

Date of Hearing: April 29, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 2572 (Fong) – As Amended March 16, 2026

Policy Committee: Higher Education Vote: 10 - 0

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

**SUMMARY:**

This bill authorizes the California State University (CSU) to award doctorate degrees jointly with one or more independent institutions of higher education without the approval of the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC).

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

No new state costs. According to the CSU, since this bill does not require the CSU to award these degrees and it only changes the process by which CSU may offer joint degrees, the bill has no fiscal effect.

**COMMENTS:**

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

AB 2572 makes several updates to current law, ensuring that CSU campuses can offer joint undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degree programs with independent institutions and international institutions of higher education. CSU campuses serve the largest and most diverse student body in the country, including many first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students who otherwise might not have access to graduate or doctoral programs. AB 2572 supports CSU's efforts to deliver relevant and necessary education to California's students.

2) **Background.** Traditionally, CSU has provided education toward baccalaureate degrees and the University of California (UC) has provided education toward baccalaureate degrees and doctoral degrees. AB 656 (McCarty), Chapter 663, Statutes of 2023, authorizes the CSU to award professional or applied doctoral degrees statewide, provided there are not more than 10 new doctoral degree disciplines pursuant to the bill per academic year and the new degrees do not duplicate doctoral degrees offered by the UC. Prior to this bill, the Legislature authorized the CSU to go beyond its original mission to offer six professional doctoral degrees. AB 2633 (Alvarez), Chapter 729, Statutes of 2024 also authorized the CSU to award undergraduate, graduate, and professional or applied doctoral degrees jointly with international institutions of higher education.

Current law establishes CPEC as the statewide postsecondary education coordinating and planning agency. While CPEC is still established in statute, it has not received funding for over a decade and is no longer operational. One of CPEC's duties in current law is to provide approval to CSU proposals to award doctoral degrees jointly with independent institutions of higher education. Because current law requires CPEC approve these programs and CPEC no longer operates, CSU has not pursued new joint doctoral programs with independent institutions in recent years.

This bill authorizes the CSU to offer doctoral degrees jointly with an independent higher education institution without the requirement for CPEC approval.

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