

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
81R1546 KJM-D

S.B. 567
By: Hegar
Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The University of Houston-Victoria was created at a time when upper-division universities were established to provide access to bachelor's and master's degrees by offering junior, senior and graduate level courses. These upper-level institutions, by design, were commuter schools with undergraduate enrollment limited to transfer students from area community schools.

While the upper-level model was a good starting point, eventually it was uniformly abandoned through a process called "downward expansion," or the lifting of restrictions for the admission of freshman and sophomore students. It became clear that the upper-level model did not allow the university to reach its full potential in terms of numbers of students, diversity of students, richness of learning and efficient use of faculty and facilities.

Only four upper-division universities remain in the nation, the University of Houston-Victoria being one of them.

As proposed, S.B. 567 expands the University of Houston-Victoria from an upper-division university to a four-year university.

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 111.96, Education Code, as follows:

Sec. 111.96. ESTABLISHMENT: SCOPE. (a) Requires the board of regents of the University of Houston (regents) to maintain an educational institution in the City of Victoria. Deletes existing text that requires the regents to establish an upper-level educational institution in Victoria.

(b) Requires the institution to offer undergraduate and graduate level programs, rather than be organized to offer junior, senior, and graduate level programs.

(c) Deletes existing text that authorizes the institution to enroll a student who has successfully completed at least 30 semester credit hours of course work at a public or private institution of higher education and who is concurrently enrolled in another public or private institution of higher education.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.