

Date of Hearing: June 21, 2022

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

SB 684 (Hueso) – As Amended June 6, 2022

SENATE VOTE: 39-0

SUBJECT: California State University: doctoral programs in public health

SUMMARY: Authorizes the California State University (CSU) to award the Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) degree. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Specifies that, in order to meet specific public health leadership needs in California, the CSU may award the DrPH degree. Specifies that the authority to award DrPH degrees is limited to the discipline of public health.
- 2) Requires the CSU to comply with all of the following requirements:
 - a) Enrollments in the DrPH degree programs offered by the CSU must not diminish enrollment growth in university undergraduate programs.
 - b) The DrPH must be focused on health and scientific knowledge translation and transformative community leadership, and will be designed to address the community public health workforce needs of California and prepare qualified professionals to be leaders and experienced practitioners who apply their advanced knowledge in service to California's diverse communities in areas such as community health administration, health education and promotion, and public health advocacy. These degree programs must enable professionals to earn the degree while working fulltime.
 - c) Each student in the degree program authorized by this article will be charged fees comparable to, but not higher than, those fees charged for the DrPH degree at the University of California (UC).
 - d) The CSU will provide any startup and operation funding needed for the degree programs authorized by this article from within existing budgets for academic program support without diminishing the quality of program support offered to CSU undergraduate programs. Funding of these degree programs must not result in reduced undergraduate enrollment at the CSU.
- 3) Finds and declares that:
 - 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 of each public higher education sector to increase access and educational opportunity for Californians. The Master Plan has a provision that allows the CSU to offer doctoral education in joint doctoral programs with the UC and independent California colleges and universities;

- b) More recently, the CSU has received legislative authority to offer independent professional doctoral degrees in areas where there is an identified workforce or accreditation need that may not be fulfilled through existing education opportunities in California; and,
- c) Because of the need to prepare and educate increased numbers of public health leaders and administrators, the State of California is granting the CSU authority to offer the DrPH degree as an exception to the differentiation of function in graduate education that assigns sole authority among the California higher education segments to the University of California 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.

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 (EDC) 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 elementary and secondary schools and community colleges and on the knowledge and skills needed by administrators to be effective leaders in California public schools and community colleges.. (EDC Section 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 will 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. (EDC Section 66041, et seq.)
- 4) Authorizes the CSU to offer the Doctor of Physical Therapy (D.P.T.) degree, and specifies that the D.P.T. degree programs at the CSU will focus on preparing physical therapists to provide health care services, and be consistent with meeting the requirements of the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education. (EDC Section 66042, et seq.)
- 5) Authorizes CSU to offer the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree programs, and specifies that the DNP offered by the CSU will focus on the preparation of nursing faculty to teach in postsecondary nursing education programs and may also train nurses for advanced nursing practice or nurse leadership. (EDC Section 89280, et seq.)
- 6) Authorizes CSU to offer the Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) degree, and specifies that OTD degree programs offered by the CSU will focus on preparing occupational

therapists to provide health care services and to be consistent with the standards for accreditation set forth by the appropriate accrediting body. (EDC Section 8xxxx, et seq.)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown.

COMMENTS: *Substantial amendments.* SB 684 was substantially amended, removing the previous contents of the bill and replacing it with current language on June 6, 2022.

Purpose. According to the author, “We currently have no DrPH programs in the CSU system...the only public option that is enrolling students [in a DrPH] is UC Berkeley's which is not meant to develop the workforce needs.”

“The [Master of Public Health (MPH)] is a professional terminal degree: graduates from these programs generally have a concentration in one of the areas of public health (eg. epidemiology, community health, health policy and administration, environmental/occupational health, etc.), which is the focus of the coursework. All MPH students complete at least one course in all "core" areas of public health. MPH students are also required to complete a practicum, internship, or field work of some sort, as well as a culminating project (eg. comprehensive exam, thesis, presentation, etc.).”

“The DrPH degree is a school-wide, advanced professional degree program designed for the student who has a master of public health (MPH) degree or its equivalent and who intends to pursue a leadership career as a public health professional. The mission of the DrPH program is to prepare graduates to advance the public's health through the integration and application of a broad range of knowledge and analytical skills in leadership, practice, policy analysis, program management, and professional communication, coupled with preparation in a specific discipline of public health. The DrPH program prepares graduates to apply these skills and methods within both academic and nonacademic settings, as well as in public-agency or private-sector settings that emphasize improving the health of the public.”

Background. As noted in “existing law,” outside of independently authorized doctoral programs, CSU is limited to provide joint doctoral programs with the University of California (UC) or with one or more independent institutions of higher education, as specified. Current law authorizes the CSU to independently award five professional doctoral degrees which include the Doctor of Education, Doctor of Physical Therapy, Doctor of Audiology, Doctor of Nursing, and Doctor of Occupational Therapy. This bill would expand the type of professional doctoral degrees CSU is authorized to award.

Currently, San Diego State and the University of California, San Diego have an MOU to provide a joint PhD program in public health. The author and sponsors contend that the existing joint program has a traditional research focus, whereas the DrPH program established in this proposal would provide independent authority to offer a professional doctoral in public health, which is more “workplace focused.”

Workforce demand. The CSU provided a report of data drawn from the Emsi workforce database using employment data from the California Employment Development Department. The data was downloaded in early October 2021, and the most recent full-year employment data that was available at that point in time was for 2019. The data generally demonstrated that employment in public health jobs requiring bachelors, masters or doctoral degrees is expected to grow across all

regions of the state, and in all degree areas, between 2019-2031. As examples, the report cites demand for jobs which require a public health doctorate degree is estimated to grow 26% in the Riverside and San Jose areas, 23% in Fresno, and 16% in the San Diego area. The author and sponsor have indicated that San Diego State University, CSU Dominguez Hills, San José State University, and CSU Long Beach are interested in starting DrPH programs.

Longstanding proposal? According to information provided by the author and sponsor, this DrPH proposal has been brought before the CSU Board of Trustees. The CSU noted in the author's background sheet that "this proposal was brought forth to CSU staff in prior years, but at those points in time it was not a priority for the CSU. Three years ago when the proposal was first brought to CSU staff for consideration, we had recently received the authority to offer a doctoral in occupational therapy and had not gotten that program off the ground. At the time, it was determined premature to seek yet another doctoral program. Two years ago, the CSU decided that we would limit any sponsored legislation as we were going through a Chancellor transition and felt the new Chancellor should be afforded the opportunity to weigh-in on any sponsored legislation that would have significant policy/program implications. Earlier this year, there was concern about moving forward with a proposal without having had the opportunity to work with the University of California due to concerns about duplication. Those conversations were very fruitful and there appears to be a movement by the UC to move their degree programs in public health to a PhD level program rather than a professional doctorate program. In doing so, this creates space for the CSU. In light of COVID, and the time it will take for campuses to initiate their programs, the urgency to seek this authority now makes sense rather than waiting another year and a half before the authority could be effective."

Arguments in support. "The CSU, the sponsors of this legislation, write that "The CSU has worked diligently with the University of California (UC) over the past year to develop language in SB 684 which is mutually agreed upon and to ensure that DrPH degrees offered by the CSU will be distinct from existing UC doctorate programs. The CSU's DrPH degree will be focused on training community practitioners to provide health education and leadership to California's diverse communities. It will also allow a student to earn the degree while working full-time, making the program accessible to those already working in the health care field. The CSU is committed to its mission of educating students to meet California's workforce needs in all communities. As the demand for accessible, quality public health programs expand, the CSU stands ready to prepare skilled health professionals to serve the public."

Committee comments. This bill represents a departure from previous successful CSU-sponsored legislation expanding stand-alone doctoral degree programs. Generally, the CSU has approached the Legislature with requests for a new program at the beginning of the calendar year, and requests have been accompanied by examples of changes in professional standards necessitating a new stand-alone degree. By introducing this measure as a substantially amended bill already outside of the house of origin, SB 684 can only be amended in the Assembly – the Senate Committee on Education will only be able to concur or not concur with the amendments. *The committee may wish to examine if this truncated timeline impacts the ability of the Legislature to fully examine this proposal.*

While information provided by the author and sponsor reference differences in scope between a Ph.D and a DrPH, no information has been provided that directly identifies how individuals with a DrPH function within California's broader public health framework, or how a DrPH degree specifically meets critical shortages in public health leadership. Given that this proposal is not

new, the lack of demonstrated pressing need calls into question the need to expand beyond the already-statutorily authorized joint Ph.D model.

Committee staff does, however, recognize that COVID-19 has exposed major gaps in the State's public health framework, especially in spaces that translate scientific truths into messages that can be easily conveyed and understood by the public. The multidisciplinary aim of a DrPH degree, as described by the author and sponsor, would likely help to train leaders well-versed in the skills necessary to lead public health organizations.

Prior legislation. AB 829 (Bloom) Chapter 183, Statutes of 2019, authorized CSU to offer the OTD degree, and specifies that OTD degree programs offered by the CSU will focus on preparing occupational therapists to provide health care services and to be consistent with the standards for accreditation set forth by the appropriate accrediting body

AB 422 (Arambula) Chapter 702, Statutes of 2017, authorized CSU to offer the DNP degree programs, and specified that the DNP offered by the CSU shall focus on the preparation of nursing faculty to teach in postsecondary nursing education programs and may also train nurses for advanced nursing practice or nurse leadership.

AB 2317 (Mullin) Chapter 267, Statutes of 2016, authorized the CSU to offer the 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.

AB 2382 (Blumenfield) Chapter 425, Statutes of 2010, authorized the CSU to offer the D.P.T. degree, and specified 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.

SB 724 (Scott) Chapter 269, Statutes of 2005, authorized the CSU to independently award the Ed.D degree focused solely on preparing administrative leaders for California public K-14 schools

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California State University, Office of the Chancellor

Opposition

None on file

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