

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
81R2110 KEL-D

S.B. 44
By: Zaffirini
Higher Education
2/27/2009
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Evidence shows that undergraduate research programs are effective in improving student retention and graduation rates, increasing students' likelihood to pursue a doctoral degree, and increasing interest in careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. By setting aside advanced research program funds specifically for undergraduates, the pool of potential graduate students will grow while providing an enriching research experience.

As proposed, S.B. 44 requires that a portion of the advanced research program funds provided by Section 142.002, Education Code, be used to support and provide research opportunities for undergraduate students.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 142.002, Education Code, to include students in addition to faculty members as persons for whom the advanced research program (program) is established to encourage and provide support for basic research conducted in certain disciplines and subjects.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 142.003, Education Code, by adding Subsection (d), as follows:

(d) Requires the advisory committee appointed by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), for each program year, to recommend to THECB a percentage of available program money to be used to fund projects in which undergraduate students conduct or have a substantial role in conducting the research. Requires THECB, not later than August 31 of each year, to determine the applicable amount of set-aside for the program year and publish that amount on THECB's website. Authorizes money set aside under this subsection that, due to lack of qualified proposals, is not awarded as prescribed by this subsection during the program year to be used to fund other projects in the same program year or in a subsequent program year in the same fiscal biennium.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.