

Date of Hearing: April 29, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1641 (Jackson) – As Introduced January 27, 2026

Policy Committee: Higher Education Vote: 9 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: No Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill adds the tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) located in California and operated by an Indian tribal government to the definition of public higher education institutions, thereby including them within California’s public higher education system akin to the California Community Colleges (CCC), the California State University (CSU), and the University of California (UC).

FISCAL EFFECT:

No new state costs. While the bill recognizes TCUs as part of the larger California public higher education framework, they remain tribally governed institutions and separate from existing governance structures or funding formulas.

COMMENTS:

1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

California’s tribal colleges and universities deserve to be recognized for their vital role in uplifting Native American students. These institutions serve as centers of identity, resilience, and opportunity that empower a historically underrepresented group to access and thrive in higher education. By including them in the Education Code, we affirm their importance within the state and lay the foundation for long-term planning that acknowledges the essential role these institutions will continue to play in California’s higher education landscape.

2) **Background.** According to information provided by the California Indians Nations College (CINC), sponsors of the bill, California is home to one-fifth of all federally recognized Tribes with over 1.4 million people statewide who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native. California also has three TCUs: the CINC, the California Tribal College, and the Kumeyaay Community College. According to EdTrust-West, writing in support of this bill, “students who attend a TCU before attending a mainstream four-year institution are four times as likely to earn their bachelor’s degree than those who attend a mainstream four-year institution right after high school.”

3) **Related Legislation.** AB 1769 (Ramos), of the current legislative session, would require the CCC Board of Governors and the CSU Trustees, and requests the UC Regents, to develop

and implement transfer programs to facilitate the transfer of students attending TCUs to other public higher education campuses.

Analysis Prepared by: Aaron Heredia / APPR. / (916) 319-2081