

SUBJECT: Establishing the San Antonio Life Sciences Institute

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 8 ayes — Rangel, F. Brown, Farabee, J. Jones, Morrison, E. Reyna, Uher, West
0 nays
1 absent — Goolsby

WITNESSES: For — Annette Garza; Joe Krier, Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce; Ian R. Morris
Against — None
On — Drs. Guy Bailey and Ricardo Romo, The University of Texas at San Antonio; Dr. Francisco Cigarroa; Dr. Jaime R. Garza, the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio

BACKGROUND: In January 2000, University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) and the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSC-SA) began to examine opportunities for joint and collaborative degree and research programs and other ways the two institutions could work more closely together to benefit the institutions and the region they both serve. A committee of representatives from each institution recommended the pursuit of joint degree and related-research programs.

The committee recommended that students enrolled in the joint degree programs of the Institute should be admitted to both institutions. It recommended establishing 10 graduate degree programs. The UT System anticipates 60 doctoral students and 70 master's students could be enrolled in the initial joint degree programs by September 2003.

DIGEST: HB 1716 would authorize the Board of Regents of the University of Texas System (UT) to establish and maintain the San Antonio Life Sciences Institute as a joint partnership of UTSA and UTHSC-SA.

The institute would develop joint degree and research programs, specializing in research and teaching the life sciences, between the two institutions and would seek state, private, and federal funding to support the operation and management of the Institute. The administration of the Institute would be under the direction of the chancellor and board of regents of the UT System through the presidents of the two partnering institutions.

The board of regents would be allowed to make joint faculty appointments or other personnel to the institute and to either the health science center and the university. Salaries for those joint faculty appointments would be apportioned on the basis of services rendered. The board of regents would determine where the facilities would be located.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2001.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

The establishment of the San Antonio Life Sciences Institute would attract and serve a new and diverse student populations in the South Texas region. It would enhance extramural research activities and funding of both institutions beyond the levels likely to be reached separately by each institution. Although the proposed joint-degree programs could be developed and offered collaboratively by both institutions without having to create a separate entity, the joint-degree programs would create a structure to build cooperation and synergy between them.

The San Antonio Life Sciences Institute would draw upon UTSA and UTHSC-SA's existing programs in the biological and biomedical sciences and shared resources in ways that would benefit students, faculty, the institutions, and the state. UTSA graduates the highest number of Hispanic graduates in life sciences in the country. This is important because the Hispanic population has surpassed other populations in San Antonio. The Institute would be training the majority population in a field that is becoming dominant in the state, especially in San Antonio, and it would support UTSA's goal of becoming a Tier 1 university.

The Special Commission on 21st Century Colleges and Universities has recommended that the Legislature provide incentives to create centers of excellence on Texas campuses that are consistent with the mission of the institution and provide an opportunity for national recognition.

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OPPONENTS
SAY: No apparent opposition.

NOTES: According to the bill's fiscal note, new general revenue costs to initiate and operate the proposed joint-degree programs would be \$4.2 million in fiscal 2002 and \$6.8 million in fiscal 2003. In addition, UTSA and UTHSC-SA estimate \$265,550 in tuition and fees would be generated annually beginning in 2003. It is estimated that after the fiscal 2002-2003 biennium, the programs would be funded at the fiscal 2003 level and would remain a special item. Funding for the programs is an item in Art. 11 of the House-passed and Senate-passed versions of SB 1 by Ellis, the fiscal 2002-03 general appropriations act, for UTSA.

The companion bill, SB 728 by Van de Putte, was reported favorably by the Senate Education Committee on May 2.