



**FINAL REPORT**  
82<sup>nd</sup> LEGISLATIVE SESSION





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## INTRODUCTION

Houston Community College (“HCC”), its governing board, chancellor, executive staff, policy team and other key internal and external supporters, worked diligently to advance the HCC policy agenda during the 82nd legislative session. This concerted effort provided our legislative delegation and other policy-makers important information about issues facing HCC and community colleges in general.

The State of Texas convened the 82nd legislative session with an estimated \$27 billion budgetary shortfall that forced substantial funding cuts, ultimately impacting community colleges and other state-supported agencies. Despite budgetary constraints, HCC was able to successfully advance its position on several key policy considerations potentially impacting students, the community and the institution. By way of general information:

- HCC’s base formula funding decreased by only 2% from \$140.6 million in 2010-2011 to \$137.8 million in 2012-2013;
- The state appropriated an additional \$34.6 million in Article IX for community colleges, of which HCC would receive an estimated \$2.8 million for the 2012-2013 biennium;
- Group Health Insurance dramatically decreased to \$198.3 million (or 38.6%), as compared to \$323.2 million the prior biennium;
- Community colleges did not receive funding for the dramatic enrollment growth over the past two years, sharply reducing the level of funding per student (or per student contact hour);
- Neither did HCC nor other community colleges receive any new campus funding;
- Outcomes-based funding does not apply to community colleges in the 2012-2013 biennium, but the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (“THECB”) has been directed to recommend such funding as part of future formula recommendations; and
- Proposed relevant concealed handgun legislation and cuts to dual credit failed passage.

The 82nd legislative session adjourned (*sine die*) May 30, 2011 followed by a special session that ended June 29, 2011. There were 6,236 bills filed during the session. HCC tracked 270 bills and resolutions, giving priority consideration to (1) **appropriations**, (2) **employee benefits**, (3) **the carrying of concealed handguns on campuses of higher education institutions**, and (4) **the establishment of a state system to oversee community colleges**. An additional 80 House and 41 Senate bills and joint resolutions were filed during the special session, with eight bills becoming law. HCC carefully followed several bills with potential budgetary impact. Immediately below is a statistical representation of legislation filed during the session.

## 82nd LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION STATISTICS

*\*There are reserved numbers which is why the total count doesn't match the last number.*

Bill Type	2011			2009			Filed		Passed	
	Filed	Passed	%	Filed	Passed	%	+/-	%	+/-	%
<b>House Bills</b>	3865	797	20.6%	4836	867	17.9%	-971	-20.1%	-70	-8.1%
<b>Senate Bills</b>	1931	582	30.1%	2583	592	22.9%	-652	-25.2%	-10	-1.7%
<b>House Joint Resolutions</b>	154	3	1.9%	140	9	6.4%	14	10.0%	-6	-66.7%
<b>Senate Joint Resolutions</b>	53	8	15.1%	50	0	0.0%	3	6.0%	8	100.0%
<b>House Concurrent Resolutions</b>	173	101	58.4%	285	203	71.2%	-112	-39.3%	-102	-50.2%
<b>Senate Concurrent Resolutions</b>	60	41	68.3%	86	55	64.0%	-26	-30.2%	-14	-25.5%
<b>Totals</b>	6236	1532	24.6%	7980	1726	21.6%	-1744	-21.9%	-194	-11.2%

*Statistical data originally produced and published by Telicon.*

The remainder of the **82nd Texas Legislative Session Final Report** ("Report") provides a funding overview and a synopsis of specific bills impacting community colleges. The Report also identifies and briefly outlines each bill's purpose, and as appropriate each bill's effective date of implementation that may require action to ensure compliance with the law.

## HCC FUNDING AND POLICY PRIORITIES

HCC urged the Legislature to adopt the funding level recommended by the Texas Association of Community Colleges ("TACC"). The three components of that request included: (1) restoration of the 7.5% reduced from base funding during the interim session, (2) restoration of the general revenue that was supplanted with federal American Recovery Reinvestment Act funds, and (3) full funding of base year for student enrollment growth.

HCC also expressed concern about various proposals (e.g., use of completions or Momentum Points Funding) to move base funding away from actual contact hours identifying that such an action could adversely affect funding for institutions serving large numbers of non-traditional and disadvantaged students. Other policy considerations included employee benefits, new campus funding, professional nurse shortage, dual credit classes, and end of course exams.

## STATE OF TEXAS APPROPRIATIONS (2012 - 2013)

- **\$168.9 billion** from all fund sources in HB 1, the General Appropriations Act, as modified by SB 2 of the special session, a decrease of **\$18.6 billion** (or **9.9%**) below the 2010-11 biennium. The governor only vetoed contingency appropriations for bills that did not pass.
- Upon voter approval of HJR 109, proposing a constitutional amendment, **\$300 million** would be added to the overall state appropriation and to the general revenue total.
- **\$77.1 billion** from general revenue funds in HB 1, as modified by SB 2 of the special session, a decrease of about **\$5 billion** from the prior biennium (or **-6.1%**).

- **\$72.6 billion** in federal funds, a decrease of **\$18.2 billion** (or **20%**) below the 2010-11 biennium, primarily due to the ending of the \$12.1 billion in ARRA funds that were appropriated for the 2010-2011 biennium.

## COMMUNITY COLLEGES' BASE APPROPRIATIONS

- **\$1.715 billion** for the biennium, a decrease of **\$144 million** (or **-7.7%**) compared with the original 2010-2011 appropriation.
- **\$34,643,560** (**\$17,321,780** in fiscal years 2012 and 2013, respectively) relating to **Article IX Section 18.22. Additional Funding for Junior Colleges**. The estimated allocation to HCC is **\$2.8 million** (or **\$1.4 million** in fiscal years 2012 and 2013, respectively).
- Relating to enrollment growth, TACC estimated an additional \$442 million would have been needed to cover the enrollment growth over the past two years at the 2010-2011 appropriated formula level.

## EMPLOYEE BENEFITS FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

The Legislature drastically reduced Higher Education Group Insurance ("HEGI"), a major policy shift when considering the prior year appropriation for HEGI. The change in funding is **\$125 million** (or **39%**) less than the 2010-2011 appropriation. The overall community college state appropriation is as follows:

- **\$ 99,199,140** for fiscal year 2012.
- **\$ 99,199,140** for fiscal year 2013.
- **\$198,398,280** for fiscal years 2012-2013.

## TEACHER RETIREMENT SYSTEM AND OPTIONAL RETIREMENT PROGRAM

Rider 13 estimates that the Teacher Retirement System ("TRS") and the Optional Retirement Program ("ORP") state appropriation for all community college is as follows:

- **TRS: \$61,661,949** – state matching contribution.<sup>i</sup>
- **ORP: \$43,211,376** – state matching contribution.<sup>ii</sup>

The above-identified amounts represent a reduction of about \$95 million (or 43%) less than 2010-2011 funding levels.

## PROFESSIONAL NURSE SHORTAGE REDUCTION PROGRAM

The Professional Nurse Shortage program received an appropriation totaling \$15 million in each year of the 2012-2013 biennium, a reduction of \$17 million (or -36%). The THECB shall allocate up to 50% of **\$4.9 million** in each fiscal year of the biennium and any unexpended amounts to community colleges.

## ABE COMMUNITY COLLEGE GRANTS

For the purpose of awarding competitive grants to community and public technical colleges to increase participation in adult basic education, the state appropriated **\$4 million** in general revenue (\$2 million in 2012 and 2013, respectively). The THECB has authority to administer these funds.

## DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION

For the purpose of implementing and supporting demonstration projects in developmental education at community colleges and public technical institutions, the state appropriated **\$4 million** (\$2 million in 2012 and 2013, respectively). Rider 20, under community colleges, directs the THECB to provide for weighted contact hour funding of non-semester length developmental education programs.

## INMATE TRAINING

Article V at C.2.2. Strategy provides \$2.7 million for inmate training – \$1.36 million for fiscal years 2012-2013, respectively. The total amount represents a reduction of approximately \$4.8 million (or -43.7%).

## STUDENT FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS

Despite initial proposals to reduce funding by 41%, eliminating new grant awards, the reduction in funding for the Texas Grant program was limited to \$62 million (or 10%). However, it will serve about 28,700 fewer students due to increased tuition and fees. Funding for the Texas Educational Opportunity Grant, aimed specifically at community college students, remained stable at \$24 million, but the number of students served will decline from 12,150 to 9,900. Overall, financial aid decreased by \$151 million to about \$880 million for the biennium.

The amounts identified immediately below are allocated to relevant student financial aid programs:

- **\$12,030,800** each year (2012 and 2013) to the Texas Education Opportunity Grant Program;
- **\$324,164,259** and **\$234,373,565** for fiscal years 2012 and 2013, respectively, to the Texas Grant Program; and
- **\$7,529,639** each year (2012 and 2013) to College Work Study Program.

## SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES (Rider 53)

The THECB “shall allocate an amount not to exceed \$350,000 in General Revenue Funds to hire a national-level consultant who possesses demonstrated and in-depth expertise in higher education governance issues to provide the Legislative Budget Board and the Governor with a blueprint to establish a state system administration for public community colleges by no later than June 1, 2012.”

## READINESS PROJECT

There is an appropriation of \$3 million to establish the stateside program to create and deploy modular courses to improve college readiness, reduce the need for developmental education, and improve student success, to be developed by a consortium of universities from multiple university systems and community colleges organized by the University of Texas at Austin.



## HCC SPECIFIC APPROPRIATIONS

- Academic Education 2012: \$ 45,386,379
- Academic Education 2013: \$ 45,386,379
- Vocational/Technical Education 2012: \$ 23,533,595
- Vocational/Technical Education 2013: \$ 23,533,595
- **Total 2012-2013 base funding: \$137,839,948**
  
- *Above total is 2% less than prior biennium.*
- *Prior biennium (2010-2011) base funding: \$140,674,225*
  
- Article IX estimated appropriation (2012): \$ 1,406,530
- Article IX estimated appropriation (2013): \$ 1,406,530
- **Total Basic Aid from Article IX (2012-2013): \$ 2,813,060**

## HCC EMPLOYEE BENEFITS (HEGI)

The state appropriation for HCC HEGI, as reported by ERS, is as follow:

- **\$ 7,651,060** (2012).
- **\$ 8,065,635** (2013).
- **\$15,715,695** (2012-2013).

The HCC HEGI appropriation is approximately **\$6.2 million** (or **28%**) **less** than the 2010-2011 appropriations to HCC.

## HCC NEW CAMPUS FUNDING

While HCC requested new campus funding for five facilities totaling approximately \$12 million in its August 2010 Legislative Appropriations Request, the Legislature did not fund any portion of the request for the 2012-2013 biennium.

**APPROPRIATIONS/ FISCAL MATTERS****HB 1 (Pitts/Ogden)**

*Relating to appropriations for the 2012-2013 biennium.*

Provides approximately \$172.3 billion from all fund sources. Also provides \$80.5 billion from general revenue funds. SB 2 (of the special session) subsequently modified the preceding numbers to \$168.9 billion of all fund sources and \$77.1 billion from general revenue. Community college funding totaled \$1.715 billion for the biennium and HCC's total base funding is **\$137,839,948**.

**Effective Date:** September 1, 2011.

**HB 4 (Pitts/Ogden)**

*Relating to making supplemental appropriations and giving direction and adjustment authority regarding appropriations.*

Reduced fiscal year 2010 – 2011 community college appropriations by \$76 million, reflecting the 7.5% reduction directed by the state's leadership for fiscal year 2011. The HCC reduction totaled \$5,275,284.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

**SB 794 (Nelson/King, Susan)**

*Relating to the use of money from the permanent fund for health-related programs to provide grants to nursing education programs.*

The current dedication of funds from the Permanent Fund for Health-Related Programs to nursing education will expire on August 31, 2011. S.B. 794 continues the current dedication of a portion of the tobacco lawsuit settlement funds to support nursing education through August 31, 2015.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

**SJR 50 (West/Branch)**

*Amendment providing for the issuance of general obligation bonds to finance educational loans to students and for authority to enter into bond enhancement agreements with respect to general obligation bonds issued for that purpose.*

Proposes a constitutional amendment providing for the issuance of general obligation bonds to finance educational loans to students.

**Effective Date:** Submitted to the voters on November 8, 2011.

**ELECTIONS/ VOTING****HB 150 (Solomons/Seliger)**

*Relating to the composition of the districts for the election of members of the Texas House of Representatives.*

Defines new districts for the election of members of the Texas House of Representatives.

**Effective Date:** August 30, 2011.

## **HB 1545 (Lewis/Watson)**

*Relating to the authority of certain political subdivisions to change the date of their general elections.*

Current law requires cities to hold council elections only on the spring uniform election date if the city has a population over 450,000 and the entire council is elected at large, the independent school district or community college service area is largely the same as the city limits, and the transit authority primarily serves the city with a population over 450,000 and council elected at large. The only way for a city that meets these criteria to change the election date is to appeal to the legislature. H.B. 1545 extends the deadline to December 31, 2012, giving subdivisions the opportunity to align their elections with the November general election.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

## **HB 2359 (Hopson/Williams)**

*Relating to direct campaign expenditures.*

Seeks to address the prohibition on direct corporate campaign expenditures by removing certain references to political expenditures in the Texas Election Code and by adding and clarifying reporting requirements for certain direct campaign expenditures.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

## **HB 2477 (Harless/Ellis)**

*Relating to the provision of bilingual election materials.*

Requires the secretary of state to prepare and provide translation of certain bilingual election materials in certain political subdivisions.

**Effective Date:** September 1, 2011.

## **SB 31 (Seliger/Solomons)**

*Relating to the composition of the districts for the election of members of the Texas Senate.*

Defines new districts for the election of members of the Texas Senate.

**Effective Date:** August 30, 2011.

## **SB 1226 (Hegar/Callegari)**

*Relating to the ballot language for junior college district annexation elections.*

Requires that a ballot for a junior college district annexation election include language regarding the district's taxing authority and current property tax rate. The bill also requires that the ballot language for a junior college annexation election identify the name of the junior college district attempting to annex territory.

**Effective Date:** September 1, 2011.

## GENERAL

### **HB 9 (Branch/Zaffirini)**

*Relating to student success-based funding for public institutions of higher education.*

Directs the THECB to include “undergraduate student success measures achieved during the preceding biennium” in its future formula funding recommendations. Initial measures include successful completion of mathematics and English developmental and college-level courses, 30 semester hours or transfer to a four-year institution after 15 semester hours, and the number of degrees and certificates awarded. Measures are to be reviewed for effectiveness in improving outcomes and possibly adjusted.

**Effective Date:** Effective Immediately.

### **HB 33 (Branch/Zaffirini)**

*Relating to measures to increase the affordability of textbooks used for courses at public institutions of higher education.*

Amends current law relating to measures to increase the affordability of textbooks used for courses at public or private institutions of higher education.

**Effective Date:** September 1, 2011.

### **HB 452 (Lucio III/Lucio)**

*Relating to temporary housing between academic terms for certain postsecondary students who have been under the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services.*

Seeks to ensure that former foster youths have living arrangements both during and between academic semesters. This bill requires institutions of higher education to help students find housing options to better support their education and social abilities.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

### **HB 736 (Patrick, Diane/West)**

*Relating to online institution resumes for public institutions of higher education.*

Requires posting on the Internet certain faculty-related information (e.g., student/faculty ratio; percentage of all full-time equivalent faculty members with teaching responsibility who are tenured or tenure track; percentage of semester credit hours taken by students, etc.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

### **HB 1244 (Castro/West)**

*Relating to developmental education courses and the assessment of student readiness under the Texas Success Initiative for public institutions of higher education.*

In part, mandates an institution of higher education that requires a student to enroll in developmental coursework to offer a range of developmental coursework or instructional support that includes the integration of technology to efficiently address the particular developmental needs of the student.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

## **HB 1495 (Munoz/Hinojosa)**

*Relating to the application of the Information Resources Management Act to public junior colleges and public junior college districts.*

Clarifies that certain statutory obligations and rules do not apply to a community college district, except as necessary for participation in the electronic government project implemented under law.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

## **HB 2909 (Branch/Shapiro)**

*Relating to increasing awareness in this state of the importance of higher education.*

In part, requires certain schools to designate one week *Generation Texas Week*, as opposed to Education: *Go Get It Week*.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

## **HB 2910 (Branch/Zaffirini)**

*Relating to agreements between the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and certain organizations for increasing degree completion rates.*

In part, permits the THECB to enter into partnerships with institutions and other nonprofit organizations to assist the board in identifying and implementing effective methods for increasing degree completion rates.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

## **SB 36 (Zaffirini/Castro)**

*Relating to methods for increasing student success and degree completion at public institutions of higher education.*

Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, institutions of higher education, and relevant professionals to develop an instrument to assess student academic advising by September 1, 2012.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

## **SB 149 (West/Castro)**

*Relating to rules adopted and reporting required under the school district college credit program.*

Identifies and addresses the need to support the partnership between the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, which needs to include rules that outline each agency's specific functions in relation to dual-credit programs and related reporting requirements. Amends existing law relating to rules and reporting required under school district credit program.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

### **SB 162 (Shapiro/Branch)**

*Relating to developing a developmental education plan for students entering public institutions of higher education.*

Requires the THECB to develop a statewide plan that will focus on community college delivery of developmental education. The plan will focus on utilizing technology to individualize plans for each student and to reach a greater number of students. THECB will also study and develop best practices for successful programs to effectively educate students. The plan will be updated and modified periodically to account for updated educator training and improving programs.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

### **SB 265 (Zaffirini/Carter)**

*Relating to training for employees and operators of certain child-care facilities.*

Seeks to ensure that child-care employees and operators receive training from knowledgeable individuals with relevant expertise by establishing requirements for persons providing that training. Those persons who can provide the training include an instructor at a public or private institution of higher education who teaches early childhood development or another relevant course, as determined by THECB and TEA rules.

**Effective Date:** January 1, 2012.

### **SB 321 (Hegar/Kleinschmidt)**

*Relating to an employee's transportation and storage of certain firearms or ammunition while on certain property owned or controlled by the employee's employer.*

Seeks to prohibit an employer from prohibiting an employee who lawfully possesses a firearm or ammunition from transporting or storing the firearm or ammunition in a locked, privately owned motor vehicle in a parking area the employer provides for employees, with certain exceptions.

**Effective Date:** September 1, 2011.

### **SB 386 (Williams/Harless)**

*Relating to the Lone Star College System District service area.*

In 2008, it was determined that the name North Harris Montgomery Community College District was no longer appropriate since the community college had added parts of San Jacinto County, Walker County, and Liberty County to its service area. SB 386 amends current law to reflect the name change.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

### **SB 419 (West/Patrick, Diane)**

*Relating to prohibiting state funding to public junior colleges for physical education courses offered for joint high school and junior college credit.*

Seeks to prohibit state funding to public junior colleges for physical education courses offered for joint high school and junior college credit identifying, in part, that physical education courses are not included in the required curriculum for colleges outlined by the THECB.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

### **SB 773 (Zaffirini/Gallegos)**

*Relating to telecommunications service discounts for educational institutions, libraries, hospitals, and telemedicine centers.*

Seeks to maintain the state telecommunication discount for digital services for voice, video, and data to libraries, schools, colleges, hospital, etc. identifying that the discount program remains an essential component to the state's information and telecommunication infrastructure, but is set to expire January 1, 2012.

**Effective Date:** September 1, 2011.

### **SB 778 (Williams/Huberty)**

*Relating to the inclusion of professional staff who educate students with disabilities on district-level and campus-level planning and decision-making committees.*

Seeks to further improve the process by which district-and campus-level planning and decision-making committees were created to assist school districts or campuses in making the best decisions for improving student achievement and services by including, if practicable, at least one individual on various committees who has a primary responsibility of educating students with disabilities.

**Effective Date:** September 1, 2011.

### **SB 866 (Deuell/Jackson, Jim)**

*Relating to the education of public school students with dyslexia, the education and training of educators who teach students with dyslexia, and the assessment of students with dyslexia attending an institution of higher education.*

Seeks to address concerns that educators are not adequately instructed on how to detect or educate students with dyslexia and that, without being tested for dyslexia, students enrolling in public school will not have access to the treatment and learning tools that might facilitate their education. Also applies to the assessment of students with dyslexia attending an institution of higher education. Requires certain educators to receive education about teaching and identifying students with dyslexia.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

### **SB 975 (Hinojosa/Munoz)**

*Relating to the operation of dropout recovery programs by certain public junior colleges in partnership with school districts.*

Seeks to mitigate concerns associated with the dropout recovery program, as it applies to certain students in Hidalgo County – to be administered by South Texas College.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.



### **SB 1414 (Duncan/Eiland)**

*Relating to sexual abuse and child molestation training for volunteers and employees of certain programs for minors held on campuses of institutions of higher education.*

Amends current law relating to sexual abuse and child molestation training and examination for employees of certain programs for minors held on campuses of institutions of higher education, and provides penalties.

**Effective Date:** September 1, 2011.

## **GOVERNING BOARD**

### **HB 1206 (Guillen/Zaffirini)**

*Relating to training for members of governing boards of public junior college districts.*

Requires certain training (e.g., best practices in campus financial management, financial ratio analysis, and case studies using financial indicators) for governing board members. Training may be conducted via electronic means. Minutes of the last regular meeting held by a public junior college governing board must reflect whether each member of the board completed any required training.

**Effective Date:** September 1, 2011.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES/ BENEFITS**

### **HB 14 (Murphy/Eltife)**

*Relating to the qualification for unemployment benefits of a person receiving severance pay.*

Disqualifies a person who receives severance pay from receiving unemployment benefits at the same time. The person would still be eligible for the full term of unemployment benefits after the severance pay ends.

**Effective Date:** September 1, 2011.

### **HB 755 (Cook/Nichols)**

*Relating to eligibility of certain dependents for coverage under the state employee group benefits program.*

Allows a dependent child over the age of 25 to qualify for coverage if on the day the child's parent becomes eligible to participate in the Texas employees group benefits program, the dependent is enrolled as the parent's dependent in the health benefits coverage under the Texas Public School Retired Employees Group Benefits Act, the Texas School Employees Uniform Group Health Coverage Act, or the State University Employees Uniform Insurance Benefits Act or is in continued coverage under the federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 and its subsequent amendments.

**Effective Date:** September 1, 2011.



## **HB 2102 (Hernandez/Luna/Ellis)**

*Relating to the requirement that certain health benefit plans provide coverage for supplemental breast cancer screening.*

After completion of a mammogram, requires the mammogram facility to provide the patient certain information about risks of breast cancer for individuals with dense breast tissues.

**Effective Date:** September 1, 2011.

## **LEGAL/COMPLIANCE**

## **HB 2538 (Vo/Jackson, Mike)**

*Relating to the confidentiality of certain identifying information regarding students of career schools or colleges and other educational entities.*

Protects all student records, regardless of the school a student attends in Texas, and treats them as confidential for purposes of the Texas Public Information Act (e.g., Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act).

**Effective Date:** September 1, 2011.

## **HB 2866 (Harper-Brown/Ellis)**

*Relating to the electronic submission of certain documents to the attorney general and the submission of certain documents by the attorney general.*

It authorizes OAG to charge a fee for the electronic submission of documents to OAG. The bill stipulates that existing paper-based methods of document filing may not be discontinued; thus the fee is entirely optional and only associated with the method of filing. The bill also clarifies that if a request, notice, or other submission is required either to or from OAG, that requirement can be met by transmitting the request, notice, or submission electronically. The authority for this fee expires on September 1, 2015, so that the legislature may revisit the continued need for the fee authority.

**Effective Date:** Upon passage or September 1, 2011.

## **HB 2937 (Lewis/Zaffirini)**

*Relating to access to the criminal history record information of certain individuals by public or private institutions of higher education and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.*

Expands the THECB's authority to conduct secure background checks relating to other employees who have access to sensitive information, such as Social Security numbers, financial data, and student-specific information, in an effort to protect the confidentiality of that information.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

**SB 602 (Rodriguez/Marquez)**

*Relating to allowing a governmental body to redact certain personal information under the public information law without the necessity of requesting a decision from the attorney general and the calculation of certain deadlines.*

Provides that certain information made confidential under the Public Information Act or other law may be withheld from a Public Information Act response without the need to seek an opinion from the Attorney General.

**Effective Date:** September 1, 2011.

**SB 1009 (Huffman/Sheffield)**

*Relating to requiring public institutions of higher education to notify the federal Student Exchange and Visitor Information System (SEVIS) regarding the withdrawal or nonattendance of certain foreign students.*

Requires public institutions of higher education to notify SEVIS immediately if a student attending on a student visa withdraws from the institution or withdraws from all courses in which the student is enrolled. Timely reporting will help ensure that the SEVIS reporting system is more accurate and complete.

**Effective Date:** September 1, 2011.

**SB 1107 (Davis, Wendy Howard, Charlie)**

*Relating to the vaccination against bacterial meningitis of first-time students at public and private or independent institutions of higher education.*

Requires students entering a public institution of higher education to provide evidence that they have been vaccinated against bacterial meningitis within the last five years. Does not apply to a student who is at least 30 years old.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

**SB 1327 (Watson/Howard, Donna)**

*Relating to the confidentiality of information obtained by a compliance office of an institution of higher education.*

Fine-tunes H.B. 4189, passed during the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, 2009. Allows certain confidential information to be shared with a systemwide compliance officer charged with reviewing compliance programs and with governmental agencies charged with reviewing a matter that is the subject of a compliance investigation. Sharing the information with these officials does not change the confidential nature of the information in any other regard.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

## OPERATIONS

### **HB 51 (Lucio III/Hinojosa)**

*Relating to energy efficiency standards for certain buildings and to high-performance design, construction, and renovation standards for certain government buildings and facilities.*

Imposes specific sustainable design, construction and renovation standards for certain facilities when the costs meet certain thresholds (the cost is either more than \$2 million or at least 50% of the cost is financed by revenue bonds).

**Effective Date:** September 1, 2011.

### **HB 2758 (Pena/Zaffirini)**

*Relating to mandatory emergency alert systems at institutions of higher education.*

Requires public and private institutions of higher education to establish an emergency alert notification system.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

### **SB 5 (Zaffirini/Branch)**

*Relating to public institutions of higher education, including the administration, operation, financial management, and reporting requirements of those institutions.*

Designed to facilitate efficient operations, reduce institutional costs, and provide administrative flexibility to institutions of higher education, particularly concerning the burdens of reporting requirements imposed by law. Also, attempts to allow an institution the best opportunity to operate in ways that are better, faster, less costly, and more productive.

**Effective Date:** This Act takes effect immediately, except Section 9.01(a) takes effect September 1, 2011, and Section 9.01(b) takes effect September 1, 2013.

### **SB 74 (Nelson/Branch)**

*Relating to the disposition of surplus or salvage data processing equipment of a university system or an institution or agency of higher education.*

Allows public institutions of higher education to donate surplus and salvage computer processing equipment to rural hospitals.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

### **SB 898 (Carona/Cook)**

*Relating to energy efficiency programs in institutions of higher education and certain governmental entities.*

Seeks to continue energy savings efforts by requiring each political subdivision, institution of higher education, and state agency to set a goal of reducing the entity's electric consumption by at least five percent each state fiscal year for each of the 10 state fiscal years beginning September 1, 2011, standardizing an entity's annual reporting to SECO, and providing for a calculation of the amount of energy savings and pollution reduction achieved through implementation of certain programs.

**Effective Date:** September 1, 2011.

### **SB 1179 (Nelson/Harper-Brown)**

*Relating to the elimination of certain required reports prepared by state agencies and institutions of higher education.*

Seeks to increase government efficiency by eliminating outdated state agency and higher education reports that are unnecessary and consume staff time, printing costs, and storage space.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

## **PROPERTY/TAXATION**

### **HB 650 (Castro/Uresti)**

*Relating to property held by certain junior colleges and presumed abandoned.*

Under Chapter 76 of the Property Code, school districts, municipalities, and counties that are holders of property presumed abandoned and valued at \$100 or less are responsible for the reporting, delivery, and claims processes for that property. H.B. 650 extends the applicability of Chapter 76 to public junior colleges only if the governing board of the junior college takes formal action to opt to handle the property described by that chapter.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

## **TUITION, FEES, AND FINANCIAL AID**

### **HB 1163 (Keffer/Hegar)**

*Relating to tuition and fee exemptions at public institutions of higher education for certain peace officers and firefighters.*

Seek to reconcile conflicts in legislation relating to tuition and fee exemptions at public institutions of higher education for certain peace officers and firefighters.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

### **HB 1341 (Walle/Zaffirini)**

*Relating to the manner of payment of tuition and mandatory fees at public institutions of higher education.*

Seek to eliminate inconsistencies in state law and the General Appropriations Act regarding tuition payment dates by giving each institution of higher education the freedom to set its own policy with regard to collection of tuition and mandatory fees. This bill also replaces specific references to semesters with more generic references to reduce confusion associated with registrations that take place outside of the traditional fall, spring, and summer model.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

### **HB 2907 (Branch/Carona)**

*Relating to the requirements for and procedures governing tuition equalization grants.*

Amends certain procedures governing tuition equalization grants.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

## **HB 2911 (Branch/Patrick, Dan)**

*Relating to guaranteed student loans and alternative education loans.*

Acknowledging existing federal law making the federal government the only issuer of guaranteed student loans, the Texas higher education loan authorities seek to make alternative education loans using the existing private activity bonding allocation and to change the method of allocating private activity bond authority.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

## **HB 2999 (Lewis/Zaffirini)**

*Relating to a fixed tuition rate program for certain students who transfer to a state university after completing an associate degree program.*

In part, provides that a general academic teaching institution may develop a fixed tuition rate program for qualified students who agree to transfer to the institution within 12 months after successfully earning an associate degree at a lower-division institution of higher education.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

## **HJR 130 (Branch/Birdwell)**

*Meeting requirements of the United States Department of Education concerning federal student aid by naming private institutions of higher education in the State of Texas that are authorized to operate educational programs.*

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

## **SB 28 (Zaffirini/Branch)**

*Relating to eligibility for a TEXAS grant and to administration of the TEXAS grant program.*

The state does not fully fund the TEXAS grant program and often there are significant numbers of students (30 percent of those eligible) who do not receive the grant. Many of these students showed academic promise while in high school. During times of budgetary constraints, the state must decide to most efficiently use limited dollars, and this change to TEXAS grants will help to maximize state grant dollars per graduate.

**Effective Date:** September 1, 2011.

## **SB 32 (Zaffirini/Branch)**

*Relating to the consolidation of related higher education programs governing tuition, fee exemptions, and waivers respective to specific target populations.*

This bill would consolidate all tuition exemptions and waivers into one chapter of the Texas Education Code.

**Effective Date:** January 1, 2012.

## **SB 639 (Van de Putte/Branch)**

*Relating to tuition and fee exemptions at public institutions of higher education for certain military personnel, veterans, and dependents residing in this state.*

Provides clarity, as sought by the THECB, relating to Hazlewood benefits transferring to military members' children. Seeks to ensure that veterans receive the benefits intended by the 81st Legislature and amends current law relating to tuition and fee exemptions for certain military personnel, veterans, and dependents residing in this state.

**Effective Date:** Effective immediately.

**SB 851 (Zaffirini/Branch)**

*Relating to a uniform deadline for student financial assistance for public institutions of higher education other than public junior colleges.*

Establishes a single statewide priority deadline for financial aid. This will address student confusion and ensure that the state can direct concentrated outreach efforts around a specific date. For clarity purposes: Does not apply to public junior colleges.

**Effective Date:** January 1, 2012.

**RELEVANT BILLS FAILING PASSAGE OR VETOED**

**HB 992 (Castro)**

*Relating to excess undergraduate credit hours at public institutions of higher education.*

Sought to prohibit a general academic institution from counting a dropped class for purposes of the six-course limit if the student dropped the class while enrolled at a public junior college and the student transferred to a general academic institution after earning at least 30 semester credits hour or an associate degree.

**SB 40 (Zaffirini)**

*Relating to the composition and functions of the Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation.*

The bill sought to allow the Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation (“TG”) to continue to manage their existing Federal Family Education Loan Program portfolio for the life of the loans and operate under the newly established Federal Direct Loan Program portfolio thereby allowing the state to continue to utilize the resources and services of TG.

**SB 354 (Wentworth)**

*Relating to the carrying of concealed handguns on the campuses of institutions of higher education.*

Sought to remove prohibition of the carrying of concealed handguns in Texas college and university buildings.

**SB 1581 (Ogden)**

*Relating to fiscal matters related to public and higher education.*

In relevant part, this bill was amended to include the language lifting the existing prohibition of the carrying of concealed handguns in Texas college and university buildings.

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- i For each public community/junior college district, the combined annual General Revenue Fund contributions to the Teacher Retirement System shall not exceed 6.0 percent in fiscal year 2012 and 6.4 percent in fiscal 2013.*
  - ii For each public community/junior college district, the combined annual General Revenue Fund contributions to the Optional Retirement Program shall not exceed 6.0 percent of each district’s unrestricted General Revenue appropriation in fiscal year 2012 and fiscal year 2013.*



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**Houston Community College will be the most relevant community college in the country. We will be the opportunity institution for every student we serve - essential to our community's success.**