

By: West, Royce

S.B. No. 676

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT

2 relating to identifying which public institutions of higher
3 education in this state are comprehensive research universities of
4 the first class.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

6 SECTION 1. The purpose of this Act is to provide guidance
7 regarding the definition of a comprehensive research university of
8 the first class to enable a common understanding and the use of
9 common terminology in legislative decisions relating to the
10 designation of and support for universities of that character.

11 SECTION 2. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is
12 amended by adding Section 61.0818 to read as follows:

13 Sec. 61.0818. IDENTIFYING INSTITUTIONS AS COMPREHENSIVE
14 RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES OF THE FIRST CLASS. (a) The board shall
15 establish a system for designating a general academic teaching
16 institution as a comprehensive research university of the first
17 class and shall prescribe criteria to determine whether a general
18 academic teaching institution should be assigned that designation.
19 The board shall determine which general academic teaching
20 institutions merit the designation and shall periodically review
21 that determination.

22 (b) In prescribing the criteria for purposes of Subsection
23 (a), the board shall consider the criteria used by generally
24 recognized college and university classification systems to

1 identify those universities in the highest classification or
2 ranking. The board shall specifically consider whether to
3 prescribe criteria based on the following factors:

4 (1) the number, variety, and quality of an
5 institution's undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate, and
6 professional degree programs, the number of programs accredited by
7 a recognized accrediting agency or recognized nationally, the
8 institution's selectivity in admissions to each program, the
9 standard time required for a student to obtain a degree in each
10 program, the institution's graduation rates in each program, and
11 the institution's faculty-to-student classroom ratios;

12 (2) the degree to which writing and critical thought
13 are incorporated as elements in each undergraduate degree program,
14 the number of graduates of each undergraduate degree program who
15 enroll in selective graduate, postgraduate, and professional
16 degree programs, the level of graduate performance on licensing
17 examinations, the number, variety, and quality of honors programs
18 available at the institution, whether honors theses are required
19 for participation in those honors programs, and the availability of
20 independent study credits at the institution;

21 (3) the number of doctoral degrees awarded by the
22 institution, the number, variety, and quality of the programs in
23 which those degrees are awarded, and the number of students
24 enrolled in each program;

25 (4) the degree of faculty and student engagement in
26 research and other creative activities, the number of faculty and
27 students who engage in those activities, the resources applied by

1 the institution to those activities, the number, variety, and
2 quality of degree programs in which those activities occur, the
3 success of the institution in receiving federal research and
4 development funding, and the number of faculty who are members of
5 nationally recognized academic associations such as the National
6 Academy of Sciences or the National Academy of Engineering;

7 (5) the quality of the libraries of the institution;

8 (6) the amount of institutional endowment and state
9 revenue available on behalf of each student;

10 (7) whether the institution is a member of the
11 Association of American Universities, the Association of Research
12 Libraries, or another similar entity that recognizes institutional
13 excellence on a national level; and

14 (8) alumni involvement in institution activities.

15 (c) In prescribing the criteria for purposes of Subsection
16 (a), the board must include any criteria the commissioner of higher
17 education considers appropriate to achieve the purposes of this
18 section.

19 (d) The board shall administer this section with the
20 assistance of an advisory committee composed of at least five but
21 not more than 15 higher education experts or scholars from any
22 state. The commissioner of higher education shall select the
23 members of the advisory committee. Chapter 2110, Government Code,
24 does not apply to the advisory committee.

25 (e) Not later than October 1, 2006, the board shall
26 establish the initial criteria and make its initial determinations
27 under this section and report the board's actions to each

1 legislative standing committee and subcommittee with primary
2 jurisdiction over higher education. This subsection expires
3 January 1, 2007.

4 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
5 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
6 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
7 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
8 Act takes effect September 1, 2005.