

Date of Hearing: April 26, 2022

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

AB 1997 (Gipson) – As Amended March 24, 2022

SUBJECT: California State University: emergency response programs: report

SUMMARY: Requires the Chancellor of the California State University (CSU), on or before July 1, 2023, to convene a stakeholder workgroup that includes a representative from specified stakeholders to evaluate and report on alternative options to current emergency response programs on CSU campuses and alternative dispute resolution options to resolve employee conflicts. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Finds and declares that:
 - a) A trauma-informed crisis response team is a valuable service that should be available on each campus of the CSU;
 - b) The crisis response team on each campus should respond to noncriminal health and safety incidents, including, but not limited to, classroom disruptions and interpersonal conflicts among campus community members; and,
 - c) A crisis response team should be separate and distinct from campus police departments and local law enforcement, and be trained in dispute resolution and restorative justice.
- 2) Requires the Chancellor of the CSU, on or before July 1, 2023, to convene a stakeholder workgroup that includes, but is not limited to, a representative from all of the following stakeholders:
 - a) Faculty;
 - b) Staff;
 - c) Students;
 - d) Campus health and safety personnel; and,
 - e) Bargaining unit representatives.
- 3) Requires the stakeholder workgroup, on or before October 1, 2023, to submit a report to the Legislature that includes recommendations to alleviate concerns of current emergency response programs on the campuses of the CSU.
- 4) Specifies that, in preparing the report pursuant (3) above, the stakeholder workgroup will, at a minimum, evaluate and report on both of the following:
 - a) Alternatives to current procedures and processes for responding to nonviolent and noncriminal situations on the campuses of the CSU; and,

- b) Alternative dispute resolution options to resolve employee conflicts.
- 5) Requires a report to be submitted in compliance with the Government Code, as specified, and repeals the provisions of this legislation on July 1, 2027.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the CSU, administered by the Trustees of the CSU, as one of the segments of public postsecondary education in this state. The CSU has 23 institutions of higher education located throughout the state (Education Code (EDC) Section 89000, et seq.).
- 2) Authorizes the trustees of the CSU to appoint one or more persons to constitute a police department for the headquarters and for each campus of the CSU (EDC Section 89560).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: *Purpose.* According to the author, “AB 1997 seeks to create a diverse stakeholder workgroup within the CSU community to develop alternatives to campus policing, including but not limited to, trauma-informed crisis response teams especially as it relates to on-campus mental health crises. The workgroup will include faculty, staff, students, campus health and safety personnel. Starting with a workgroup will allow all stakeholders, including campus police, to find the best approach to address and alleviate concerns regarding current emergency response programs at CSU campuses.”

“In California, more often than not, if a student is dealing with a severe mental health issue, campus police are called on to respond. Although law enforcement serves an important role in keeping our schools and students safe and secure, it is important to have trained specialists that focus on dispute resolution and transformative justice to best respond to nonviolent and noncriminal situations on campuses.”

CSU Law Enforcement. Each of the CSU’s 23 campuses operates a police department, whose peace officers are sworn and certified by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST). The POST-certified Regular Basic Course is the training standard for police officers, and includes a minimum of 664 hours of POST-developed training and testing in 42 separate areas of instruction called Learning Domains. Most POST-certified basic training academies exceed the 664 hour minimum by 200 or more hours with some academies presenting over 1000 hours of training and testing.

Academy students are subject to various written, skill, exercise, and scenario-based tests. Students must also participate in a rigorous physical conditioning program which culminates in a Work Sample Test Battery (physical ability test) at the end of the academy. Students must pass all tests in order to graduate from the basic academy.

Each CSU police or public safety department is charged with maintaining a safe campus environment by enforcing federal and state laws, CSU regulations, and the establishment of crime deterrence and prevention-related programs.

Arguments in support. The California Faculty Association (CFA), the sponsor of AB 1997, wrote that “...students on the campuses of the CSU system, particularly those students of color, have reported that they do not feel safe, and there have been increasing reports that students have been

harassed by armed campus police. CFA and Students for Quality Education (SQE), the student advocacy group within the California Faculty Association (CFA), have been considering options to the typical response to incidents that occur on our campuses.”

CFA and SQE believe that there are a number of alternatives to campus policing that might address the concerns raised by students. These options include:

- 1) Reinvestment in mental health counselors and mental health crisis intervention teams;
- 2) Providing mandatory de-escalation and unconscious bias training for all campus police and security;
- 3) Implementing a trauma-informed crisis response team available at each campus of the CSU;
- 4) Requiring crisis response teams on each campus to respond to non-criminal health and safety incidents, including, but not limited to, classroom disruptions, and interpersonal conflicts among campus community members; and,
- 5) Ensuring that crisis response teams are separate and distinct from both campus police departments and local law enforcement.

Committee comments. Should the committee see fit to support AB 1997, the author may wish to consider the following amendments:

- 1) Removing the findings and declarations in (b) and (c), as the findings presuppose the result of any findings of the Workgroup.
- 2) Amending the date of the final report from the workgroup. Three months from the first convening of a workgroup to completion of a report appears to be a very tight timeline. The author may wish to consider meeting with stakeholders to confirm meeting timelines and expectations.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Faculty Association

Opposition

None on file

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