

SUBJECT: Allowing graduate level programs at the University of Houston-Victoria

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 5 ayes — Morrison, F. Brown, Dawson, J. Jones, Rose
0 nays
4 absent — Goolsby, Gallego, Giddings, Harper-Brown

WITNESSES: For — None
Against — None
On — Tim Hudson, University of Houston - Victoria

DIGEST: HB 1215 would amend the Education Code to authorize the University of Houston - Victoria (UHV) to offer "graduate" rather than "master's" level programs.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2005.

SUPPORTERS SAY: HB 1215 would harmonize the University of Houston - Victoria's governing statute with those of its peer institutions and enable the institution to contemplate offering more advanced degree programs.

While UHV does not offer academic programs beyond the master's level, nor does it have any current plans to do so, the university may wish at some point to offer more advanced programs if it were determined that they would better serve the needs of the community. Advanced degree programs include doctoral degrees or specialist degrees, such as speech pathology. UHV is the only university within 100 miles of Victoria, so more than 4,000 teachers in the service area of the institution have limited opportunities to pursue advanced degrees.

If the community stakeholders and the university decided the community would benefit from having these programs, they would still have to go

through the rigorous approval process for adding new academic programs. This would include obtaining preliminary approval from the board of regents of the University of Houston System and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, as well as from the regional accrediting body. This process can take as long as four years and requires the university to demonstrate the need, the benefit, and the resources available for establishing any new graduate programs.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No apparent opposition.

NOTES:

The companion bill, SB 391 by Armbrister, has been referred to the Senate Education Subcommittee on Higher Education.