

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1050
By: Zaffirini
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Research has demonstrated the effectiveness of work-study programs that involve peer mentoring and tutoring in improving the retention and graduation rates of college students involved in the programs. However, the limited number of job opportunities available has been a barrier to expanding such programs.

As proposed, S.B. 1050 requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to develop a work-study mentorship program under which eligible college students are authorized to mentor and counsel other students. The bill also provides for the funding of the program, authorizes students to serve as mentors in GO Centers and in high schools, and authorizes nonprofit organizations to partner with institutions of higher education to pursue the objectives of the program.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 2 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

SECTION 1: Amends Section 56.079 of the Education Code, relating to a work-study student mentorship program. Defines “coordinating board,” “eligible institution,” and “participating entity.” Deletes the existing definition of “general academic teaching institution.”

Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), in accordance with this section and THECB rules, to administer a work-study mentorship program under which students enrolled at participating eligible institutions who meet the eligibility requirements for employment in the Texas college work-study program (program) are authorized to be employed by entities participating in the program to mentor students at participating eligible institutions or high school students in participating school districts or counsel high school students at GO Centers or similar high school-based recruiting centers designed to improve student access to higher education.

Provides that to participate in the work-study student mentorship program, an eligible institution and one or more school districts or nonprofit organizations interested in jointly participating in the program shall file with the THECB a joint memorandum of understanding detailing the roles and responsibilities of the participating entities.

Requires the THECB, in consultation with eligible institutions, school districts, and nonprofit organizations expressing interest in participating in the program, to develop a standard contract establishing the roles and responsibilities of participating entities to be used as a model for a memorandum of understanding entered into by participating entities.

Sets forth the required and authorized actions of the THECB with regard to funding the program. Provides that the THECB shall establish criteria to ensure that the participating eligible institution's contribution toward the wages and benefits of a student employed as a mentor under the work-study student mentorship program is matched by funds provided by the participating entity benefiting from the services of the employed student in an amount that is at least equal to the amount of the participating eligible institution's contribution; may accept appropriate in-kind contributions from participating nonprofit organizations to satisfy the matching funds

requirement of this subsection; and may waive the matching funds requirement of this subsection for a participating entity that meets criteria established by the THECB for a waiver.

Provides that the THECB shall partner with participating nonprofit organizations to establish additional GO Centers or similar high school-based recruiting centers designed to improve student access to higher education in this state.

Requires the THECB to ensure that each student employed under the program receives appropriate training and supervision and is paid at least the minimum wage required by law.

Authorizes the THECB to accept gifts, grants, and donations from any public or private source for the purposes of this section. Makes conforming, nonsubstantive and clarifying changes. Requires each eligible institution participating in the program to submit to the THECB a report regarding the progress resulting from the institution's participation in the program. Sets forth specific content requirements for the report. Makes other conforming, nonsubstantive and clarifying changes.

SECTION 2: Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to adopt rules relating to the administration of the program under Section 56.079 of the Education Code, as amended by this Act, as soon as practicable after the Act's effective date.

SECTION 3: Effective date.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2007.