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AB-656 California State University: doctoral programs. (2023-2024)

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Assembly Bill No. 656

CHAPTER 663

An act to add Article 4.92 (commencing with Section 66046) to Chapter 2 of Part 40 of Division 5 of Title 3 of, and to repeal Section 66046.3 of, the Education Code, relating to public postsecondary education.

[Approved by Governor October 10, 2023. Filed with Secretary of State October 10, 2023.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 656, McCarty. California State University: doctoral programs.

Existing law establishes the California State University, under the administration of the Trustees of the California State University, and the University of California, under the administration of the Regents of the University of California, as 2 of the segments of public postsecondary education in this state. Existing law provides for the missions and functions of these segments, and states that the University of California has the sole authority in public higher education to award doctoral degrees in all fields of learning, except that it may agree with the California State University to award joint doctoral degrees in selected fields. However, existing law authorizes the California State University to offer doctoral programs in education, audiology, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and public health without that agreement.

This bill would authorize the California State University to award professional or applied doctoral degrees statewide that do not duplicate University of California doctoral degrees and satisfy certain requirements. The bill would require a California State University campus seeking authorization to offer a professional or applied doctoral degree program pursuant to the bill to submit specified information on the proposed doctoral degree for review by the office of the Chancellor of the California State University, and approval by the trustees, as provided. The bill would authorize professional or applied doctoral degree programs that are approved for implementation by the trustees pursuant to the bill to be implemented at any California State University campus, but would limit the number of doctoral degree programs that may be offered at a California State University campus. The bill would prohibit the trustees from approving more than 10 new doctoral degree disciplines pursuant to the bill per academic year. The bill would require the Legislative Analyst's Office to conduct a systemwide evaluation of doctoral degree programs established pursuant to the bill and report the results of the evaluation to the Legislature and the Governor on or before December 31, 2028.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Article 4.92 (commencing with Section 66046) is added to Chapter 2 of Part 40 of Division 5 of Title 3 of the Education Code, immediately following Article 4.9 (commencing with Section 66044), to read:

Article 4.92. Doctoral Programs

66046. As used in this article, the following definitions apply:

- (a) "Chancellor" means the Chancellor of the CSU.
- (b) "Chancellor's office" means the office of the chancellor.
- (c) "CSU" means the California State University.
- (d) "President" means the President of the UC.
- (e) "President's office" means the office of the president.
- (f) "Proposed doctoral program" means a proposed doctoral degree program at the CSU pursuant to this article.
- (g) "Trustees" means the Trustees of the CSU.
- (h) "UC" means the University of California.

66046.1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(1) Since its adoption in 1960, the Master Plan for Higher Education has served to create the largest and most distinguished higher education system in the nation. A key component of the Master Plan for Higher Education is the differentiation of mission and function of each public higher education sector to increase access and educational opportunity for Californians. The Master Plan has a provision that allows the CSU to offer doctoral education in joint doctoral programs with the UC and independent California colleges and universities.

(2) More recently, the CSU has received legislative authority to offer independent professional or applied doctoral degrees in areas where there is an identified workforce or accreditation need that may not be fulfilled through existing education opportunities in California.

(3) The State of California is granting the CSU authority to offer professional or applied doctoral degrees statewide that do not duplicate UC doctoral degrees as an exception to the differentiation of function in graduate education that assigns sole authority among the California higher education segments to UC for awarding doctoral degrees independently. This exception to the Master Plan for Higher Education recognizes the distinctive strengths and respective missions of the CSU and the UC.

(b) Consistent with subdivision (a), and notwithstanding Section 66010.4, the CSU, in consultation with the president's office, may award professional or applied doctoral degrees statewide that do not duplicate UC doctoral degrees. In implementing this article, the CSU shall comply with all of the following requirements:

(1) Enrollment in CSU professional or applied doctoral degree programs established pursuant to this article shall not diminish enrollment in CSU undergraduate programs.

(2) CSU professional or applied doctoral degree programs established pursuant to this article shall not duplicate UC doctoral degree programs that are offered or under review by the UC. A professional or applied doctoral degree program established pursuant to this article shall be distinguished from doctoral degree programs offered by the UC.

(3) The CSU shall establish fees for professional or applied doctoral degree programs established pursuant to this article that shall be comparable to, but no higher than, those fees charged for UC doctoral degree programs.

(4) The CSU shall provide any startup and operational funding needed for professional or applied doctoral degree programs established pursuant to this article from within existing budgets for academic program support without diminishing the quality of program support offered for CSU undergraduate programs. Funding of professional or applied doctoral degree programs established pursuant to this article shall not result in reduced CSU undergraduate enrollment.

66046.2 A professional or applied doctoral degree program established pursuant to this article shall comply with all of the following limitations:

(a) A CSU campus seeking authorization to offer a doctoral degree program pursuant to this article shall submit all of the following for review by the chancellor's office, and approval by the trustees:

(1) Documentation verifying that the proposed doctoral program does not duplicate a UC doctoral degree program that is offered or under review by the UC. The CSU shall, in consultation with the Academic Senate of the CSU, and the UC is requested to, in consultation with the Academic Senate of the UC, develop and agree on criteria for assessing duplication. This criteria shall include both of the following:

- (A) Curricular and academic elements of the proposed doctoral program.

(B) Postgraduate professional job objectives for recipients of the proposed doctoral degree.

(2) Enrollment projections for the proposed doctoral program.

(3) An administrative plan for the proposed doctoral program, including, but not limited to, the funding plan for the program.

(4) Statewide workforce data relevant to the proposed doctoral program.

(b) The chancellor shall ensure all of the following for a CSU campus seeking to offer a proposed doctoral program:

(1) The chancellor notifies, in writing, and sends relevant materials on the proposed doctoral program to the president's office and the President of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities to allow for consultation on issues of duplication. Proposed doctoral programs shall be submitted for consultation once per year pursuant to a timeline that is mutually agreed upon by the CSU and the UC.

(2) The trustees shall not approve for implementation a proposed doctoral program if the president's office has, within 120 days of being notified and receiving materials for the proposed doctoral program pursuant to paragraph (1), provided written objections on the basis of duplication.

(3) A proposed doctoral program that receives written objections from the president's office in compliance with paragraph (1) shall not be approved for implementation by the trustees unless and until a letter indicating a resolution of the written objections and a mutual agreement, signed by both the chancellor and the president, in support of the CSU offering the proposed doctoral program is submitted to the Assembly Committee on Higher Education and the Senate Committee on Education.

(c) (1) Doctoral degree programs that are approved for implementation by the trustees pursuant to this article may be implemented at any CSU campus.

(2) The trustees shall not approve more than 10 new doctoral degree disciplines pursuant to this article per academic year.

(3) The total number of professional or applied doctoral degree programs offered by a CSU campus pursuant to this article shall not, at any time, exceed 25 percent of the total number of undergraduate, graduate through the master's degree, and professional and teacher education programs offered by the CSU campus.

66046.3. (a) The Legislative Analyst's Office shall conduct a statewide evaluation of the doctoral degree programs authorized pursuant to this article.

(b) On or before December 31, 2028, the Legislative Analyst's Office shall submit a report, pursuant to Section 9795 of the Government Code, to the Legislature and the Governor on the results of the evaluation.

(c) (1) The evaluation and report shall include, but are not limited to, all of the following information on the doctoral degree programs authorized pursuant to this article:

(A) The number of CSU campuses that proposed doctoral degree programs.

(B) The types of doctoral degree programs proposed by CSU campuses.

(C) The number of doctoral degree programs approved by the trustees.

(D) The number of doctoral degree programs implemented.

(E) The number of doctoral degree program proposals that received objections from UC, what the objections were, and how the objections were resolved.

(F) Enrollment and completion information on implemented doctoral degree programs.

(G) The impact of expanded doctoral degrees at the CSU pursuant to this article on the accessibility, quality, and affordability of higher education in California.

(2) The report described in paragraph (1) shall include information on the impact of expanded professional doctoral education at CSU on the accessibility, quality, and affordability of higher education in California.

(d) Pursuant to Section 10231.5 of the Government Code, this section shall become inoperative on December 31, 2030, and as of January 1, 2031, is repealed.