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AB-58 University of California, Merced: medical school. (2025-2026)

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AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 24, 2025

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2025–2026 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

NO. 58

Introduced by Assembly Member Soria

December 02, 2024

~~An act relating to postsecondary education.~~ *An act to add Article 6.4 (commencing with Section 92161) to Chapter 2 of Part 57 of Division 9 of Title 3 of the Education Code, relating to the University of California.*

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 58, as amended, Soria. ~~Postsecondary education.~~ *University of California, Merced: medical school.*

The California Constitution provides that the University of California constitutes a public trust administered by the Regents of the University of California, a corporation in the form of a board, with full powers of organization and government, subject to legislative control only for specified purposes.

Existing law creates the University of California, San Francisco, San Joaquin Valley Regional Campus Medical Education Endowment Fund. Upon an appropriation by the Legislature, existing law requires moneys in the endowment fund to be allocated to the University of California to support the annual operating costs for the development, operation, and maintenance of a branch campus of the University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine in the San Joaquin Valley, and to generate funding through investment earnings for support of medical education in the San Joaquin Valley, as provided.

This bill would request the University of California to submit a report to the Legislature, on or before August 31, 2026, on the financial requirements necessary to expand the current University of California, San Francisco and University of California, Merced medical education collaboration, the San Joaquin Valley PRIME+ program, and to transition the program into a fully independent medical school operated by the University of California, Merced. The bill would request the report to include the projected costs associated with various program components, a list of potential health facilities at which students could conduct residencies, and a timeline and milestones for the completion of an independent school of medicine at the University of California, Merced.

~~Existing law establishes the University of California, under the administration of the Regents of the University of California, the California State University, under the administration of the Trustees of the California State University, the California Community Colleges, under the administration of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, independent institutions of~~

~~higher education, as defined, and private postsecondary educational institutions, as defined, as the segments of postsecondary education in this state.~~

~~This bill would express the intent of the Legislature to enact subsequent legislation relating to postsecondary education.~~

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

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

SECTION 1. *The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:*

(a) The San Joaquin Valley historically has been among the lowest regions in educational attainment in the state. Universities in the San Joaquin Valley serve a disproportionate number of first-generation college students, many of whom also come from low-income households.

(b) Among University of California campuses, the University of California, Merced is uniquely positioned to serve a population of students from rural areas in the San Joaquin Valley that have been historically isolated, both geographically and socioeconomically, from the rest of the state, especially in regard to high-quality medical care.

(c) In addition to the University of California, Merced's mission to educate students, the university also intends to increase available workforce development opportunities in the San Joaquin Valley in sectors experiencing significant shortages in the region or state.

(d) A health workforce assessment of the San Joaquin Valley conducted in 2017 by the University of California, San Francisco found that the region has the lowest ratios of licensed medical doctors, doctors of osteopathy, nurse practitioners, and registered nurses per 100,000 residents in California.

(e) To meet the health care needs of the patient population of the San Joaquin Valley, it is the University of California, Merced's long-term intent to develop an independent medical school. As part of achieving this goal, the University of California, Merced launched, in cooperation with the University of California, San Francisco, the San Joaquin Valley PRIME+ program with its inaugural class of students entering the bachelor of science degree program at the university in 2023.

(f) The first combined San Joaquin Valley PRIME+ class will begin their medical training at the University of California, Merced campus through the partnership with the University of California, San Francisco and University of California, Merced Department of Medical Education in 2027, and graduate in 2031. However, achieving an independent medical school at the University of California, Merced, in development with the University of California, San Francisco's regional campus in the City of Fresno, to address the medically underserved across this region of California will require financial support, faculty and staff, capital investments, and a strong foundation of clinical partnerships for student rotations.

SEC. 2. Article 6.4 (commencing with Section 92161) is added to Chapter 2 of Part 57 of Division 9 of Title 3 of the Education Code, to read:

Article 6.4. University of California, Merced School of Medicine

92161. *(a) The Legislature requests the University of California to submit a report to the Legislature, on or before August 31, 2026, on the financial requirements necessary to expand the current University of California, San Francisco and University of California, Merced medical education collaboration, the San Joaquin Valley PRIME+ program, and to transition the program into a fully independent medical school operated by the University of California, Merced. The report is requested to include all of the following:*

(1) The projected costs of all of the following:

(A) Hiring new permanent full-time faculty and staff.

(B) Capital investments in facilities and infrastructure.

(C) Procurement of medical equipment and supplies needed to conduct medical research and instruction.

(D) Potential development of a program to assist medical residents with applying for physician retention programs.

(E) Transitional costs associated with establishing the University of California, Merced medical school.

(F) Development of nursing and physician assistant programs.

(2) A list of potential health facilities at which students could conduct residencies and what accommodations, if any, are needed to facilitate those residencies.

(3) If the facilities identified in paragraph (2) are determined to be insufficient to accommodate student residencies, an assessment of what prospective new medical facilities might be able to meet that need in the future.

(4) Timeline and milestones for the completion of an independent school of medicine at the University of California, Merced.

(b) A report submitted pursuant to subdivision (a) shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the Government Code.

~~SECTION 1. It is the intent of the Legislature to enact subsequent legislation relating to postsecondary education.~~