
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Carol Liu, Chair
2015 - 2016 Regular

Bill No: AB 2317
Author: Mullin
Version: February 18, 2016
Urgency: No
Consultant: Olgalilia Ramirez
Hearing Date: June 8, 2016
Fiscal: Yes

Subject: California State University: Doctor of Audiology degrees

SUMMARY

This bill authorizes the California State University (CSU) to award a Doctor of Audiology degree (Au.D) and establishes constraints on the funding and fees for these degrees.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Provides that the primary mission of the California State University is undergraduate and graduate instruction through the master's degree, but authorizes the CSU to offer joint doctoral degrees with the University of California (UC), or with one or more independent institutions of higher education, only as specified. (Education Code § 66010.4)
- 2) In setting forth the missions and functions of California's public and independent institutions of higher education provides, among other things, that 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. (EC § 66010.4)
- 3) 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. (EC § 66040, et seq.)
- 4) Authorizes the CSU, until January 1, 2019, to offer the Doctor of Physical Therapy (D.P.T.) degree focused solely 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. (EC § 66402, et seq.)
- 5) Authorizes the CSU, until January 1, 2019, to offer the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree programs at up to three campuses chosen by the CSU Trustees and requires the CSU to provide data, as specified, by July 1, 2016, to the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), in order for the LAO to prepare a report to the Legislature on or before January 1, 2017. (EC § 89281, et seq.)

ANALYSIS

- 1) Finds and declares the following intent of the Legislature:
 - 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, whereby doctoral and identified professional programs are limited to the University of California (UC), with the provision that the California State University (CSU) can provide doctoral education in joint doctoral programs with the UC and independent California colleges and universities. The differentiation of function has allowed California to provide universal access to postsecondary education while preserving quality; and,
 - b) Because of the need to prepare and educate increased numbers of audiologists, the State of California is granting the CSU authority to offer the Doctor of Audiology degree (Au.D) degree as an exception to the differentiation of function in graduate education that assigns sole authority among the California higher education segments to the 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.
- 2) Authorizes the CSU to award a Au.D degree, notwithstanding the Masterplan and its differentiation of mission and function, in order to meet specified audiology needs in California, subject to compliance with the following conditions:
 - a) Limits the authority to award doctorate to the discipline of audiology.
 - b) Requires that the amount of state full-time equivalent student (FTES) funding per student be at the agreed upon marginal cost calculation that the CSU receives and further:
 - i) Requires that FTES funding for the new students in these programs come from within the CSU's agreed upon enrollment levels in the annual Budget Act.
 - ii) Prohibits enrollment in these programs from altering the ratio of graduate instruction to total enrollment and diminishing the growth of enrollment of undergraduate programs.
 - c) Caps the fess that may be charged students in these programs at the rate charged for students in state-supported Au.D programs at the UC (including joint programs of the CSU and UC).
 - d) Requires that the degree be focused on preparing audiologist to provide

health care services, and that it be consistent with meeting the requirements of the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech Language Pathology.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the California Academy of Audiology, there are approximately 1,600 audiologists in the state which falls short of the number needed to provide services for the increasing number of California's with hearing and balance disorders. The author asserts that, "Doctor of Audiology degree (Au.D) programs provided by the California State University (CSU) will likely provide more affordable programs that will draw the much –needed student diversity required of today's hearing health care providers." This bill seeks to address a shortage of licensed audiologist in the state by authorizing CSU to award Au.D independently from doctoral degree programs offered at UC.
- 2) ***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 three professional doctoral degrees which include the Doctor of Education, Doctor of Physical Therapy and Doctor of Nursing. This bill would expand the type of professional doctoral degrees CSU is authorized to award.
- 3) ***Slippery slope.*** In 2001, the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA), a national professional organization representing audiologists and also the accrediting body for professional preparation programs in audiology, speech and language pathology, mandated that beginning in 2007 audiologists would be required to earn a doctorate to attain professional certification. Schools that did not offer a doctorate in audiology would lose their accreditation. At the time, the CSU offered five master's level audiology programs and one joint doctoral program between San Diego State University (SDSU) and UC San Diego (UCSD). To date, the SDSU/UCSD joint degree is the only public program in the state.

Staff notes that it was not CSU or an independent accrediting or educational evaluating organization that mandated the change in the program. Rather, it is a private professional association that, at present, is the sole accrediting agency and sole provider of individual certification and the national licensing exam.

Should a single private agency, in essence, dictate the programs that California public colleges must offer? Shouldn't the institutions play a role in determining what their educational standards should be? How many other private professional agencies will follow suit?

- 4) ***What is the Au.D?*** According to the American Academy of Audiology, an Au.D is a clinically based, professional doctoral degree, for purposes of clinical practice in this field and as such is distinguished from the doctoral program (PhD) that is research based. This bill specifically authorizes CSU to offer an Au.D degree focused on preparing audiologists to provide health care services.

- 5) ***Why not a joint degree?*** Under current law, the California State University (CSU) is authorized to offer joint degrees with either the University of California (UC) or private higher education institutions. Arguably, under this authority, the need to offer the Doctor of Audiology degree (Au.D) program could be met by expanding the type of partnership that exists between San Diego State University (SDSU) and UC San Diego (UCSD). On its own, UC does not offer Audiology degrees. It appears that at one point in time additional joint programs were in the works but derailed as a consequence of the 2008 recession.

Rather than authorizing CSU to offer its own Au.D, would it make more sense to encourage CSU to first attempt to establish a joint degree before offering its own program?

- 6) ***California's audiology programs.*** There are two Au.D programs in the state, one offered by SDSU/UCSD and the other by the University of the Pacific (UoP) a non-profit postsecondary institution. In 2014-2015 the joint SDSU/UCSD program awarded a total of 8 audiology degrees (reflects the 3-year average rate). The UoP recently launched its program in the fall of 2015 and is expected to admit 20-22 students annually.
- 7) ***Workforce trends.*** According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the need for Audiologists is expected to increase due to the growth in the aging population. It also appears that California's new born hearing screening program, which offers parents of infants delivered in California the opportunity to have their baby's hearing screened, has also increased the demand for audiologist in the state. According to the Labor Market Information Division (LMID) of the California Employment Development Department, in California, the demand for audiologists is ranked among faster growing occupations in the state with jobs expected to increase by 30 percent (300 jobs) between 2012-2022. In addition, the LMID reports that the median annual salary for Audiologist in California in 2015 was \$86,900 (\$42.34 hourly). Does the need for audiologist outweigh concerns about adhering to the principles of the Masterplan or concerns about catering to the interests of private professional organizations?

SUPPORT

California Academy of Audiology
 Hearing Healthcare Providers California (HHP)
 Numerous individuals
 Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology and Hearing Aid Dispensers Board
 The Graduate College of Education at San Francisco State University

OPPOSITION

None received.

-- END --