

Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 960 (Cabaldon) – As Amended June 25, 2026

Policy Committee: Higher Education

Vote: 6 - 1

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill authorizes a community college district (CCD) to offer a baccalaureate degree program in duplication of a California State University (CSU) degree program if the local service area of the campus of the CSU and the respective CCD overlap but the CSU degree program has been impacted for three consecutive years. The bill also requires the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) to annually report to the Legislature on the status of programs approved under this expanded authority.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) No new Proposition 98 General Fund costs. According to the CCCCCO, this bill operates entirely within the existing framework established in statute authorizing the CCCCCO to approve up to 30 new baccalaureate degree programs per academic year. Under the existing framework, a CCD must demonstrate (a) full financial and operational capacity required for a new program prior to receiving approval from the CCCCCO and (b) the increased upper-division per-unit cost provides additional revenue to CCDs offering a baccalaureate degree program that effectively creates an ongoing revenue stream that serves to support the program financially by offsetting potential cost pressures. Additionally, the existing framework connects baccalaureate degree program funding to the current community college marginal cost rate for a full-time equivalent student as a means of keeping expenditures within existing Proposition 98 appropriated resources.
- 2) One-time General Fund costs likely in the tens of thousands of dollars for the CCCCCO to update the CCD application for the baccalaureate degree program, issue guidance, provide technical assistance, and complete required reporting.
- 3) No administrative costs according to the UC and CSU. However, the CSU reports it may experience cost pressures related to potential decreased enrollment, possibly in hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars (General Fund), due to reduced enrollment to the extent four-year degree students who would have otherwise enrolled at a campus of the CSU enroll in a newly established CCD baccalaureate program authorized under the provisions of this bill. The CSU reports that, across the CSU system, 36% of Fall 2025 semester enrolled students within an impacted degree program transferred from a community college, approximately 70,000 students total.

COMMENTS:

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

SB 960 is a student-centered policy that allows a California Community College to offer a bachelor's degree in a high-demand field when the regional [CSU] has been impacted in that same program for three consecutive years or if the program is not offered by the regional CSU.

2) **Background.** In 2014 the Legislature authorized the California Community Colleges Board of Governors, in consultation with the CSU and 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 provided 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.

In 2021, the Legislature permanently approved the original pilot programs and allowed authorization for as many as 30 new baccalaureate degrees per year statewide. As of publication of this analysis there are 47 approved programs across 38 community colleges. Most participating campuses offer one program. Current law continues to prohibit any of the CCC baccalaureate degree programs to duplicate any program offered by the CSU or UC, except with regard to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree programs offered by the CCC.

This bill expands the existing authority for community college-offered baccalaureate degree programs to include programs that duplicate those offered by the CSU if the CSU degree program in the overlapping service area of the CCD has been impacted for three consecutive years.

3) **Related Legislation.** AB 2694 (Alvarez), of the current legislative session, expands the existing CCD baccalaureate degree establishment process by authorizing program duplication if no substantially similar CSU or UC program exists. AB 2694 is pending hearing in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 2301 (Soria), of the current legislative session, requires the CCCCCO to develop a BSN Pilot Program limited to 10 CCDs statewide and requires the CCCCCO to identify and select eligible CCDs based on specified criteria. AB 2301 is pending hearing in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

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