

**SUBJECT:** Optional training for elected college trustees

**COMMITTEE:** Higher Education — committee substitute recommended

**VOTE:** 8 ayes — Rangel, Ogden, Gallego, Goolsby, Harris, Kamel, Reyna, Rodriguez  
0 nays  
1 absent — Moreno

**WITNESSES:** For — J. William Wenrick, Dallas County Community Colleges  
Against — None

**BACKGROUND:** A requirement for two days of training of members of governing boards of colleges, universities and junior and community colleges was established by the 73rd Legislature in SB 485 by Parker. Education Code sec. 61.083(a) provides that state college and university trustees — appointed or elected — must attend a two-day training seminar in Austin conducted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and other state agencies. The seminar provides training in budgeting, policy development and governance. Trustees must attend a session during their first two years of service. The coordinating board sets a registration fee that covers the costs of the training seminar.

**DIGEST:** CSHB 1689 would remove *elected* trustees of higher education institutions from the Education Code requirement that trustees attend the state-sponsored training seminar, but continue to allow elected trustees the option of attending the seminar. The bill would take effect immediately if approved by two-thirds of the membership of each house.

**SUPPORTERS SAY:** Elected trustees of the state's local public institutions of higher education should not be included in the new training requirement enacted as their needs are different from those of appointed trustees and regents. Elected officials have to know a lot about the colleges they govern in order to get elected. Once in office, most elected trustees receive additional training to maintain voter's confidence in them.

The state should not require elected trustees to take unneeded and unwanted training by having to take the time and expense of traveling to Austin. No similar requirement is imposed on mayors and city council members, and elected college trustees should not be treated differently. For those local elected officials who may find the training seminar useful, the bill would still allow them the option of attending.

OPPONENTS  
SAY:

Elected trustees, just as much as appointees, need certain basic information to do the important work of governing institutions of higher education. A good working knowledge of the intricacies of governing a college or university is not always necessary to get elected, but is necessary to do an adequate job for the state's students and taxpayers.

The required state-sponsored training program helps elected trustees understand their position in the university or college system and alleviates problems that occur when trustees inadvertently overstep their bounds and meddle in the daily affairs and management of colleges and universities.

OTHER  
OPPONENTS  
SAY:

The problems the training program was designed to address could be more effectively dealt with if the Legislature stipulated minimum qualifications for higher education board service, to give the electorate more guidance in electing trustees.

NOTES:

HB 1689 as introduced would have made the training program optional for both appointed and elected trustees of higher education institutions. The committee substitute would continue to make training mandatory for appointees.

CSHB 420 by Ogden, which was reported favorably by the Public Education Committee on March 21, would add as a ground for removal from the board of a general academic institution failure to comply with the trustee-training requirements of Education Code 61.083(a).