

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 1697  
By: McCall  
Higher Education  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

During the 77th Regular Session, the Legislature passed S.B. 353, establishing the Texas Engineering and Technical Consortium (TETC) for the purpose of increasing the number of engineering and computer science graduates from private and public Texas institutions of higher education and to increase collaborative efforts between universities, engineering and computer science departments, and private technology companies. S.B. 353 created a matching fund for state dollars to be matched to private, federal, or other funds raised by the consortium at a 1:1 match rate. \$10 million was funded for this program. Through the fundraising efforts of the consortium, the federal government has granted two earmarks of \$3 million and \$1 million; and the schools have applied for and been granted National Science Foundation grants targeted for this program.

Last session, however, the same money was also appropriated to the Governor's Office, and by the time the issue was resolved, there was only \$4.6 million left in the fund for the TETC program. Through a review of the program, it was determined that the Comptroller was not permitted to match funds not deposited in the state treasury. Therefore, NSF grants received directly by the schools were determined to be ineligible for matching funds.

H.B. 1697 clarifies that the intent of the original legislation was to match National Science Foundation or other grant money generated *by* and *for* TETC. H.B. 1697 also clarifies that the evaluation committee of peers from universities across the country is indeed an evaluation committee and *not* an advisory committee. This change would allow members of the committee to be reimbursed for duties arising out of the peer review process.

### **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 the Education Code by adding language to allow the state to match qualifying grants that are received directly by an eligible institution.

SECTION 2 - Amends the Education Code by clarifying that the peer review committee is indeed an evaluation committee and not an advisory committee, and that the evaluation committee is not subject to Chapter 2110 of the Government Code.

SECTION 3 - States that changes in the law apply only on or after the effective date.

SECTION 4 - Effective date.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

This Act takes effect September 1, 2005.