

Date of Hearing: April 9, 2019

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Jose Medina, Chair

AB 829 (Bloom) – As Introduced February 20, 2019

SUBJECT: California State University: Doctor of Occupational Therapy Program

SUMMARY: Authorizes the California State University (CSU) to award the Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD) degree and establishes constraints on the funding and fees for these degrees. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Authorizes the CSU to establish OTD degree programs in order to meet specific occupational therapy education needs in the state.
- 2) Specifies that the authority to establish degree programs granted by this article will be limited to the discipline of occupational therapy.
- 3) Establishes that the OTD degree programs offered by the CSU shall be distinguished from doctoral degree programs at the University of California.
- 4) Requires the OTD degree programs offered by the CSU to be focused 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.
- 5) Mandates the CSU to provide any startup and operational funding needed for the degree programs authorized from within existing budgets for academic program support, without diminishing the quality of program support offered to CSU undergraduate programs.
- 6) Makes findings and declarations, as specified.

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 K-14 schools. (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 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. (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 shall be focused 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 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. (EDC Section 89280, et seq.)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown.

COMMENTS: *Need for the bill.* According to the author, “AB 829 allows the CSU to award doctorate degrees in Occupational Therapy to help California provide quality services for our growing population. The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education has recently shifted the entry point for certification in this field from masters to doctorate-level. Starting in 2027, a doctorate in occupational therapy will be required in order to be eligible to take the national board exams to become a certified occupational therapist. Without the authority to transition to a doctorate-level program, the CSU’s current master’s programs at San Jose State University and CSU Dominguez Hills will be unable to admit new students and will be forced to close down...Our inability to offer these programs would have an immediate impact on the supply of these highly sought-after healthcare specialists.”

“The CSU’s programs have valuable community partnerships that provide students with important service-learning models. Faculty and students from CSU Dominguez Hills operate partnerships with local community centers and rehabilitation clinics for veterans and survivors of abuse, while San Jose State University operates on-campus clinics providing free and low-cost services to the community. With this authority, the CSU will be able to continue its essential community partnerships and provide an accessible path to a career in occupational therapy.”

Background. The CSU offers the state’s only public master’s degrees in occupational therapy. Occupational therapists work with people of all ages and conditions to enhance their ability to perform their daily activities. Children with learning disabilities, people recovering from injuries, and older adults experiencing cognitive and physical changes all benefit from the support of occupational therapists.

The CSU’s occupational therapy programs currently serve approximately 30% of the future occupational therapists being educated in California. Over 80% of San Jose State University graduates and over 95% of CSU Dominguez Hills graduates are employed as occupational therapists within six months of graduation, producing approximately 143 certified graduates per year. Both programs have demonstrated strong success metrics, with graduation rates exceeding 95%, and a 97% pass rate on the national certification exams.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has projected a 24% growth in employment of occupational therapists between 2016 and 2026. With an aging population and shifts in access to health

insurance, occupational therapy is projected to become increasingly important for Californians with physical and mental impairments seeking to live their daily lives to the fullest.

Existing authorization. Notwithstanding the Masterplan for Higher Education, which designates the University of California the only California public postsecondary education segment authorized to award a doctoral degree, current law authorizes the CSU to independently award four professional doctoral degrees which include the Doctor of Education, Doctor of Physical Therapy, Doctor of Audiology, and the Doctor of Nursing. This bill would expand the type of professional doctoral degrees CSU is authorized to award.

Accreditation Changes. The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) represent the interests and concerns of occupational therapy practitioners and students of occupational therapy and works to improve the quality of occupational therapy services. Current AOTA membership is approximately 60,000, including occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants, and occupational therapy students. AOTA represents 213,000 occupational therapy practitioners and students in the United States.

The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) is an associated advisory council of the executive board of the American Occupational Therapy Association. ACOTE is tasked with developing educational standards and accrediting occupational therapy educational programs across the country. It establishes, approves, and administers educational standards to evaluate occupational therapy educational programs.

In October 2018, AOTA and ACOTE placed the pending 2027 doctoral level educational mandate for compliance in abeyance pending a six month review. In April 2019, they will be meeting to vote on the compliance date for the doctoral mandate, which, if it remains as is, would again be set as 2027.

Nationally, universities are transitioning their existing master's level occupational therapy programs to doctorate level programs. Out of 96 occupational therapy master's programs, 76 have moved or are in the process of moving to a doctorate level program since ACOTE's first proclamation in 2013 that the entry point education should move from a master's to doctorate.

Accreditation standards for occupational therapists were last changed in 2007, when the point of entry for occupational therapy moved from a bachelor's to master's level education.

Programmatic Changes. According to the CSU Chancellor's office, curriculum will need to be adjusted in order to transition from the master's to doctorate program. The master's program is currently comprised of seven consecutive semesters, including summers. The doctorate program would likely require at least an additional two semesters, for a total of three years. To transition to a doctoral level, the program would need to add:

- 1) Approximately thirty additional units for specialization tracks;
- 2) Another semester of full-time placement, translating to 640 additional hours of hands-on experience.

- 3) A capstone project during the last year, focused on one of the following topics: clinical practice skills, research skills, administration, leadership, program and policy development, advocacy, education, or theory development.

These changes would be needed to address the additional doctoral accreditation standards identified by ACOTE, which require programs to:

- 1) Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of delivery models, policies, and systems related to practice in settings where occupational therapy is currently practiced and settings where it is emerging.
- 2) Demonstrate active involvement in professional development, leadership, and advocacy.
- 3) Demonstrate the ability to synthesize in-depth knowledge in a practice area through the development and completion of a doctoral capstone in one or more of the following areas: clinical practice skills, research skills, administration, leadership, program and policy development, advocacy, education, and theory development.

Arguments in support. According to the Occupational Therapy Association of California (OTAC), "...The profession is rapidly expanding the range of professional degrees offered to maintain a high level of entry-level education and, most recently, the ACOTE called for a mandate to go to the doctoral entry-level degree as the single point of entry. While this mandate remains in discussion, all other academic programs in California either already have the doctoral degree offered or are actively developing such. Regardless of the final decision on the minimum degree for entry-level practice, the CSU programs are at great risk to fall behind the wave of change impacting occupational therapy education across California and the United States."

"OTAC has a long and collaborative history with the CSU Occupational Therapy programs. Our relationship is one of mutual respect and support. Students at San Jose State University and California State University Dominguez Hills have access to participation in our committees, spring symposium, annual professional conference, and myriad local activities. We have invested in the enrolling and mentoring of both students and newer graduates to become involved in our association governance in support of roles they may become involved with either in their practice setting or the realm of state and national policy as well. Several of our elected and appointed leaders over the last four decades have held degrees from one of the CSU programs. In 2018, the SJSU program celebrated 75 years of existence while CSUDH celebrated its twentieth year. These two programs are valued as providers of education in expert clinical practice as well as lifelong community service."

Prior legislation. 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**

Advanced Therapy Center
Adventist Health
Alameda Health System
Almaden Valley Children's Therapy Center
Anaheim Elementary School District
California Hospital Association/California Association of Hospitals and Health Systems
California State University, Office of the Chancellor
Cedars-Sinai Medical Center
Center for Elders Independence
Century Villages at Cabrillo
City of Carson
El Camino Hospital
Family Supportive Housing
Firefly Center
Joy and Laughter Developmental Therapy
Kaiser Permanente
Long Beach Adult Day Healthcare Center
Los Angeles Unified School District
Mcroy Pediatric Services, Inc.
Mental Health Association of San Mateo County
Occupational Therapy Association of California
Occupational Therapy Training Program - San Francisco
Pediatric Therapy Network
San Jose Healthcare & Wellness Center
St. Christopher Adult Day Health Care Center
30 Individuals

Opposition

None on file.

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