnership graduated more than half of nurse anesthetists in California. By 2022, all nurse anesthetist programs must be taught at the doctoral level. CSU contends that this partnership is critical, and the nurse anesthetist pipeline will be lost if the CSU is not granted permanent DNP granting authority.

## **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

### **Support**

Academic Senate of the California State University  
 California State University (Sponsor)  
 CareMore Medical Group  
 Children’s Hospital of Orange County  
 Community Medical Centers  
 Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian  
 Humboldt State University  
 Kaiser Permanente School of Anesthesia  
 Keck Medical Center of USC  
 Long Beach Memorial Hospital  
 Mental Health America of Los Angeles  
 Miller Children’s and Women’s Hospital Long Beach  
 Saint Agnes Medical Center  
 Santé Health System  
 Sequoia Health Care District  
 Southern California CSU DNP Consortium  
 St. Joseph Hoag Health  
 St. Jude Medical Center

Valley Children's Healthcare  
21 Individuals

**Opposition**

None on File

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