



California Postsecondary Education Commission

The Commission's Program Review Responsibilities in Senate Bill 724

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This paper outlines the Commission's program review responsibilities called for in Senate Bill 724 (Scott). It also summarizes the Commission's existing responsibilities in the area of new program review. Senate Bill 724 would permit the California State University (CSU) to independently award the Doctor of Education Degree (Ed.D.) and includes language clarifying that the Commission's existing role in reviewing proposed new programs would not change.

(c) Nothing in this article shall be construed to limit or preclude the California Postsecondary Education Commission from exercising its authority under Chapter 11 (commencing with Section 66900) to review, evaluate, and make recommendations relating to, any and all programs established under this article.

The language does not constitute CPEC approval authority such as that required for joint doctoral degrees between CSU and independent institutions, but it does require that all new independent Ed.D. program proposals submitted by CSU be subject to review and evaluation and that CPEC staff make recommendations, as is currently the case, regarding the program proposal.

Although the Commission's role in evaluating new programs under the statute is primarily advisory, it is worth noting that since the inception of its program review functions thirty years ago, no new degree program has been implemented without the Commission's recommendation that it go forward.

New mandates

The language in SB 724 requires that new independent Ed.D. program proposals must be submitted to CPEC for review and will be subject to the same review process as all new academic programs. In addition, program proposals must meet the following mandates:

- The Doctor of Education degree offered by the California State University shall focus on preparing administrative leadership for K-12 schools and community colleges.
- The Ed.D programs offered by CSU shall be offered through partnerships with K-12 schools and community colleges and those entities shall participate substantively in program design, candidate recruitment and admissions, teaching, and program assessment and evaluation.
- The program must enable professionals to earn the degree while working full time.

All of these requirements are new and will require sufficient definition and understanding by all parties to determine whether the intent of the legislation is being met in the program design, candidate recruitment, and admissions processes.

In addition to the program development and implementation requirements cited above, funding for proposed new Ed.D. programs are subject to a number of requirements in other areas, including:

- Funding for program participants must come from within CSU's planned enrollment growth of 2.5% per year from 2006 to 2010.
- After 2010, enrollments for these programs shall be within enrollment growth levels agreed to by the California State University, the Governor, and the Legislature.
- Enrollments in these programs must not alter the CSU's ratio of graduate instruction to total enrollment, and shall not come at the expense of enrollment growth in undergraduate programs.
- Funding provided from the state for each (FTES) student shall be at the agreed-upon marginal cost calculation that the California State University receives.
- Student fees shall be no higher than the rate charged for students in state-supported doctoral degree programs in education at the University of California, including joint Ed.D. programs of the California State University and the University of California.

SB 724 also requires a program evaluation to be conducted by the Department of Finance and the Legislative Analyst's Office to determine the effectiveness of the programs based on: (a) their number and ability to meet state needs, (b) employment and job placement data, (c) effect on student achievement, and (d) program costs for students and the State.

Current review process

The Commission's legislative mandate provides for both individual program review and long range planning. The formalized 5-year plans envisioned in the original legislation have evolved into an effective and comprehensive review process that emphasizes cooperation and information sharing from the initial planning phase through implementation and evaluation. To maximize limited Commission resources, new programs are not subject to review if they do not represent a substantive departure from current academic offerings, do not require additional resources or facilities, or have been subject to sufficient campus review.

The overall goals of the Commission's program review process are to safeguard the State against inefficiencies in the allocation of program resources, to ensure that new programs will meet student and societal needs, and to ensure that programs are well conceived and that they will have desired educational and social consequences.

The Commission uses specific criteria to guide its review of segmental proposals:

- Student demand
- Societal needs
- Appropriateness to the institutional and system mission
- Number of existing and proposed programs in the field
- Total costs of the program
- Maintenance and improvement of quality
- Advancement of knowledge