

Date of Hearing: May 6, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 2660 (Alvarez) – As Amended April 27, 2026

Policy Committee:	Higher Education	Vote:	10 - 0
	Education		9 - 0

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

**SUMMARY:**

This bill establishes Cal-Bridge as an intersegmental partnership program between the California Community Colleges (CCC), the California State University (CSU), and the University of California (UC) to promote STEM pathways and resources for students. The bill also establishes the ENLACE program as an independent program working in collaboration with Cal-Bridge as a component of the state’s STEM education ecosystem.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

- 1) Ongoing General Fund cost pressures of an unknown amount but likely in the millions of dollars for the Legislature to appropriate funding to support the operation and participation in the Cal-Bridge program by the UC, CSU, and CCC systems.

The Legislature most recently appropriated \$5 million for the Cal-Bridge program in 2025.

- 2) Ongoing General Fund cost pressures of an unknown amount but likely in the low millions of dollars for the Legislature to appropriate funding to support the ENLACE program.

According to the ENLACE program’s website, the cost to participate in 2026 is \$7,500 per student, not including airfare or visa processing fees. ENLACE served 200 students in 2025, representing a potential annual cost to fully fund participation costs in the program of \$1.5 million. To the extent participation in the program increases because of this bill, cost pressures would increase.

**COMMENTS:**

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

The STEM public university professoriate in California does not come close to reflecting the state’s diversity. As a consequence, large numbers of students from groups underrepresented in the science and technology workforce leave STEM majors before completing their BS degree, thereby grossly underutilizing the talent of the state. California needs to enact Cal-Bridge and ENLACE to broaden opportunities by identifying and nurturing the diverse talent of all Californians.

- 2) **Background.** The Cal-Bridge Program was founded in 2014 as a partnership between UC and CSU designed for CSU students interested in pursuing a PhD in STEM fields. The

program has an executive director and is assisted by faculty and staff from various CSU and UC campuses. The Cal-Bridge program recruits under-represented CSU and CCC students entering their junior year at a CSU. Once a student has joined, the student receives intensive faculty mentoring, substantial need-based scholarships up to \$10,000 per year, professional development, and summer research opportunities.

The National Science Foundation funded the program until 2022. Since then, the Legislature has provided funding multiple times through the annual budget act, most recently with \$5 million in the 2025 budget act. Provisional language stipulates the funds be used to support fellowships, undergraduate research, salaries and benefits for postdoctoral students, scholarships for students prior to their first PhD year, faculty professional development, and administration of the program.

ENLACE is a summer research program established in 2013 at UC San Diego and pairs Californian and Mexican 11th grade or undergraduate students for a seven-week immersive research experience in a STEM field relevant to the CaliBaja region. The program provides mentorship, academic support, and research opportunities for students and aims to diversify California's STEM workforce in research, industry, and healthcare through providing opportunities in STEM fields to typically underrepresented students.

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