

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 668
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Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Since tuition deregulation was implemented in 2003, tuition and fees at Texas' public, four-year universities have increased by 53 percent. To avoid having to stay longer than necessary at a university to finish a degree plan, students should be given sufficient, individualized information on how to graduate successfully and in a timely manner.

A peer mentorship pilot program that connects incoming freshmen students with senior mentors at their institution of higher education would be advantageous to both students involved. The senior students would be trained and then paid to offer their time and knowledge, and the freshman students would receive invaluable advice about thriving academically and graduating on time. The mentorship program would also benefit the university as a whole because retention rates and grades would improve and students would have better individualized attention when selecting classes to take, organizations to join, and other programs to engage in to support the university.

As proposed, S.B. 668 establishes a student mentorship pilot program under which students in their senior year at a participating general academic teaching institution are paid to mentor incoming freshmen students in an effort to increase the retention and success rate of those students.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Section 61.0593, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, by adding Section 61.0593, as follows:

Sec. 61.0593. STUDENT MENTORSHIP PILOT PROGRAM. (a) Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to establish a pilot program under which students enrolled in their senior year at a participating general academic teaching institution are paid to mentor incoming freshman students at the institution in an effort to increase the retention and success of those students.

(b) Requires THECB to select not more than five general academic teaching institutions to participate in the pilot program from among institutions to participate in the pilot program from among institutions that apply to participate in the manner prescribed by board rule.

(c) Requires THECB, in consultation with general academic teaching institutions, to adopt rules consistent with this section as necessary to implement this section, including rules establishing the manner in which an institution may apply to participate in the pilot program; institutions and students are selected to participate in the pilot program; the requirements for participating in the pilot program; general guidelines for the mentoring to be provided under the pilot program, including guidelines for the methods and content the board considers most critical to ensuring student retention and success; and criteria to ensure that

each student providing mentoring under the pilot program receives appropriate training and supervision and is paid at least the minimum wage required by law.

(d) Authorizes the pilot program to be funded by legislative appropriations, or gifts, grants, and donations described by Subsection (e).

(e) Authorizes THECB to solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations from any public or private source for the purposes of this section.

(f) Requires THECB, not later than December 1, 2010, to submit a report to the legislature on the progress of and level of participation in the pilot program, and the image of the pilot program on the retention and success of students receiving mentoring under the program.

(g) Provides that this section expires September 1, 2011.

SECTION 2. Requires THECB to adopt the rules required by Section 61.0593, Education Code, as added by this Act, as soon as practicable after this Act takes effect. Authorizes THECB, for that purpose, to adopt the initial rules in the manner provided by law for emergency rules.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.