

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 800
By: Madla
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Historically, the southern sector of San Antonio has had limited access to certain higher educational opportunities. The Texas A&M University-Kingsville System Center - San Antonio, opened in the fall of 2000 on the campus of Alamo Community College District. Within two years, enrollment grew from 126 to 550 students, 44 percent of whom are full-time students. The Palo Alto Community College campus, built for 2,500 students, currently serves 7,500, in addition to the 550 students in the A&M center. The majority of the center's classes are being held in portable buildings.

Located in Killeen, the Tarleton State University System Center-Central Texas campus was the first University System Center created by the State of Texas using the Pathway Model. Since its creation in the fall of 1999, Tarleton-Central Texas has experienced phenomenal growth. Enrollment in spring of 2003 was 1722, a 36% increase since the Center's beginning in fall 1999. More than 70 full-time professional staff and faculty have been employed at the Center. Currently, twenty-three degree programs are available to Tarleton-CT students.

SB 800 would provide legislative recognition of the Texas A&M University-Kingsville System Center - San Antonio and Tarleton State University System Center-Central Texas similar to that of University of North Texas System Center (Dallas). S. B. 800 ensures the same status for the San Antonio and Killeen campuses as that for other developing campuses elsewhere in Texas.

Recognizing the realities of normal and expected growth of emerging campuses, SB 800 ensures future campus independence, if and only if, the emerging institutions demonstrate a sustainable student body and the organizational maturity to operate without structural and resource support of the "parent" institution. As proposed, S.B. 800 expedites the opening of Texas A&M University -- San Antonio and Texas A&M University-Central Texas if its enrollment numbers reach 2,500 students for one semester. Development of these campuses in growing areas of the state will accomplish the goals set forth by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's Closing the Gaps.

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

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 87, Education Code, by adding Subchapter K, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER K. TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY -- SAN ANTONIO

Sec. 87.841. TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY -- SAN ANTONIO. (a) Provides that Texas A&M University -- San Antonio is a general academic teaching institution in Bexar County and a component of The Texas A&M University System under the management

and control of The Texas A&M University System's board of regents (board).

(b) Authorizes the board to prescribe courses that lead to degrees customarily offered at leading American universities, and to award those degrees, including baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees in all fields of study. Prohibits any department, school, or degree program from being instituted without prior approval of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB).

(c) Provides that the board has the same powers and duties concerning Texas A&M University -- San Antonio as it does concerning Texas A&M University.

(d) Prohibits Texas A&M University -- San Antonio from operating as a general academic teaching institution until THECB certifies enrollment has reached the equivalent of 2,500 full-time students for one semester.

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 87, Education Code, by adding Subchapter L to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER L. TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY--CENTRAL TEXAS

Sec. 87.861 TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY--CENTRAL TEXAS. (a) Texas A&M University--Central Texas is a general academic teaching institution located in Bell County. The university is a component institution of The Texas A&M University System and is under the management and control of the board of regents of The Texas A&M University System.

(b) The board may prescribe courses leading to such customary degrees as are offered at leading American universities and may award those degrees. Those degrees may include baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral degrees in all fields of study, including professional degrees. No department, school, or degree program may be instituted except with the prior approval of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

(c) The board also has the same powers and duties concerning Texas A&M University--Central Texas as are conferred on the board by statute concerning Texas A&M University.

(d) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this subchapter, Texas A&M University--Central Texas may not operate as a general academic teaching institution until the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board certifies that enrollment at the Tarleton State System Center--Central Texas in Killeen has reached an enrollment equivalent of 2,500 full-time students for one semester.

SECTION 3. Provides that Section 61.056, Education Code (Review of Legislation Establishing Additional Institutions), does not apply to this Act. Provides that this Act does not affect the board's authority to operate a system center or branch campus of any component institution of The Texas A&M University System in Bexar County or Bell County.

SECTION 4. Provides that Subchapter J, Chapter 87, Education Code, is repealed.

SECTION 5. Provides that it is the intent of the legislature that the board of regents of The Texas A&M University System consult with existing general academic teaching institutions and community colleges in the Central Texas area as well as local governments and community leaders prior to a decision by the board to offer lower-division courses at Texas A&M University--Central Texas.

SECTION 6. Provides that in accordance with Article VII, Section 18(c), Texas Constitution (Texas A&M University System; University of Texas System; Bonds or Notes Payable from Income of Available University Fund), if this Act receives a two-thirds vote of all members

elected to each house, Texas A&M University -- San Antonio will be entitled to participate in the funding provided by Article VII, Section 18, Texas Constitution (Texas A&M University System; University of Texas System; Bonds or Notes Payable from Income of Available University Fund).

SECTION 7. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2003.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2003.