

Date of Hearing: April 21, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Mike Fong, Chair

AB 2301 (Soria) – As Introduced February 19, 2026

SUBJECT: Community colleges: Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing Pilot Program

SUMMARY: Requires the California Community College (CCC) Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO) to develop a Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing (BSN) Pilot Program that authorizes select community college districts (CCD) to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree. The bill would limit the pilot program to 10 CCDs statewide and would require the CCCCCO to identify and select eligible community college districts based on specified criteria. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires that, notwithstanding existing law, the CCCCCO to develop a BSN Pilot Program that authorizes select CCDs to offer a BSN degree.
- 2) Specifies that the pilot program will be limited to 10 CCDs statewide. The CCCCCO will identify and select eligible CCDs based on the following criteria:
 - a) The CCCCCO is encouraged to ensure there is equitable access between the northern, central, and southern parts of the state to the pilot program;
 - b) Priority will be given to CCDs located in underserved nursing areas;
 - c) Priority will be given to CCDs where the service area of the CCD includes communities with persistent poverty; and,
 - d) The CCDs must have a nationally accredited nursing program.
- 3) Requires a CCD selected for the pilot program to continue to offer an associate degree in nursing (ADN) program.
- 4) Specifies that the total number of ADN and BSN students at a CCD will be limited to the CCD’s ADN class size approved by the Board of Registered Nursing, and the total number of participants in a pilot program established pursuant to this article will be limited to 25% of that class size, or 35 students, whichever is greater.
- 5) CCDs without a nationally accredited nursing program, but that are in “candidate” status, may be provisionally selected to participate in the pilot program, and may commence the program upon final accreditation. Regarding this provision, priority will be given to CCDs located in the central valley and the Inland Empire. If a CCD that is provisionally selected is found to be making untimely progress toward accreditation, after notice and an opportunity to cure, the chancellor’s office may withdraw the provisional selection and may select a different CCD to participate in the pilot program.
- 6) Requires the CCCCCO to develop a process designed to assist CCD with nursing programs that are applying for national accreditation for the purpose of qualifying for the pilot

program, and that assistance will be made available to community college districts upon request.

- 7) Requires that each participating CCDs give priority registration for enrollment in the pilot program to students with an ADN from that CCD.
- 8) Requires the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) to conduct an evaluation of the pilot program to determine the effectiveness of the program and the need to continue or expand the program. The evaluation will include, but is not limited to, all of the following:
 - a) How many, and which specific, CCDs applied for the pilot program;
 - b) The number of pilot programs implemented, including information identifying the number of enrollments and degree recipients;
 - c) Which of the selected CCDs developed a pilot program in an underserved nursing area;
 - d) Which CCDs were selected to participate in the pilot program and why they were selected;
 - e) The pilot program costs and the funding sources that were used to finance each of the pilot programs;
 - f) The cost charged to students, including tuition and any additional fees;
 - g) The extent to which instruction was provided in person or online;
 - h) Current completion rates, if available, for each cohort of students participating in a pilot program;
 - i) Time-to-degree rates and completion rates for each pilot program;
 - j) The extent to which each pilot program established as specified is in compliance with the requirements of this proposal;
 - k) Other factors to consider when expanding BSN opportunities across the state; and,
 - l) Recommendations on whether and how the authorization establishing the pilot program should be extended.
- 9) Requires each participating CCD to submit the information necessary for the evaluation conducted pursuant to paragraph 8) above, as determined by the LAO, to the CCCCO. Requires the CCCCO to provide the information received from the CCDs to the LAO upon request.
- 10) Requires the results of the evaluation to be submitted to the Legislature, as specified, on or before July 1, 2034.

- 11) Specifies that provisions of current law regarding CCC baccalaureate degrees, as specifies, does not apply to a BSN offered pursuant to this proposal.
- 12) Defines, for purposes of this proposal, hat “underserved nursing area” means a registered nurse shortage area designated at a high-, medium-, or low-severity level as identified by the Department of Health Care Access and Information.
- 13) Specifies that the provisions of this proposal remain in effect only until January 1, 2036, and as of that date is repealed.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Differentiates the missions and functions of public and independent institutions of higher education. Under these provisions:
 - a) The primary mission of the California State University (CSU) is to offer undergraduate and graduate instruction through the master’s degree in the liberal arts and sciences and professional education including teacher education. The CSU is authorized to establish two-year programs only when mutually agreed upon by the Trustees and the CCC Board of Governors (BOG). The CSU is also authorized to jointly award the doctoral degree with the University of California (UC) and with one or more independent institutions of higher education.
 - b) The UC is authorized to provide undergraduate and graduate instruction and has exclusive jurisdiction in public higher education over graduate instruction in the professions of law, medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine. The UC is also the primary state-supported academic agency for research.
 - c) The independent institutions of higher education are required to provide undergraduate and graduate instruction and research in accordance with their respective missions.
 - d) The mission and function of the CCC is the offering of academic and vocational instruction at the lower division level, and the CCC are authorized to grant the Associate in Arts and the Associate in Science degrees. The community colleges are also required to offer learning supports to close learning gaps, English as a Second Language instruction, and adult noncredit instruction, and support services which help students succeed at the postsecondary level. (Education Code (EDC) Section 66010.4)
- 2) Authorizes the BOG of the CCC to establish permanent district baccalaureate degree programs, and provided that only 15 baccalaureate degree programs are approved during each application period allowing for a total of 30 baccalaureate degree programs per academic year. Additionally, existing law:
 - a) Specifies that CCDs, as part of the baccalaureate degree program, will have the additional mission to provide high-quality undergraduate education at an affordable price for students and the state.
 - b) Requires the Chancellor of the CCC to consult with and seek feedback from the Chancellor of the CSU, the President of the University of California (UC), and the

President of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) on proposed baccalaureate degree programs, as specified, and establishes a mechanism for the assessment, consultation, and approval of programs where duplication is identified, as specified;

- c) Requires a CCD to continue to offer an associate degree program in the same academic subject for which baccalaureate degree program has been approved, unless the CCD has received approval from the CCC Chancellor to eliminate the associate degree program, and requires the CCC Chancellor to evaluate both changes to the labor market viability of an associate degree and changes to the minimum education required to maintain program accreditation when making a decision to authorize the elimination of an associate degree program; and,
 - d) Specifies that the total number of baccalaureate degree programs offered by a CCD, at any time, does not exceed 25% of the total number of associate degree programs offered by the CCD, including associate degrees for transfer. (EDC Section 78040, et seq.)
- 3) Authorizes the CSU to award professional or applied doctoral degrees statewide that do not duplicate UC doctoral degrees and satisfy certain requirements. Requires a CSU campus seeking authorization to offer a professional or applied doctoral degree to submit specified information on the proposed doctoral degree for review by the office of the Chancellor of the CSU, and approval by the CSU Board of Trustees (BOT), as provided. Authorizes a proposed doctoral degree that is approved for implementation by the BOT to be implemented at the CSU systemwide, but would limit the number of doctoral degree programs that may be offered at a California State University campus. (EDC Section 66046, et seq.)
 - 4) Authorizes the CSU to independently award the Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree focused solely on preparing administrative leaders for California public elementary and secondary schools and community colleges and on the knowledge and skills needed by administrators to be effective leaders in California public schools and community colleges. (EDC Section 66040, et seq.)
 - 5) Authorizes the CSU to offer the Doctor of Audiology (Au.D) degree; and, specifies that the Au.D degree programs at the CSU will focus 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.)
 - 6) 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 will focus 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.)
 - 7) Authorizes CSU to offer the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree programs, and specifies that the DNP offered by the CSU will 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.)

- 8) Authorizes CSU to offer the Doctor of Occupational Therapy (OTD) degree, and specifies that OTD degree programs offered by the CSU will focus 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. (EDC Section 66043, et seq.)
- 9) Authorizes CSU to offer the Doctor of Public Health (Dr.PH) degree, and specifies that DrPH degree programs offered by the CSU will focus on health and scientific knowledge translation and transformative community leadership, and will be designed to address the community public health workforce needs of California and prepare qualified professionals to be leaders and experienced practitioners who apply their advanced knowledge in service to California's diverse communities in areas such as community health administration, health education and promotion, and public health advocacy. (EDC Section 66044, et seq.)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: According to the author, "California's current healthcare workforce development apparatus is not equipped to handle the growing nursing needs of the state, especially in disadvantaged communities in more rural parts of the state. While California's Community College system can reach these communities and does offer associates degrees in nursing, the needs of the healthcare workforce more frequently demand a bachelor's degree. This level of degree is exclusive in California to private institutions that are prohibitively expensive or the UC and CSU systems that have limited capacity and difficulty serving areas of the state with the highest need. In order to meet our nursing workforce needs and extend these career opportunities to Californians throughout the state, we must expand the role of our community college system. AB 2301 will take the first steps in this process by allowing a limited number of campuses to expand their nursing programs to offer Bachelors of Science in nursing degree."

Master Plan for Higher Education. As outlined in the Master Plan for Higher Education and by state statute, the CCCs are designated to have an open admission policy and bear the most extensive responsibility for lower-division undergraduate instruction. Its three primary areas of mission include education leading to associates degrees and university transfer, career technical education, and basic skills. The primary mission of the CSU is undergraduate and graduate instruction through the master's degree. The UC was granted the sole authority to independently offer doctoral degrees.

Notwithstanding the differentiation of the mission envisioned by the Master Plan, as outlined in statute, the Legislature authorized the CSU to go beyond its original mission to offer six professional doctoral degrees which include the Au.D, Ed.D, D.P.T., DNP, OTD, and Dr.PH. Each program was individually approved through legislation. Fees were capped at the rate charged at the UC, no additional funding was provided by the state, and these programs were to be implemented without diminishing or reducing enrollment in undergraduate programs. Additionally, the CSU programs that offer applied doctorates were not duplicative of degrees offered by UC.

Parallel expansion. SB 850 (Block), Chapter 747, Statutes of 2014, authorized the CCC BOG, in consultation with the CSU and the UC, to establish a baccalaureate degree pilot program. The pilot program allowed up to 15 participating CCDs to offer one baccalaureate degree program each to meet local workforce needs as long as it was not duplicating a baccalaureate degree

program already offered by the CSU or the UC. The LAO conducted interim and final evaluations of the pilot program.

AB 927 (Medina and Choi), Chapter 565, Statutes of 2021 made the original pilot program (SB 850 (Block) Chapter 747, Statutes of 2014) permanent, perpetually approving the original pilot programs and authorizing as many as 30 new baccalaureate degrees per year.

As of publication of this analysis there are a total of 60 approved programs across 45 colleges. Most participating campuses currently offer one program, although some campuses offer as many as three. Consistent with the provisions of SB 850 (Block), AB 927 (Medina and Choi) mandates that none of the CCC baccalaureate degree programs can duplicate programs offered by the CSU or UC.

AB 656 (McCarty), Chapter 663, Statutes of 2023, authorizes the CSU to award professional or applied doctoral degrees statewide that do not duplicate UC doctoral degrees and satisfy certain requirements.

Nursing programs in California. Graduates of associate and BSN degree programs may sit for nurse licensure exams and become licensed registered nurses. The state's Board of Registered Nursing (BRN) approves all of California's pre-licensure nursing programs offered by public and private colleges and makes decisions about the number of students that new and existing nursing programs are allowed to enroll. The number of nursing programs in the state totals 152, with 102 public, 92 associate degrees in nursing, 47 BSN, and 13 Entry Level Master's (ELM) programs.

According to the most recent BRN annual school report (2022-2023), California graduated about 13,984 students in 2022-23 from registered nursing programs, which represents a 20% increase in student completions since 2016. Associate's degree completions decreased while bachelor's degrees and ELM nursing completions increased. The number of joint associate degrees in nursing and bachelor's programs has increased over the last 10 years. The time it takes a student to graduate from a program varies by degree. An associate degree in nursing prepares students for registered nursing care in a variety of settings in two-to-three years, whereas a bachelor's degree takes about four years to train students for registered nursing care as well as administrative and leadership positions. An ELM is a one- to two- year program for baccalaureate degree holders in other fields seeking to become registered nurses. All schools are required to provide clinical instruction with clinical placement in a health care facility in each phase of the educational process. Students must pass a national licensure examination to earn a license.

Arguments in support. The CCCCCO wrote in support, noting that "AB 2301 presents a timely and necessary opportunity to expand equitable access to baccalaureate nursing education by leveraging the strength of community college nursing programs. California currently faces a projected 18 percent registered nurse shortage by 2037, with the most severe impacts concentrated in rural and underserved regions. At the same time, demand for BSN-prepared nurses continues to outpace supply. In 2023–24, there were 19,939 qualified BSN applications for just 9,812 enrollment slots statewide, leaving tens of thousands of students without access to a pathway forward. AB 2301 provides them with an opportunity to earn a BSN, which has dual benefit to the state by expanding the pipeline of professional nurses. address these challenges by expanding affordable, local BSN pathways for our students"

The CCCCCO continued, noting that CCCs “...can address regional health disparities by increasing baccalaureate degree attainment in regions that do not provide equitable access to BSN programs. The California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) found that the BSN pathway is now twice as common as ADNs, yet education levels are unevenly distributed throughout the state. Students in the Central Coast, Northern and Sierra regions, and San Joaquin Valley are more likely to pursue ADNs because they cannot afford or access BSN schools. While this crisis can be partially addressed through collaborative partnerships between community colleges and existing BSN programs, additional capacity is urgently needed to avoid nursing shortages that exacerbate regional equity gaps. Community colleges can support this critical need by scaling our ADN programs into nursing baccalaureate degrees.”

The California Hospital Association (CHA) wrote in support, stating that “California’s health care workforce crisis is only growing, with the National Center for Health Workforce projecting that by 2038, the state will be short more than 84,750 full-time nurses — the largest nursing shortage in the U.S. and a sharp increase from previous projections of 65,000 full-time nurses by 2037. Nurses are often patients’ primary point of contact, providing not just clinical care but also information, compassion, and more. They are integral to providing high-quality care, and a shortage of this magnitude would severely impact patient care statewide.

The CHA continues, writing “by expanding baccalaureate degrees in nursing to community colleges, AB 2301 would empower more students to pursue higher education in nursing, helping to meet the demand for highly qualified nurses in health care settings. Many hospitals prefer that nurses hold baccalaureate degrees, as this helps hospitals meet accreditation and quality standards; the education that AB 2301 would make possible opens more doors for graduates, increasing their opportunities for jobs and career advancement. Community colleges play a vital role in providing accessible and quality postsecondary education, particularly for students facing financial, geographical, and logistical challenges. They also serve a more diverse student population, which would help the nursing workforce better reflect its community — an important step toward better patient care and improved outcomes.”

A joint letter from the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) notes that “The shortage of health professionals in California, and particularly in rural areas of the state, has been a persistent concern for many years, and has become more acute in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the aging of the health care workforce. Rural areas with smaller populations that are farther from urban centers often have the lowest supply of health professionals per capita. Further, rural California does not have a high concentration of the four-year universities needed for graduate degree health professionals; however, often these communities have access to community college programs. However, problems are not isolated to rural areas. The Inland Empire and the Central Valley are two of the fastest growing regions in California, and they are the two areas that have the lowest per capita health workforce. It’s also a challenge to recruit and retain people in the Central Valley and Inland Empire that reflect the diversity and language capabilities of these regions.”

Arguments in opposition. The CSU Chancellor’s Office wrote in opposition, stating that “CSU universities offer several online Associate Degrees in nursing (ADN) to BSN programs which serve rural students and allow them to fulfill all upper division coursework remotely while a community health clinical requirement is completed in the student’s local area. Twenty CSU

campuses offer ADN-to-BSN programs, and the CSU partners with 49 community colleges on concurrent ADN-to-BSN pathways to further shorten time to completion. Since 2017, the CSU has consistently graduated more than 1,000 students each year through these programs. We believe these programs are the most appropriate and proven path forward to achieve an increase in the number of nurses.”

Further, the CSU notes that they believe “the bill also raises several concerns about the potential impacts on California’s higher education segments. AB 2301, like several measures introduced this session, expands or alters higher education authorities without fully accounting for the operational, financial, and administrative impacts on institutions and the state. We believe that any proposal that shifts institutions’ roles should include, at minimum, statewide duplication standards to ensure efficient use of state resources and quality metrics to ensure positive student outcomes. Additionally, a full fiscal analysis across higher education segments and K-12 to understand how these degree expansions will impact Prop. 98 funding distributions and each segment’s core mission. Changes in intersegmental responsibilities of this scale warrant a comprehensive evaluation to ensure that unintended consequences are fully considered and addressed. Given the potential statewide implications on all higher education segments, we believe this issue would benefit from a larger, more inclusive conversation involving all parties. The CSU welcomes this conversation and is ready to engage on a balanced approach that is student-centered, builds on the strengths of each segment’s mission, and preserves fiscal sustainability of California’s higher education system.”

The Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) also wrote in opposition, stating “the independent California college and university (ICCU) sector is a leading producer of the nursing workforce in the state. Over 25 institutions within the sector offer nursing degrees, and ICCUs collectively produce 51% of the four year and advanced degree holders educated within the state. As outlined in a letter we jointly submitted earlier this year alongside our four-year segmental counterparts and the California Association of Colleges of Nursing, we have several ideas for ways in which the state can make improvements to the nursing education regulatory and policy space to expand opportunities for nursing students.”

AICCU also noted that their “...concerns with this proposal are consistent with our concerns expressed in prior proposals to expand baccalaureate degree authority for nursing, including:

- 1) The bill does not address capacity constraints to the nursing pipeline such as the availability of clinical placements.
- 2) Research by UC San Francisco suggests that the statewide nursing gap is projected to close by 2028. While there are pertinent discussions to have about regional workforce needs, we believe there are other policy considerations the Legislature could consider to address those in place of new degree authority for community colleges.
- 3) Existing online BSN programs are viable options for many students in rural communities. While we acknowledge that access to high-speed internet remains an issue in some rural communities, we believe that student data from CalBright College’s 2024 Milestones Report indicates that students in 34 of the state’s 40 rural counties are able to access online coursework.

Rather than compound the existing challenges in the nursing educator pipeline, we believe that the Legislature should instead look to incentivize and promote collaborative, intersegmental partnerships through models such as concurrent enrollment and accelerated pathways.”

Is this an appropriate solution? If it is the desire of the Legislature to expand BSN degree programs, arguably a more effective and efficient alternative exists that do not require a departure from the CCC’s traditional mission.

Improving alignment between CCC and the universities could increase the number of CCC students who ultimately obtain a bachelor’s degree and reduce the amount of time students take to obtain their degree. As noted in their letter of opposition, CSU has helped to develop over 30 concurrent enrollment and online programs. For example, the Tri- County Nursing Pathway is a partnership between Riverside City College and two CSU campuses (Fullerton and San Bernardino) that allows associate degree nursing students to concurrently obtain their bachelor’s degrees. Students can enroll in CSU courses while still completing their associate degree requirements, allowing them to obtain their BSN degree with only six additional months of coursework.

As noted in CSU’s letter, the FY 24-25 budget contained \$60 million annually for five years to establish the Rebuilding Nursing Infrastructure Grant Program. This program is intended to develop and expand CCC BSN partnerships, including established partnerships with the CSU, the UC, or independent institutions of higher education.

The Governor wrote in his veto of AB 1400 (Soria) of 2025, which is substantively similar to AB 2104 (Soria) of 2024, that “Last year, I vetoed a nearly identical bill, citing two primary reasons that continue to persist. First, the 2024 Budget Agreement included \$60 million per year, from 2025-26 to 2028-29, for the Rebuilding Nursing Infrastructure Grant Program, which may be used to develop or expand BSN partnerships with UC, CSU, and independent nonprofit higher education institutions. These partnerships have proven successful in expanding BSN access for community college students and increasing the number of BSN degree recipients. All segments of higher education must continue to collaborate on building these programs, and returning this bill will ensure those collaborative efforts are not undermined.”

The Governor continued that, “. . .in recent years, both the CCC and the CSU have been authorized to offer independent programs outside of their traditional roles, provided they do not duplicate degree offerings of other public segments. I encourage the CCC system to focus on implementing this expanded authority and to ensure that it can continue to make progress on the unique and vital role the CCC plays in serving its students and the state. Given these significant changes, a pause should be maintained to understand their full impact before additional authorities are granted.”

The Committee may wish to consider all of the following:

- 1) *Does this bill create additional competition for limited nursing placement slots?*
- 2) *Is this bill consistent with recent budget action, given that Legislature has allocated significant resources in the Rebuilding Nursing Infrastructure Act to increase nursing partnerships?*

- 3) *Should the Legislature continue to expand the authority of the segments to offer independent programs, or should efforts be made to foster collaboration and synergy between all higher education campuses to meet regional needs?*

Higher education coordination. All of California's public education institutions share a commitment to work together to ensure that parts of the system work for all Californians. Since the defunding of the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) in 2011, California has not had a statewide coordinating entity for higher education. Prior to its demise, the role of the CPEC included academic program review to coordinate the long-range planning of the state's public higher education systems as a means to ensure that the segments were working together to carry out their individual missions while serving the state's long-range workforce and economic needs.

The absence of a higher education coordinating entity has hindered the state's ability to review degree programs to ensure alignment with state and workforce needs. In its place, changes to higher education's blueprint are being made one legislative proposal at a time in a piecemeal way, which has arguably resulted in an uncoordinated and fragmented system. Although this bill is limited to one community college baccalaureate degree program, it establishes a precedent for permitting duplication of degree programs and could expand CCC's ability to establish baccalaureate degrees independently from California's other public universities.

In 2025 the Governor signed AB 1098 (Fong & Padilla), Chapter 446, Statutes of 2025, establishing the California Education Interagency Council (Council) within the Government Operations Agency to align education and workforce systems, support adult skill development, and address the changing nature of work and the economy. The language of AB 1098 (Fong) specifically states that the Council was created to increase "collaboration across postsecondary education" and to be a "a forum for communication to discuss the impacts of proposed intersegmental and cross-sector issues.

The Committee may wish to consider all of the following:

- 1) *What relationship is there among the different missions of California's higher education segments and their differential ways in which they offer education?*
- 2) *Is it appropriate to rely solely on the legislative process to implement significant programmatic changes to higher education without any coordination or long-range plan to guide the conversation? Does the legislative process allow for consideration of priority relative to other demands in higher education?*
- 3) *How should the legislature leverage the strength of each segment to address regional or statewide workforce needs? What is the expectation for collaboration among the segments?*
- 4) *The delineation of missions serves as a guide for how and where to allocate state resources. If there is a lack of clarity about institutional missions, what will guide the future of higher education?*

Related legislation. AB 664 (Alvarez) authorizes the Chancellor of the California Community College (CCC) to allow the Southwestern Community College District (SWCCD) to offer no more than four workforce- aligned baccalaureate degrees programs, as provided. Requires

interim and final reports from the LAO, and sunsets the provisions on January 1, 2035. AB 664 is currently pending a hearing in the Senate Committee on Education.

AB 2053 (Ta) authorizes the Chancellor of the CCC to authorize the Coast CCD to offer a workforce-aligned cybersecurity baccalaureate degree program at Coastline College, as provided. Require the LAO to, on or before July 1, 2030, conduct and present to the Legislature and the Governor an interim evaluation of the baccalaureate degree program that is offered pursuant to that authorization and, on or before July 1, 2034, a final evaluation of that degree program, as provided. AB 2053 (Ta) is scheduled to be heard in the Assembly Committee on Higher Education on April 21st, 2026.

AB 2136 (Pacheco) authorizes the BOG of the CCC to authorize the Cerritos CCD to offer up to three applied baccalaureate degree programs in the fields of public safety management, paralegal studies, and automotive technology. AB 2136 (Pacheco) is scheduled to be heard in the Assembly Committee on Higher Education on April 21st, 2026.

AB 2694 (Alvarez) changes the standard governing when CCDs may offer baccalaureate degree programs, replacing a hard prohibition on duplicating CSU or UC programs with a more flexible "substantially similar within the geographic region" test that includes exceptions for unmet workforce need and lack of CSU or UC enrollment from that region. The bill also modifies the objection and consultation process, narrowing the required consultation to programs that may be substantially similar to nearby CSU or UC offerings and streamlining the written agreement process when an objection is filed. AB 2694 (Alvarez) is scheduled to be heard in the Assembly Committee on Higher Education on April 21st, 2026.

SB 960 (Cabaldon) limits the prohibition on CCC duplication of CSU baccalaureate degree programs to instances where a CSU's campus local admission area includes or overlaps with the CCC district's territory, except when the CSU program has been impacted for at least three consecutive years. SB 960 is currently pending hearing in the Assembly Committee on Appropriations.

Prior legislation. AB 1400 (Soria), of 2025, would have required Chancellor of the CCC to develop a BSN Pilot Program that authorizes select community college districts to offer a BSN degree. AB 1400 was vetoed by the Governor. Selections of the veto message can be found on 9 above.

AB 1098 (Fong), Chapter 446, Statutes of 2025, is described in *Higher education coordination* above.

SB 155 (Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review), Chapter 71, Statutes of 2024, created Rebuilding Nursing Infrastructure Grant Program to expand nursing programs and partnerships, address nursing shortages, and increase, educate, and maintain the next generation of registered nurses through the community college system. The Budget Act of 2024 supported this program with \$60 million Proposition 98 General Fund per year for five years, starting in 2024-25, with CCC Strong Workforce Program funding.

AB 2401 (Soria) of 2024, would have required Chancellor of the CCC to develop a BSN Pilot Program that authorizes select community college districts to offer a BSN degree. AB 2401 (Soria) was vetoed by the Governor.

SB 895 (Roth) of 2024, would have required the CCC Chancellor's Office to establish a Community College BSN Pilot Program that would authorize 10 community college districts to offer a BSN degree. AB 895 (Roth) was vetoed by the Governor, and the veto message was substantively similar to the veto message of AB 2401 (Soria) detailed on page 9 of this analysis.

AB 656 (McCarty), Chapter 663, Statutes of 2023, authorized the CSU to award professional or applied doctoral degrees statewide that do not duplicate UC doctoral degrees and satisfy certain requirements. Required a CSU campus seeking authorization to offer a professional or applied doctoral degree to submit specified information on the proposed doctoral degree for review by the office of the Chancellor of the CSU, and approval by the CSU Board of Trustees, as provided.

AB 1311 (Soria), Chapter 126, Statutes of 2023, required the LAO to conduct an assessment, on or before January 1, 2025, evaluating the efficacy of existing programs in allied health jointly offered between campuses of the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California. Required the final assessment to be reported, in writing, to the Legislature and the Governor on or before January 1, 2025, as specified.

SB 684 (Hueso), Chapter 936, Statutes of 2022, authorized CSU to offer the DrPH degree, and specified that DrPH degree programs offered by the CSU will focus on health and scientific knowledge translation and transformative community leadership.

AB 927 (Medina and Choi), Chapter 565, Statutes of 2021, removed the cap on the total number of baccalaureate degree programs allowed within the CCC system and eliminates the January 1, 2027, sunset date of the statewide baccalaureate degree pilot program, thereby permanently authorizing the offering of baccalaureate degree programs at CCCs.

SB 874 (Hill) of 2020, would have extended the operation of the statewide baccalaureate degree pilot program indefinitely. The bill would have removed the requirements that the program consist of a maximum of 15 community college district programs and for a student to commence a program by the end of the 2022–23 academic year. SB 874 was held in the Senate Committee on Education due to bill restrictions from COVID-19.

AB 829 (Bloom), Chapter 183, Statutes of 2019, authorized CSU to offer the OTD degree, and specifies that OTD degree programs offered by the CSU will focus 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.

SB 577 (Dodd), Chapter 603, Statutes of 2018, established the CCC Teacher Credentialing Partnership Pilot Program, awarding grants to collaboratives of one or more teacher-credentialing higher education institutions partnering with one or more community colleges for the purpose of offering teacher credentialing programs at community colleges.

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.

SB 769 (Hill) of 2017, would have extended the operation of the statewide baccalaureate degree pilot program until July 1, 2028. SB 769 was held in the Assembly Committee on Appropriations.

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.

SB 850 (Block), Chapter 747, Statutes of 2014, authorized the CCC BOG, in consultation with the CSU and the UC, to establish a baccalaureate degree pilot program. The pilot program allows up to 15 participating community college districts to offer one baccalaureate degree program each to meet local workforce needs as long as it does not duplicate a baccalaureate degree program already offered by the CSU or the UC.

AB 661 (Block) of 2011, authorized Grossmont-Cuyamaca and the San Mateo Community College districts to offer one baccalaureate degree pilot program per campus. AB 661 was heard and passed in the Assembly Higher Education Committee by a vote of 6-0 but was moved to the inactive file on the Assembly Floor.

AB 2400 (Block) of 2010, authorized the San Diego, Grossmont-Cuyamaca and San Mateo Community College districts to establish baccalaureate degree pilot programs. No vote was taken and AB 2400 was held in the Assembly Higher Education Committee.

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

United Nurses Associations of California/union of Health Care Professionals (Sponsor)
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO
Antelope Valley Community College District
Association of California Community College Administrators
Calbright College
California Community College Baccalaureate Association
California Community College Independents
California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
California Hospital Association
California Physicians Alliance
California School Employees Association

California Workforce Association
Chabot Las Positas Community College District
Chief Executive Officers of the California Community Colleges Board
Citrus College
College of the Redwoods
College of the Siskiyous
Contra Costa Community College District
Copper Mountain Community College District
Courage California
El Camino Community College District
Faculty Association of California Community Colleges
Feather River College
Foothill-de Anza Community College District
Foundation for California Community Colleges
Glendale Community College
Hartnell Community College District
Improve Your Tomorrow, INC.
Cuesta College
Kern Community College District
Los Angeles Unified School District
Mendocino - Lake Community College District
Merced Community College District
Michelson Center for Public Policy
Nextgen California
North Orange County Community College District
Northern California Apprenticeship Network (NCAN)
Palomar Community College District
Pasadena Area Community College District
Providence
Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC)
San Bernardino Community College District
San Jose-evergreen Community College District
Santa Clarita Community College District - College of the Canyons
Santa Monica Community College District
Sharp Healthcare
Sierra Community College District
South Orange County Community College District
Southwestern Community College District
State Center Community College District
Student Debt Crisis Center
Student Senate for California Community Colleges
Ventura County Community College District
Victor Valley Community College District
West Hills Community College District
West Kern Community College District
Western Center on Law and Poverty

Opposition

Association of Independent California Colleges & Universities (AICCU)
California Faculty Association
California State University, Office of the Chancellor

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