

TACRAO Legislative Issues Committee 2017-2018 Committee Report

The TACRAO Legislative Issues Committee Members:

Debbie Gilchrist, chair-elect, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Dr. Bobbye Fry, University of the Incarnate Word

Sheila Gray, Texas Tech University

Chris Reed, Texas A&M University

The TACRAO Legislative Committee's first meeting was on November 6, 2017 at the annual conference in South Padre Island, Texas. The Committee has been monitoring several news sources and the Texas Legislative Online (TLO) website for information on what to expect when the 86th Legislature convenes in January. On July 17 and 19th, 2017 Debbie Gilchrist, Sheila Gray and Chris Reed attended the TACRAO University and Community College Issues Summer Meeting in Austin, Texas and provided an update on both Federal and State legislation and news.

Interim Charges

Below are a list of charges that lawmakers have been studying and discussing during the interim:

- Examine the rapid growth of dual credit course offerings across the state – *House Committee on Higher Education*
- Review current data available to the public about Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) and make recommendations, review the accountability system, and determine ways to measure the effectiveness of teachers prepared by individual programs – *House Committee on Higher Education*
- Review dual credit opportunities throughout the state - *Senate Committee on Education*
- Examine progress in achieving goals within the 60x30TX plan – *Senate Committee on Higher Education*
- Examine different models of student-focused funding for general academic institutions, including competency-based and performance funding models, and make recommendations - *Senate Committee on Higher Education*
- Monitor HB 2205 (84th) relating to the State Board for Educator Certification, educator preparation programs, educator certification, issuance of certain teaching permits, and certain procedures for investigating educator misconduct - *Senate Committee on Higher Education*
- Monitor SB 810 (85th) relating to open educational resources - *Senate Committee on Higher Education*
- Improve Transferability

Projected Economic Outlook for Texas

The Legislative Budget Board (LBB) met on July 11, 2018 and received testimony from the Comptroller of Public Accounts on the financial condition of the state. The LBB reported that the state's economic landscape is positive and a balance is projected to accrue in the treasury. However, reductions in revenue could occur due to supplemental appropriations such as Medicaid, Harvey related expenses and the state highway fund payback. In addition, unfavorable revisions to NAFTA and volatile oil process

could impact the Texas economy negatively. All Texas State agencies have been advised that baseline requests for General Revenue Funds and General Revenue Dedicated Funds may not exceed the sum of amounts expended in fiscal year 2018 and budgeted in fiscal year 2019. A supplemental schedule detailing how they would reduce the baseline request by an additional 10% in 2.5% increments in General Revenue and General Revenue Dedicated funds has also been requested.

November Elections

Approximately half the seats in the Texas Senate and every seat in the Texas House of Representatives are up for election/re-election this year. The Texas House will elect a new speaker to replace Joe Straus who is not seeking another term.

The 86th Texas Legislature will convene on Tuesday, January 8, 2019 at noon. The Legislative Issues Committee will continue to monitor and report to the TACRAO membership any proposed or passed laws that affect higher education.

Respectively submitted by

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