

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1772
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S/C on Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Currently, the long-range plan that exists for higher education, *Closing the Gaps*, does not extend beyond 2015. The state has provided the mechanism for planning related to the creation of one or more flagship universities, but no plan has been created.

As proposed, S.B. 1772 establishes a commission composed of representatives of certain entities to be appointed by the commissioner of higher education, except for the chair of the commission, who will be appointed by the governor. The commission will study issues concerning higher education, including incentives and requirements for transfer students, communication between universities and the business community, creation of additional flagship public research universities, enhancing coordination between universities and identifying each university's uniqueness, alternative methods of funding, review of three financial aid programs, and adding a mentoring program to the workstudy program of the Texas Grant program. The bill also requires the commission to write a report including the commission's findings, recommendations, and possible legislation.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to any state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter H, Chapter 51 Education Code, by adding Section 51.4011, as follows:

Sec. 51.4011. COMMISSION TO STUDY AND REPORT ON A LONG-RANGE PLAN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION. (a) Establishes a commission (commission) to conduct a study of issues relating to the higher education system in Texas and recommend a long-range plan for higher education that will meet the demands of a global economy and a growing and diverse population.

(b) Requires the commission to be composed of 18 members. Provides that the members are to be appointed by the commissioner of higher education and include representatives from certain entities.

(c) Requires the governor to designate as the chair of the commission one of the commission members who is not affiliated with a university system, community college, or technical college.

(d) Authorizes the commission to request assistance and information, other than confidential information relating to an identifiable individual, from any public institution of higher education or other state agency. Requires an institution or other agency to provide the assistance and information requested to the extent practicable.

(e) Requires the expenses of the commission to be paid in equal amounts from the contingent expense accounts of the senate and the house of representatives, or as otherwise agreed to by the lieutenant governor and speaker of the house. Provides that members of the commission serve without compensation, but are entitled to

reimbursement of travel expenses incurred in carrying out the commission's duties.

(f) Requires the commission to study certain issues.

(g) Requires the commission to prepare a report, including findings, recommendations, and possible legislation, to certain government officials and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board not later than October 1, 2008.

(h) Provides that this section expires January 1, 2009.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2007.