

Date of Hearing: May 6, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 2068 (Connolly) – As Amended March 19, 2026

Policy Committee: Higher Education Vote: 7 - 3

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

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the Trustees of the California State University (CSU BOT), within 30 days of a campus president's written notification of their intent to resign or vacate their position, to establish a Presidential Search Committee, as prescribed, and establishes a revised presidential search process.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Ongoing General Fund costs of an unknown but potentially significant amount, possibly between \$100,000 and \$250,000 annually. According to the CSU, costs result from limited flexibility for campus presidential searches relative to the existing process and potential for failed searches requiring subsequent repeated processes.

COMMENTS:

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

CSU students, faculty, staff, and community members deserve to have their voices heard in the presidential search process. AB 2068 will promote transparency and attract a broader, more diverse pool of candidates that will be hand-picked with campus community needs in mind. Every CSU campus impacts the lives of thousands of people, all of whom should be represented in the selection of its leader.

2) **Background.** Current law authorizes the CSU BOT to appoint a campus president and the BOT have conducted presidential searches for 17 of the CSU's 23 campuses within the last six years. The CSU BOT conducts its presidential searches in accordance with its adopted policies and procedures for presidential searches, which are similar to the requirements of this bill. However, the current process the CSU BOT undertakes during a presidential search is confidential whereas this bill requires the final three candidates to conduct a public forum on campus. Under the current presidential search process the presidential search committee conducts a public form to gather input from community members but candidates are not present. Additionally, this bill establishes a set of 30-day deadlines across seven months within which the presidential search committee must execute specified tasks, which is in contrast to the more flexible existing timeline that the chancellor and executive staff determine, typically six-to-nine months total.

Supporters of this bill, such as the California Faculty Association (CFA), claim the current process is a “top-down approach” wherein the CSU BOT and CSU chancellor have final decision power. CFA argues that gathering “comprehensive input from the local community provides multiple perspectives on institutional needs, and this process may attract a broader, more diverse pool of candidates.” However, the bill’s requirements, particularly regarding the mandated timelines for each step of the search, may present logistical difficulty for the CSU BOT to comply with. For example, the CSU Office of the Chancellor, writing in opposition of this bill states that the existing structure “ensures that shared governance and stakeholder perspectives are fully integrated while maintaining a coordinated and effective search process.” Further, the CSU warns “compressed timelines would limit the ability of highly qualified candidates—often sitting presidents or senior leaders—to engage in the process, potentially excluding strong candidates who cannot meet accelerated deadlines.”

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