

Date of Hearing: April 25, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
Mike Fong, Chair  
AB 656 (McCarty) – As Amended March 16, 2023

**SUBJECT:** California State University: doctoral programs

**SUMMARY:** Authorizes the California State University (CSU) to award doctoral degrees statewide that do not duplicate University of California (UC) doctoral degrees and satisfy certain requirements. Requires a CSU campus seeking authorization to offer a doctoral degree to submit specified information on the proposed doctoral degree for review by the office of the Chancellor of the CSU, and approval by the CSU Board of Trustees (BOT), as provided. Authorizes a proposed doctoral degree that is approved for implementation by the BOT to be implemented at the CSU systemwide. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Authorizes the CSU, in consultation with the UC President's Office, to award doctoral degrees statewide that do not duplicate UC doctoral degrees. In implementing these provisions, the CSU must comply with all of the following requirements:
  - a) Enrollment in CSU doctoral degree programs as specified must not diminish enrollment in CSU undergraduate programs;
  - b) CSU doctoral degree programs established as specified will not duplicate UC doctoral degree programs that are offered or under systemwide review by the President's Office.
  - c) The CSU will establish fees for doctoral degree programs established pursuant to this article that shall be comparable to, but no higher than, those fees charged for UC doctoral degree programs; and,
  - d) The CSU must provide any startup and operational funding needed for doctoral degree programs established from within existing budgets for academic program support without diminishing the quality of program support offered for CSU undergraduate programs. Funding of doctoral degree programs established must not result in reduced CSU undergraduate enrollment.
- 2) Specifies that a CSU doctoral degree program established as specified must comply with all of the following limitations:
  - a) A CSU campus seeking authorization to offer a doctoral degree program must submit all of the following for review by the CSU chancellor's office, and approval by the CSU trustees:
    - i) Documentation verifying that the proposed doctoral program does not duplicate a UC doctoral degree program that is offered or under systemwide review by the President's Office.
    - ii) Enrollment projections for the proposed doctoral program.

- iii) An administrative plan for the proposed doctoral program, including, but not limited to, the funding plan for the program.
  - iv) Statewide workforce data relevant to the proposed doctoral program.
- b) The CSU Chancellor will ensure all of the following for a CSU campus seeking to offer a proposed doctoral program:
- i) The CSU Chancellor notifies, in writing, and sends relevant materials on the proposed doctoral program to the UC President's Office and the President of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) to allow for consultation on issues of duplication.
  - ii) The trustees must not approve for implementation a proposed doctoral program if the UC President's Office has, within 60 days of being notified and receiving materials for the proposed doctoral program as specified, provided written objections on the basis of duplication.
  - iii) A proposed doctoral program that receives written objections from the UC President's office as specified will not be approved for implementation by the CSU Board of Trustees unless and until a letter indicating a resolution of the written objections and a mutual agreement, signed by both the CSU chancellor and the UC president, in support of the CSU offering the proposed doctoral program is submitted to the Assembly Committee on Higher Education and the Senate Committee on Education.
- 3) Specifies that a proposed doctoral program that is approved for implementation by the CSU Board of Trustees may be implemented at the CSU systemwide.
- 4) Establishes various definitions, as specified.
- 5) Makes the following legislature findings and declarations:
- 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) The State of California is granting the CSU authority to offer doctoral degrees statewide that do not duplicate UC doctoral degrees as an exception to the differentiation of function in graduate education that assigns sole authority among the California higher

education segments to 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.

**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 66043, et seq.)
- 7) Authorizes CSU to offer the Doctor of Public Health (Dr.PH) degree, and specifies that DrPH degree programs offered by the CSU will focus 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. (EDC Section 66044, et seq.)

- 8) Authorizes the Board of Governors (BOG) of the California Community Colleges (CCC) to establish permanent district baccalaureate degree programs, and provided that only 15 baccalaureate degree programs are approved during each application period allowing for a total of 30 baccalaureate degree programs per academic year. Additionally, existing law:
- a) Requires the Chancellor of the CCC to consult with and seek feedback from the Chancellor of the California State University (CSU), the President of the University of California (UC), and the President of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) on proposed baccalaureate degree programs, as specified, and establishes a mechanism for the assessment, consultation, and approval of programs where duplication is identified, as specified;
  - b) Requires a CCD to continue to offer an associate degree program in the same academic subject for which a baccalaureate degree program has been approved, unless the community college district has received approval from the chancellor to eliminate the associate degree program, as specified; and,
  - c) Specifies that the total number of baccalaureate degree programs offered by a CCD, at any time, does not exceed 25% of the total number of associate degree programs offered by the CCD, including associate degrees for transfer. (EDC Section 78040 et seq.)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown

**COMMENTS:** *Purpose.* According to the author, “the mission of CSUs is to extend knowledge and opportunity to diverse communities throughout our state. AB 656 allows the CSUs to reasonably expand doctoral programs. Doing so will lead to more equitable access to practical doctoral degrees, greater diversity in academia, and the ability to meet California’s changing workforce demands.”

*Master Plan for Higher Education.* As outlined in the Master Plan for Higher Education and by state statute, the primary mission of the CSU is undergraduate and graduate instruction through the master’s degree. The UC was granted the sole authority to independently offer doctoral degrees.

Notwithstanding the differentiation of the mission envisioned by the Master Plan, as and outlined in statute, the Legislature has authorized the CSU to go beyond its original mission to offer six professional doctoral degrees which include the Au.D, Ed.D, D.P.T., DNP, OTD, and Dr.PH. Each program was individually approved through legislation. Fees were capped at the rate charged at the UC, no additional funding was provided by the state, and these programs were to be implemented without diminishing or reducing enrollment in undergraduate programs. Additionally, the CSU programs that offer applied doctorates are not duplicative of degrees offered by UC.

*Parallel expansion.* SB 850 (Block), Chapter 747, Statutes of 2014, authorized the CCC BOG, in consultation with the CSU and the UC, to establish a baccalaureate degree pilot program. The pilot program allowed up to 15 participating community college districts to offer one baccalaureate degree program each to meet local workforce needs as long as it was not duplicating a baccalaureate degree program already offered by the CSU or the UC. The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) conducted interim and final evaluations of the pilot program.

This pilot program was expanded and authorized indefinitely by AB 927 (Medina), Chapter 565, Statutes of 2021.

AB 656 (McCarty) borrows several conceptual elements from provisions of AB 927 (Medina), including the review of proposed programs by the UC and AICCU, a requirement that CSU doctoral degree programs established, as specified, will not duplicate UC doctoral degree programs that are offered, and the requirement that a written agreement must be in place for programs with objections to move forward.

*Committee staff notes* that, specifically, the duplication requirement in AB 656 (McCarty) also captures programs that are offered by UC, and under systemwide review, a program approval process can take multiple years in the lead up to a campus offering a new program. This is an expansion of the requirements in AB 927 (Medina), Chapter 565, Statutes of 2021.

*Committee staff notes* that the written agreement provision in AB 656 (McCarty) is significantly more detailed than what is provided for in current law for community colleges. Current law requires that, upon receipt of written objections, the Chancellor of the CCC will have 30 working days to convene with the applicant and the segment, or segments, which raised an objection to collaborate, and establish a written agreement before the program is approved. This measure instead requires that a proposed doctoral program that receives written objections from the UC President's office will not be approved for implementation by the CSU Board of Trustees unless, and until, a letter indicating a resolution of the written objections and a mutual agreement, signed by both the CSU Chancellor and the UC President, in support of the CSU offering the proposed doctoral program is submitted to the Assembly Committee on Higher Education and the Senate Committee on Education.

*Arguments in support.* The CSU, the sponsor of AB 656 (McCarty), writes that, "since 2005, the CSU has worked strategically with the Legislature and the UC to secure approval on legislative proposals to authorize the CSU to offer doctoral degrees in Education, Audiology, Physical Therapy, Nursing Practice, Occupational Therapy, and Public Health. The CSU currently awards more than 600 doctoral degrees each year in these disciplines. However, pursuing legislation on each degree program is a lengthy process which can delay academic program development and leave workforce demands unmet."

The CSU continues that they are, "...absolutely committed to not duplicating doctoral degrees offered by the UC, and language in AB 656 clearly prohibits duplication. Specifically, a participating campus must provide evidence of non-duplication with UC programs, workforce need, enrollment demand, and an administrative plan. Participating campuses are required to make their programs financially self-sufficient, so no additional state funds are needed. A consultation process with the UC system is clearly spelled out in the bill, including language to ensure that any disagreement on duplication is resolved in a written document submitted to the Legislature before a program can be approved."

The Cal State Student Association also wrote in support, noting that, "over 60% of CSU students stay in California after graduation and become an integral part of the state's economy. Nearly the 4th largest global economy, California is home to over 10% of the most valuable technology companies in the world, and has thriving industries in the areas of finance, business services, government, health, trade, agriculture, and manufacturing. However, many of these sectors have reported advanced degree workforce gaps in areas not addressed by any UC campus. CSU

campuses already have robust graduate programs and faculty in many of these areas, who are primed to meet this workforce need, but for whom no interested UC or private partner exists. CSU campuses average 40% underrepresented minority students and more than 60% of its student body are of low economic means. CSU is known to be a leader in access and affordability, making it one of the top 10 conduits for economic and social mobility for underserved students in the nation. By increasing the number and types of doctoral programs that are available at the CSU, countless students who previously may not have had access to a doctoral degree may obtain one.”

*Other options?* Notwithstanding successful expansions of CSU doctoral authority via prior legislation, the CSU currently has the authority to offer joint doctoral degrees with the UC, or with one or more independent institutions of higher education. The author noted in background documents that “...there are several instances in recent years in which the potential UC campus has lacked the time, resources, or desire to collaborate on the doctoral program proposed by the CSU.”

While AB 656 (McCarty) looks to offer doctoral degrees not currently offered by the UC, the broader question of intersegmental coordination and partnership should be considered. The Master Plan created specific missions for each of the segments of higher education. While both the expansion of CCC and CSU authority to offer advanced degrees is predicated on moving to meet the needs of students, *the committee may wish to consider the ways that CCC, CSU, and UC can work together in a joint manner to offer programs that meet students ongoing educational needs.*

*The Committee may also wish to consider if the continued expansion of independent degree granting authority will further move the segments into silos, instead of encouraging collaboration and collegial cooperation.*

*Unrestrained growth?* AB 656 (McCarty) lacks some growth caps that are currently built into the CCC baccalaureate degree program, specifically a limit on the amount programs that can be created in a current year and an overall cap on doctoral programs as compared to the overall programs offered by a community college district.

*Moving forward, the author may wish to consider working with stakeholders to:*

- 1) *Establish an annual and overall cap on doctoral programs offered at CSU campuses; and*
- 2) *Require reporting by the Legislative Analyst’s Office or other appropriate body to assess the first several years of doctoral expansion.*

*Prior legislation.* SB 684 (Hueso), Chapter 936, Statutes of 2022, authorized CSU to offer the DrPH degree, and specified that DrPH degree programs offered by the CSU will focus on health and scientific knowledge translation and transformative community leadership.

AB 927 (Medina), Chapter 565, Statutes of 2021, expanded and indefinitely authorized the CCC Baccalaureate Degree Pilot Program.

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.

SB 850 (Block), Chapter 747, Statutes of 2014, authorized the CCC BOG, in consultation with the CSU and the UC, to establish a baccalaureate degree pilot program. The pilot program allows up to 15 participating community college districts to offer one baccalaureate degree program each to meet local workforce needs as long as it does not duplicate a baccalaureate degree program already offered by the CSU or the UC.

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**

ASML San Diego  
Bakersfield, California State University  
Biocom California  
Cal State Student Association  
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo  
California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt  
California State Polytechnic University, Pomona  
California State University, Office of the Chancellor  
Channel Islands, California State University  
Dominguez Hills, California State University  
East Bay, California State University  
Fresno, California State University  
Fullerton, California State University  
Greater Sacramento Economic Council  
Hamilton Lane Advisors, L.l.c.

I Am  
I Am an Individual  
Independent Indivisible  
Individual  
Individual Letter  
Long Beach, California State University  
Los Angeles, California State University  
Monterey Bay, California State University  
North Orange County Chamber  
Northridge, California State University  
Orange County Business Council  
Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce  
Sacramento, California State University  
San Bernardino, California State University  
San Diego Gas and Electric Company  
San Diego State University  
San Francisco State University  
San José State University  
San Marcos, California State University  
Scripps Health  
Sharp Healthcare  
Sonoma State University  
Stanislaus, California State University  
Valley Children's Healthcare

**Opposition**

None on file.

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