

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
81R7454 JRJ-D

S.B. 2189
By: Lucio
Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Texas State Technical College (TSTC) Harlingen desires to offer an associate of science (AS) degree to complement its mission to offer advanced and emerging associate degrees for areas of need and to facilitate maximum upward articulation of TSTC--Harlingen graduates to bachelor of science (BS) degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines at Texas universities. Approval of this request builds the capacity for state and national STEM graduates in Texas and national designated high-growth, high-demand job disciplines.

Currently Chapter 135 (Texas State Technical College System), Education Code, appears to restrict TSTC--Harlingen to associate of applied science (AAS) degrees and certificate offerings. Even though TSTC satisfies the academic requirements for offering an AS degree and could do so without additional cost, it is precluded from offering the AS degree simply due to the apparent restrictions in Chapter 135. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) has confirmed that TSTC--Harlingen possesses the academic course inventory and the credentialed faculty necessary to effectively and economically offer such degrees. According to SACS, under the standards applied to all higher education institutions in Texas, TSTC--Harlingen is authorized to offer all levels of associate degrees but must obtain approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB).

As proposed, S.B. 2189 authorizes TSTC--Harlingen to provide an associate of science degree if THECB makes certain determinations.

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 135.011, Education Code, as follows:

Sec. 135.011. DEFINITIONS. Sets forth for purposes of this chapter, rather than this section, definitions for certain terms.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 135.51, Education Code, to authorize the board of regents of the Texas State Technical College (TSTC) System to offer and award an associate of science degree in a field of study at TSTC--Harlingen if the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board determines that the degree in that field of study is appropriate to the role and mission of the system, and meets the educational or workforce needs of the region in which the campus is located.

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