

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 2425
By: Morrison (Averitt)
Higher Education
5/21/2009
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Current law requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to design and administer a one-week summer program to take place on the campus of each general academic teaching institution that offers an engineering degree program to expose middle school and high school students to mathematics, science, and engineering concepts they are likely to encounter in an engineering degree program and requires THECB to establish and administer a degree scholarship program for students who graduate with certain credentials. These requirements were enacted to address Texas' status as the ninth state among the 10 most populous states in the number of degrees awarded per 1,000 students in science and engineering fields. However, 25 percent of the bachelor's degrees awarded in Texas are from the private colleges and universities in Texas.

To encourage all Texas children to enroll in more mathematics and science classes, remain competitive on a national and global level in those fields of study, and increase the diversity of the program, the noncompetitive grant application procedure needs to be extended to the private colleges and universities.

H.B. 2425 includes Texas private or independent colleges and universities among those colleges and universities on whose campuses THECB is required to establish a one-week summer program for prospective engineering students and whose engineering students are eligible to participate in THECB's engineering scholarship program.

Additionally, this bill amends the Education Code to require THECB to authorize a public junior college to offer a bachelor's degree program that meets certain qualifying criteria if the program is in applied science or applied technology or of the public junior college previously participated in a pilot project to offer bachelor's degree programs.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority previously granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is modified in SECTION 1 (Section 61.791, Education Code) and SECTION 2 (Section 61.792, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 61.791(a), Education Code, to require the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to establish and administer, using funds appropriated for that purpose, a one-week summer program to take place on the campus of each general academic teaching institution or private or independent institution of higher education that offers an engineering degree program.

SECTION 2. Amends Sections 61.792(a) and (b), Education Code, as follows:

- (a) Requires THECB to establish and administer, using funds appropriated for that purpose, scholarships for students pursuing a degree in engineering at a general academic teaching institution or a private or independent institution of higher education.
- (b) Requires a student, to qualify for a scholarship under this section, to maintain an overall grade point average of at least 3.0 on a four-point scale at the general academic

teaching institution or the private or independent institution of higher education in which the student is enrolled, among certain other requirements.

SECTION 3. Amends Sections 130.0012(a) and (b), Education Code, as follows:

(a) Requires THECB to authorize a public junior college to offer a baccalaureate degree program that qualifies under Subsection (e) (relating to the requirement of THECB to consider certain factors in determining what baccalaureate degree programs are to be offered) if the program is in the field of applied science or applied technology or the public junior college previously participated in a pilot project to offer baccalaureate degree programs. Deletes existing text providing that offering a baccalaureate degree program under this section does not otherwise alter the role and mission of a public junior college. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

(b) Provides that offering a baccalaureate degree program under this section does not otherwise alter the role and mission of a public junior college. Deletes existing text requiring THECB to authorize baccalaureate degree programs at each public junior college that previously participated in a pilot project to offer baccalaureate degree programs.

SECTION 4. (a) Provides that Sections 61.791 and 61.792, Education Code, as amended by this Act, apply beginning with the 2009-2010 academic year.

(b) Requires THECB to adopt rules for the administration of Sections 61.791 and 61.792, Education Code, as amended by this Act, as soon as practicable after this Act takes effect. Authorizes THECB, for that purpose, to adopt the rules in the manner provided by law for emergency rules.

SECTION 5. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.