
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Carol Liu, Chair
2015 - 2016 Regular

Bill No: AB 2163
Author: Low
Version: June 22, 2016
Urgency: No
Consultant: Olgalilia Ramirez
Hearing Date: June 29, 2016
Fiscal: Yes

Subject: California State University: appointment of campus presidents

NOTE: This bill was previously heard by this Committee on June 15, 2016. No vote was taken. The author has amended the bill to respond to concerns raised in the prior committee analysis. The analysis has been updated to reflect those amendments.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Trustees of the California State University (CSU), in exercising its authority to appoint presidents, to hold at least one public forum with an appointed president of a campus within 15 working days after the appointment is made.

BACKGROUND

Existing law establishes the CSU, under the administration of the Trustees of the CSU, as one of the segments of public postsecondary education in this state. The CSU comprises 23 institutions of higher education, each of which is headed by a president who is appointed by the trustees. (Education Code § 66600)

ANALYSIS

This bill requires the Trustees of the CSU, in exercising its authority to appoint presidents, to require a person appointed as president of a campus to participate in at least one public forum on that campus within 15 working days after the trustees make that appointment.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Rationale for the bill.*** This bill emerges out of a concern regarding the process for appointment of a CSU campus president. Prior to 2011, the CSU required campus visits that included an open forum with candidate(s). The slate of final candidates who visit the campus were required to be announced in advance of their visits. This policy changed in 2011. Campus visits are now an optional component of the search process.

According to the California Faculty Association, all but a few CSU campus academic senates have adopted resolutions in favor of reinstating campus visits within the hiring process. The author asserts, "the CSU is the largest public university system in the country, and there is an urgent need for a more transparent selection process. Requiring finalists to participate in a public

campus based forum will allow for the involvement and participation of the CSU community, which includes students, parents, faculty and staff.”

2) **Current policy.** The current *Policy for the Selection of Presidents* was adopted by the Trustees in September of 2011. When there is an impending vacancy on a campus, California State University (CSU) Board of Trustees policy directs the chair of the board to appoint a Trustee Committee for the selection of the President comprised of the board’s chair, four trustees and the chancellor. A second committee is also empaneled, the Advisory Committee to the Trustees committee, to provide advice and consultation. The Advisory Committee is comprised of campus representatives, including:

- The chair of the campus Academic Senate;
- Two additional faculty representatives, selected by the campus faculty;
- A member of the campus support staff, selected by the staff;
- A student, selected by the constituted representatives of the student body;
- A member of the campus Advisory Board, selected by that board;
- An alumni of the campus, selected by the campus Alumni Association;
- A vice president or academic dean from the campus;
- The president of another CSU campus; and,
- Two additional members from constituent groups can be appointed by either the chair of the board or the chancellor to ensure diversity of the campus and/or service area is thoroughly considered during the search.

At the front end of the selection process this Advisory Committee and the Board of Trustees committee host an open forum with the campus community at the campus to gain input on the needs of the campus, and the desired attributes of the new President. These committees determine the final list of candidates to be advanced to the Board of Trustees. The chancellor and chair of the Trustees Committee determine whether to schedule a campus visit, which is optional. The process is confidential until a finalist for the position is announced.

3) **Appointments made in the last three years.** According to CSU, "beyond the campus itself, the two biggest criteria that come into play when developing a final pool of candidates is the ability to go through the process confidentially and executive compensation." According to the CSU, candidate pools have greatly increased since CSU’s presidential selection process was modified in 2011 to make a campus visit for semi-finalists optional. Fourteen campus presidents have been appointed under the new policy in the last three years. Among the campus presidents selected in 2016, all five are women, which bring the total number of women presidents to 11 of the 23 campuses.

The California State University (CSU) notes that the appointments made since the implementation of the new policy have resulted in the most diverse cohort of campus presidents in any system nationally. CSU believes eliminating the confidentiality that is afforded candidates under the new policy would adversely impact the applicant pool and that CSU would lose the opportunity to attract the best candidates both nationally and internally.

The provisions in this bill require an individual, within 15 days after being appointed president, to participate in an open forum on campus. This would ensure that the campus community has an opportunity to engage with a new president shortly after the appointment as well as allow the selection process to remain confidential for candidates competing for the position.

SUPPORT

California State University

OPPOSITION

None received on this version.

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