

SUBJECT: Allowing UT-Tyler to offer lower division courses

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 6 ayes —Rangel, Ogden, Goolsby, Harris, Kamel, Rodriguez

0 nays

3 absent — Gallego, Moreno, Reyna

WITNESSES: For — Tom Mullins, Tyler Chamber of Commerce, A.W. Riter,Jr.

Against — Scott Nelson, former president, Texas Junior College Teachers Association.

On — William Crowe, president, Tyler Junior College

BACKGROUND: The University of Texas at Tyler, established by Chapter 76 of the Education Code, may offer junior and senior undergraduate programs and graduate programs.

DIGEST: CSHB 2187 would authorize UT-Tyler to offer lower division courses relating to an engineering degree program if the program is approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and if the courses are offered as part of a partnership agreement with junior colleges or other educational institutions. The bill would require UT-Tyler to seek and expand such partnership agreements.

In developing such partnership agreements UT-Tyler would be required to take into account the need to recruit minority and lower-income students and the cost effectiveness and other impacts of such courses on students likely to enroll and on the community as a whole.

If UT-Tyler offers lower division courses, the coordinating board would be required to adopt a formula applying the funding formula for four-year institutions to all lower division semester credit hours offered.

The bill would take immediate effect if approved by two thirds of the membership of both houses.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

By encouraging partnerships between UT-Tyler and its surrounding junior colleges CSHB 2187 would improve the continuity, quality, and efficiency of educational programs and services in the Tyler area.

Through this legislation UT-Tyler could offer its educational facilities and talented faculty to students who normally would not be able to receive a university education. The Tyler community would benefit from a partnership arrangement that would allow UT-Tyler to offer lower division courses that may not be available at area junior colleges. The bill includes guidelines providing that the cost effectiveness and impact on area students would have to be taken into account in determining whether UT-Tyler should offer lower division courses in partnership with other institutions.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

Allowing UT-Tyler to offer lower division courses would duplicate less expensive courses already offered at Tyler area junior colleges and would be an inefficient use of local academic resources. The perceived benefits of an education at UT-Tyler could persuade the best students to leave Tyler area junior colleges.

NOTES:

The committee substitute provides that UT-Tyler, rather than the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, could enter into partnership agreements on behalf of the university. The substitute would require UT-Tyler to actively recruit minority students and take into account the cost effectiveness and other impacts of the courses offered. The substitute added that any lower division courses offered at UT-Tyler would be funded by a formula adopted by the coordinating for four-year universities.