

Date of Hearing: April 29, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Mike Fong, Chair

AB 958 (Sharp-Collins) – As Introduced February 20, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Trustees of the California State University: gubernatorial and faculty appointees

**SUMMARY:** Increases the size of the California State University (CSU) Board of Trustees (BOT) to 27 members by adding an additional member of the public appointed by the Governor and an additional faculty member. The bill would require the Governor to appoint the two faculty members from a list of at least four names, as specified. Require the two faculty members to serve two-year terms with one faculty member beginning their term of office on July 1 of an odd-numbered year and the other faculty member beginning their term of office on July 1 of an even-numbered year.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Establishes the CSU system, comprised of 23 campuses, and bestows upon the CSU Trustees, through the BOT, the power, duties, and functions with respect to the management, administration, and control of the CSU system (Education Code (EDC) Sections 66606 and 89000 et. seq.).
- 2) Establishes the membership of the BOT to include 25 voting members as follows:
  - a) Five ex-officio members including the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Speaker of the Assembly, and the person named by the trustees to serve as the Chancellor of the California State University;
  - b) A representative of the CSU alumni associations, who is appointed to serve a two-year term by the alumni council and is not employed by the CSU while on the board;
  - c) Sixteen members of the public, who are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by two-thirds of the California State Senate for an eight-year term;
  - d) Two students, who are at least sophomores and attend a campus of the CSU, are appointed by the Governor from a list of two to five names provided by the California State Student Association (CSSA); and,
    - i) One student representative is appointed for a two-year term beginning on July 1 of an even number year and ending on June 30 two years later. The second student representative is appointed to a two-year term beginning on July 1 of an odd number year and ending on June 30 two years later; and,
    - ii) Students appointed will have their tuition fee waived for the duration of their term of office on the BOT.

- e) One tenured faculty member from the CSU is appointed by the Governor to serve on the board for two years. The Governor selects the faculty member from a list of names provided by the systemwide Academic Senate of the CSU.
  - i) The faculty member is not permitted to participate on any subcommittee of the BOT which is responsible for collective bargaining negotiations; and,
  - ii) The appointed faculty member will begin their two-year term on July 1 and if the Governor has not appointed a successor by the end of the term, the faculty member may remain on the BOT for one additional year or until the Governor appoints a successor; whichever occurs first. (EDC Section 66602)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown.

**COMMENTS:** *Purpose.* According to the author, “faculty are on the front lines of education in the CSU system—they engage directly with students, shape curriculum, and uphold the academic standards that define the university experience. Yet, despite representing over 20,000 voices across 23 campuses, they have only one seat on the Board of Trustees. AB 958 recognizes the vital role faculty play in the success of the CSU and ensures their perspectives are better represented in governance. By adding a second faculty representative to the board, we take a meaningful step toward more inclusive, balanced, and effective decision-making for our students and our public university system.”

*California State University and the Board of Trustees.* Originally established in 1875 as a college for teachers in San Francisco, the CSU has since expanded to include 23 campuses who enroll over 450,000 students. The CSU provides nearly half of the bachelor degrees in the state and has an alumni base of over three million students and counting. To oversee the nation’s largest four year public university, the State established the Board of Trustees (BOT).

The BOT is endowed with the authority to adopt regulations and policies pertaining to the overall operations of the CSU including educational policy decisions, budgeting, and campus planning. The membership of the board is comprised of 25 members each with term limits and voting privileges, who are selected and appointed through various manners.

<i>Member</i>	<i>Term Limit</i>	<i>How the Trustee is chosen to serve:</i>
Five ex officio members (Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Speaker of the Assembly, and Chancellor of the CSU)	Term of their elected or appointed office.	<p>The Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Superintendent of Public Instruction, are elected in a statewide election and are immediately appointed to the Board.</p> <p>The Speaker of the Assembly is an elected official in the California State Assembly who is selected by their peers to lead the State Assembly.</p> <p>The Chancellor of the CSU is appointed by the BOT after an exhaustive nationwide</p>

		search and is immediately appointed as a member of the BOT.
Two student members who attend a CSU campus and are at least in their sophomore year (or have taken at least 30 units).	Each are appointed for two-year terms that are staggered so that one student begins their term on July 1 in an odd numbered year and the other student's term begins the following year (even numbered year) on July 1. Both students' terms end on June 30 after two years (one in an odd numbered year and one in an even numbered year).	Appointed by the Governor from list of at least two to five students provided by CSSA.
16 members of the public	One eight-year term	When their term expires, the Governor will appoint a member of the public to replace the outgoing member of the board and the new appointee is approved by 2/3 of the Senate.
One tenured faculty member	One two-year term. The faculty trustee is permitted to remain on the BOT past the expiration of their term for one year if the Governor has not appointed a replacement.	Appointed by the Governor from a list of faculty provided by the systemwide CSU Academic Senate.
An alumni of the CSU system	One two-year term.	Appointed by the Alumni Council of CSU and the appointee may not be employed by the CSU during their tenure on the board.

*Arguments in support.* The California Faculty Association (CFA) wrote in support of the measure, noting that “currently, the CSU Board of Trustees includes one faculty member appointed by the Governor from a list provided by the Academic Senate of the [CSU]. This bill proposes an essential change: increasing the number of faculty members on the board from one to two and requiring that each faculty member be appointed from a list of at least four nominees. This amendment is a significant step towards ensuring that faculty, who are at the heart of our

educational endeavors, have adequate representation and a stronger voice in the governance of the CSU system.”

“The involvement of faculty in the decision-making processes of the university is crucial for several reasons. Faculty members bring a unique and necessary perspective to the table, grounded in their direct interaction with students and firsthand understanding of the educational environment. Their insight is invaluable in shaping policies and decisions that affect the academic integrity, educational quality, and student success within the CSU system.”

“By expanding the list of potential faculty appointees and increasing the number of faculty representatives, AB 958 fosters a more inclusive, equitable, and balanced approach to university governance. It ensures that a broader range of faculty voices, experiences, and disciplines are considered in the governance processes, thereby enhancing the board's decision-making with a richer and more diverse set of perspectives.”

*Committee comments.* The Committee recommends, and the author has accepted, amendments that accomplish the following:

- 1) Clarifies that the Governor would be required to appoint each faculty member from a list of at least two names furnished annually by the Academic Senate of the CSU.

*Committee Staff notes that, consistent with current law, the faculty members appointed to the BOT would not participate on any subcommittee of the board responsible for collective bargaining negotiations.*

*Moving forward, the Committee may wish to consider the implications of continued expansion of the BOT. With 25 appointed and ex-officio members already on the BOT, at what point does the size of the BOT dilute the voices of the membership?*

*Prior legislation.* AB 2070 (Cervantes, 2024) would have added a second faculty member to the CSU BOT. AB 2070 was moved to the inactive file on the Assembly Floor. AB 2516 (Santiago, 2024) would have added a bargaining unit representative selected for a 2-year term by the California State University Labor Council to the CSU BOT.

AB 1625 (Medina) Chapter 103, Statutes of 2022, authorizes a student who was appointed to the CSU BOT, whose term expires on June 30, to remain as a member of the BOT until either January 1 of the following year or until the Governor has appointed the student's replacement; whichever occurs first.

AB 1062 (Levine) Chapter 524, Statutes of 2018, originally increased faculty representation and the voting rights of the student members of the BOT. The bill was amended, removing the content and instead expanded existing reporting requirements for the BOT related to key performance data on online courses.

AB 2386 (Williams, 2016), vetoed, would have revised the membership of the BOT by requiring the Governor to appoint a permanent non-faculty CSU employee for a two-year term.

SB 325 (Block) Chapter 175, Statutes of 2013, waived the tuition fee for student members of the BOT for the duration of their term and permitted sophomores to be appointed as student members of the BOT.

AB 213 (Romero), Chapter 251, Statutes of 1999, increased the size of the BOT from 24 members to 25 by establishing an additional student representative to the board.

AB 514 (Medina), Chapter 61, Statutes of 2019, allows all student members of the BOT to vote throughout the duration of their term on the BOT.

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SB 1515 (Yee, 2012) would have changed the CSU BOT composition, increasing the number of faculty, students and represented staff. This measure was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 2849 (Lowenthal, 2004) would have added one non-faculty member of CSU. This bill was vetoed by Governor Schwarzenegger. The veto read, "I find no compelling reason for increasing the membership of the CSU BOT specifically to appoint a non-faculty union employee. Under current law, the Governor is authorized to appoint 16 at-large members to the Board, one of whom may be a non-faculty employee. Therefore, the bill is unnecessary."

SB 644 (Burton, Chapter 860, Statutes of 2003) designated one of the 13 gubernatorial appointments to the California Community Colleges (CCC) Board of Trustees (BOG) as a classified employee, with the appointment made from a list of at least three persons furnished by the exclusive representatives of classified employees of the CCC.

AB 307 (Pavley, 2001) would have added one non-faculty member to the CSU Trustees. This bill was ultimately amended to a different subject matter.

SB 1604 (O'Connell, 2000) would have added one non-faculty member to the CSU Trustees. This bill was held at the Senate Desk.

AB 213 (Romero), Chapter 251, Statutes of 1999, increased the size of the BOT from 24 members to 25 by establishing an additional student representative to the board.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

California Faculty Association

**Opposition**

None on file.

**Analysis Prepared by:** Kevin J. Powers / HIGHER ED. / (916) 319-3960