

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 24
By: Zaffirini
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties note the need to expand and enhance the training required for members of the governing boards of institutions of higher education. S.B. 24 seeks to address this need.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 24 amends the Education Code to require the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to develop an intensive short orientation course for members of the governing boards of institutions of higher education who hold appointive positions. The bill requires the orientation course to be offered as an online interactive course, authorizes the course to be offered also in the form of a written document or in a one-on-one or group setting, and sets out required contents for the course's instruction.

S.B. 24 shortens from the first two years of service as a member of a governing board of an institution of higher education to the first year of such service the period during which a member is required to attend at least one training program established by coordinating board rule for members of the governing boards of institutions of higher education. The bill requires the coordinating board's rules to require a governing board member who holds an appointive position to attend, as part of the training program, the intensive short orientation course and any available training course sponsored or coordinated by the office of the governor with a curriculum designed for training newly appointed state officers, board members, or high-level executive officials. The bill requires the rules to require the member to attend those courses the first time they are offered following the date the member takes the oath of office, regardless of whether that attendance is required under other law. The bill authorizes the rules to provide a governing board member with additional time to attend those courses if the member for good cause is unable to attend the courses the first time they are offered and exempts the courses from a statutory requirement that the coordinating board provide an equivalent training program by electronic means if a governing board member is unable to attend a training program. The bill prohibits a governing board member who holds an appointive position and whose first year of service on the governing board begins on or after September 1, 2015, from voting on a budgetary or personnel matter related to system administration or institutions of higher education until the member completes the intensive short orientation course.

S.B. 24 adds ethics training to the content of the instruction at the training program established by coordinating board rule for governing board members. The bill removes the authorization for the training program to cover topics prescribed by statute and instead requires the training program to cover such topics, adds as a topic the requirements of laws relating to the protection of student information under the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 or any other federal or state law relating to the privacy of student information, and includes limitations on the authority of a governing board in the topic on the role of the governing board at institutions of higher education and the relationship between the governing board and an institution's administration, faculty and staff, and students. The bill makes the coordinating board responsible for documenting governing board members' completion of applicable training requirements.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2015.