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# SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair  
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

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## **AB 2660 (Alvarez) - Public postsecondary education: intersegmental partnerships: STEM education**

**Version:** June 24, 2026

**Urgency:** No

**Hearing Date:** June 29, 2026

**Policy Vote:** ED. 7 - 0

**Mandate:** No

**Consultant:** Lenin Del Castillo

**Bill Summary:** This bill establishes the Cal-Bridge Program and ENLACE Program as intersegmental science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) pathway initiatives to increase the number and diversity of students pursuing STEM doctors of philosophy (PhDs) and entering California's STEM workforce.

### **Fiscal Impact:**

- While the state has provided funding in the annual Budget Act for the Cal-Bridge Program in recent years, codifying the program in statute could lead to ongoing General Fund cost pressures in the millions of dollars each year to permanently support its operations. The 2025 Budget Act includes \$5 million for the program. This bill could also result in additional General Fund cost pressures in the low millions of dollars each year to support the ENLACE program on a permanent basis.
- The UC estimates General Fund costs of between \$2.5 million and \$5 million each year for systemwide administrative staff and faculty time, which includes staff on campus to administer and track information regarding participation and funding as well as buying out faculty time as needed for supporting students and advising.
- The CSU estimates General Fund costs in the low to mid-millions of dollars each year for systemwide operating costs. This includes faculty release time, program coordinators which would be required on each campus, advising, tracking and reporting infrastructure, and intersegmental coordination.
- The Chancellor's Office indicates that the implementation costs for community colleges should be minor.

**Background:** Existing law establishes the Donahoe Higher Education Act, setting forth the mission of the California Community Colleges (CCCs), the California State University (CSU), and the University of California (UC).

Existing law establishes the California State Summer School for Mathematics and Science (COSMOS) to create a multidisciplinary academic development program in mathematics and science and to enable pupils with demonstrated academic excellence in mathematics and science to receive intensive educational enrichment in these subjects.

**Proposed Law:** This bill establishes the Cal-Bridge Program as a fully intersegmental partnership program between the CCC, CSU, and UC that is independent of the CCC, CSU, and UC, but is administratively housed at either a CSU or UC campus.

This bill establishes the ENLACE Program as an operationally independent program that works in collaboration with the Cal-Bridge Program for the purpose of serving as a critical component of the state's STEM education ecosystem. The ENLACE Program is to operate as an intersegmental STEM pathway program to serve students in high school and undergraduate studies across all STEM disciplines.

This bill requires the recruitment of CCC, CSU, and UC students majoring in STEM disciplines into the Cal-Bridge Program and requires that the Cal-Bridge Program have specified goals, including; preparing students to apply to PhD programs in STEM disciplines, particularly UC STEM PhD programs; providing summer research experiences for community college and CSU undergraduates to prepare them for PhD programs or the California STEM workforce; and supporting students to become PhD scholars and preparing them to become competitive postsecondary faculty candidates and leaders in California's technology industry.

This bill requires that the Cal-Bridge Program consist of the following interrelated programs:

1. The Cal-Bridge Undergraduate Program, which is to provide specified types of support, including financial, mentorship, professional development, and research opportunities to CCC and CSU undergraduate scholars majoring in the physics, astronomy, computer science, computer engineering, mathematics, and statistics disciplines with the goal of supporting them to successfully apply to STEM PhD programs.
2. The Cal-Bridge Summer Program, which is to provide research opportunities for Cal-Bridge undergraduate and community college scholars to conduct summer research at UC and other research sites.
3. The Cal-Bridge Doctoral Program, which is to provide specified types of support including financial, professional development and mentorship to students in CSU and UC STEM PhD programs, particularly those in the UC system, to prepare them to become competitive postsecondary faculty candidates or leaders in California's technology industry.
4. The Cal-Bridge Postdoctoral Program, which is to provide additional preparation for postdoctoral scholars to become competitive faculty candidates, as specified.
5. The Cal-Bridge First Academic Scholar Training (FAST) Program, which is to provide preparation for CCC students to join the California STEM workforce, and for those interested, to successfully apply to the Cal-Bridge Undergraduate Program. The Cal-Bridge FAST Program is to include computer programming workshops, small research projects, and research opportunities in STEM disciplines specifically targeted at the CCC students.

6. The ENLACE Program, which is to operate independently from, but in collaboration with the Cal-Bridge Program toward shared statewide STEM workforce development goals, is to consist of the ENLACE High School and Undergraduate Program, as specified.

This bill requires that the Cal-Bridge Program and the ENLACE Program seek areas for formal and informal collaboration to enhance their joint missions of developing a diverse and robust California STEM workforce.

This bill specifies how funding appropriated for purposes of the Cal-Bridge Program may be used, including financial aid to students and administrative salaries.

This bill would require the program to submit an annual programmatic progress report to the UCOP that includes data on implementation of the program's activities and the allocation of funding for those activities.

**Staff Comments:** The existing Cal-Bridge Program is a partnership between UC, CSU, and CCC faculty that aims to increase the number of CSU students from groups traditionally underrepresented in astronomy and physics who complete bachelor's degrees and enter a PhD program at one of the participating UC campuses. The partnership is between 9 UCs, 22 CSUs, and CCCs with over 200 faculty from the three systems participating. Scholars are recruited from CSU and CCC campuses across the state with the help of local faculty or staff liaisons at each campus. To be eligible for the Cal-Bridge Program, applicants must be 18 years old, enrolled in a CSU campus with a physics, astronomy, computer science, or mathematics major, or a CCC student transferring to a 4-year institution. The Cal-Bridge Program has been operating since 2014 and includes participation from CCC, CSU, and UC faculty and campuses throughout the state. This bill would codify existing Cal-Bridge Program in statute.

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