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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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Bill No: SB 241  
Author: Cervantes (D)  
Amended: 9/2/25 in Assembly  
Vote: 21

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SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE: 7-0, 3/26/25

AYES: Pérez, Ochoa Bogh, Cabaldon, Choi, Cortese, Gonzalez, Laird

SENATE FLOOR: 39-0, 4/1/25 (Consent)

AYES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

NO VOTE RECORDED: Reyes

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 78-1, 9/8/25 - See last page for vote

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**SUBJECT:** Community colleges: personnel: qualifications

**SOURCE:** Faculty Association of California Community Colleges

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**DIGEST:** This bill requires that a community college instructor and the specified staff be a person.

*Assembly Amendments* of 9/2/25 clarifies that this bill's provisions do not prevent a community college from using artificial intelligence (AI) tools to assist in its operations or in providing services to students.

**ANALYSIS:**

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the California Community Colleges (CCC) under the administration of the Board of Governors (BOG), as one of the segments of public

postsecondary education in California. The CCC system shall be comprised of community college districts. (Education Code (EC) § 70900)

- 2) Requires the BOG to adopt regulations to establish and maintain the minimum qualifications for service as a faculty member teaching credit instruction, a faculty member teaching noncredit instruction, a librarian, a counselor, an educational administrator, an extended opportunity programs and services worker, a disabled students programs and services worker, an apprenticeship instructor, and a supervisor of health. (EC § 87356)
- 3) Provides, notwithstanding 1) above, that a person authorized to serve as a community college instructor, librarian, counselor, student personnel worker, supervisor, administrator, or chief administrative officer under a credential shall retain the right to serve under the terms of that credential, and, for that purpose, shall be deemed to possess the minimum qualifications specified for every discipline or service covered by the credential until the expiration of that credential. (EC § 87355)
- 4) Requires the BOG to adopt regulations authorizing local governing boards to employ faculty members and educational administrators who do not meet the specified minimum qualifications, subject to alternative minimum qualifications. (EC § 87359)
- 5) Requires that the instructor of record for a community college course be a person who meets minimum qualifications to serve as a faculty member teaching noncredit or credit instruction. (EC § 87359.2)

This bill:

- 1) Requires that a CCC instructor, librarian, counselor, student personnel worker, supervisor, administrator, chief administrative officer, extended opportunity programs and services worker, disabled students programs and services worker, apprenticeship instructor, or health supervisor be a person who meets the minimum qualifications to serve in that position established in current law.
- 2) States that that this bill's provisions do not prevent a community college from using AI tools to assist in its operations or in providing services to students.

## Comments

*Need for this bill.* According to the author, "The rapid development in recent years of new technology like artificial intelligence has had a massive effect not only on our society generally, but on public policy in particular. One of the most pressing

issues faced by the growing use of new technology tools has been the possible effects on human workers, particularly the threat of AI, that human workers could be replaced wholesale by artificial intelligence. In the May 2023 edition of the California Community Colleges' 'Digital Futures' newsletter, an article entitled '*Transforming Education: The Rise of AI in the California Community Colleges*' described the potential pedagogical use of AI in community colleges. It stated that 'AI could provide excellent opportunities for more individualized instruction, tutoring, and class reviews. Faculty members might use AI to create lesson plans...' While there is room for technology tools like AI to contribute in community college classrooms in California, human faculty are still necessary and best suited to teach human students. Senate Bill 241 follows up on my Assembly Bill 2370 (2024) by providing additional guardrails on the use of AI at our community colleges. It will accomplish this by expanding the list of instructor and faculty positions at our community colleges who must meet all of the minimum qualifications set by the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges to serve as faculty."

*What's the problem?* As described by the Little Hoover Commission in their 2018 report on *Artificial Intelligence (AI): A Roadmap for California*, Artificial Intelligence refers to a quality of any computer program (algorithms, data structures, and data) that can sense reason, act, and adapt like humans. It performs with near-humanlike abilities to sense, reason, or act. Fear of the potential replacement of human jobs by AI technology is a growing concern across many sectors. The rapid development of AI has significantly impacted education as these technologies offer valuable tools for enhancing instructional practices, but also bring out the need to defend the role of human faculty and other educator positions. Current law explicitly requires that the instructor of record for a community college course be a person. This bill attempts to build on that policy by requiring that a number of other positions on campus be held by a person.

*The pandemic accelerated virtual instruction.* Online instruction in higher education accelerated as a result of the COVID pandemic that necessitated distance learning. The Legislative Analyst's Office 2024 publication, Trends in Higher Education Series: Student Success demonstrates, that the rapid increase of 20% in the 2019-20 academic year and, 60% in the 2020-2021 academic year, and approximately 50% in the 2022-2023 academic year of community college courses were delivered through online instruction. Arguably, this rapid growth stimulated the use of AI technologies to support student learning, especially in virtual settings. Online courses have remained a popular option for community college students who want greater flexibility in how they access their education, particularly for those who are place-bound or have work and family obligations.

*AI integration in higher education.* Postsecondary educational institutions are called on to assure success in educational programs, and with that comes a personal element to effectively educate and foster personal growth among individuals. Human faculty members have the ability to simulate critical and creative thinking, inspire them, cultivate empathy and moral conviction, and respond to unexpected situations. The Faculty Association of California Community Colleges, the sponsor of this measure, asserts, “Teaching is a profound human endeavor that requires nuanced interpersonal skills, subject matter expertise, and the ability to engage students in ways that machines cannot replicate... AI, while useful for certain supplementary functions, lacks the cognitive and emotional intelligence to truly replace human faculty. Allowing AI to take over direct instruction could severely compromise education quality.” It is commonly argued that when establishing policies regarding the integration of AI, the Legislature should strive to strike a balance that fosters innovation while minimizing adverse consequences in other aspects of civic life. The same principle applies to education. AI can provide numerous benefits in augmenting traditional methods of learning and instruction. Examples of this capability include offering interactive simulations, virtual reality experiences, and intelligent tutoring systems, as well as improving accessibility for students with disabilities with text-to-speech and speech-to-text technology. The California State University’s recent announcement of becoming an AI-empowered higher education system in integrating AI learning and teaching tools across the system demonstrates AI’s growing influence in educational settings. This bill aims to strike an appropriate balance in preserving positions held by humans in academia without prohibiting the integration of AI technology to enhance instructional practices.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: No Local: No

**SUPPORT:** (Verified 9/8/25)

Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (source)

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

California Teachers Association

CFT- A Union of Educators & Classified Professionals, AFT, AFL-CIO

**OPPOSITION:** (Verified 9/8/25)

None received

**AYES:** Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Fariás, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis,

Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NOES: DeMaio

NO VOTE RECORDED: Nguyen

Prepared by: Olgalilia Ramirez / ED. / (916) 651-4105

9/8/25 19:32:00

\*\*\*\* **END** \*\*\*\*