

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 81ST LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

April 17, 2009

TO: Honorable Judith Zaffirini, Chair, Senate Committee on Higher Education

FROM: John S. O'Brien, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: SB1249 by Zaffirini (relating to the creation of a pilot program to improve curricula alignment between junior colleges and general academic teaching institutions for engineering degree program.), **Committee Report 1st House, Substituted**

Estimated Two-year Net Impact to General Revenue Related Funds for SB1249, Committee Report 1st House, Substituted: a negative impact of (\$363,674) through the biennium ending August 31, 2011.
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General Revenue-Related Funds, Five-Year Impact:

Fiscal Year	Probable Net Positive/(Negative) Impact to General Revenue Related Funds
2010	(\$192,855)
2011	(\$170,819)
2012	(\$98,819)
2013	\$0
2014	\$0

All Funds, Five-Year Impact:

Fiscal Year	Probable Savings/(Cost) from General Revenue Fund 1
2010	(\$192,855)
2011	(\$170,819)
2012	(\$98,819)
2013	\$0
2014	\$0

Fiscal Year	Change in Number of State Employees from FY 2009
2010	1.5
2011	1.5
2012	1.5
2013	1.5
2014	1.5

Fiscal Analysis

The bill provides for a pilot program to develop and assess methods of increasing the number of students earning a baccalaureate degree in engineering. The program would require standards for achievement of disciplinary fundamentals, provide a process for transitioning from the associate's

level to the baccalaureate level, and establish an orientation and advising methodology to support students choosing the engineering disciplines. The bill requires the development of a statewide articulated transfer curriculum in engineering disciplines, up to the level of the associate's degree, that would satisfy the lower-division requirements in specific engineering disciplines and reinforces the lower limit of the core curriculum sequence at 42 semester credit hours, unless otherwise approved by the Higher Education Coordinating Board for programs engaged in field-of-study curricula or other statewide articulated transfer curricula.

Not later than January 1, 2011, the Higher Education Coordinating Board, with the assistance of advisory committees, would develop the statewide articulated transfer curricula and report to the legislature regarding the board's progress in developing and evaluating the program. The program shall:

(1) develop levels of academic attainment, including, if feasible, standard associate's degrees: (A) for specific engineering disciplines, including biomedical, chemical, civil, computer, electrical, environmental, industrial, mechanical, nuclear, and petroleum engineering; or (B) that provide a foundation in any engineering discipline; (2) develop a well-defined process for transitioning students who earn an associate's degree or other level of academic attainment in an engineering discipline into an accredited engineering degree program at a four-year institution; and (3) establish methods to provide orientation and advising to support students in choosing an engineering discipline and in completing a baccalaureate degree in engineering.

Methodology

The Higher Education Coordinating Board has indicated that the bill would require the convening of nine advisory committees. One advisory committee for mechanical engineering is already being piloted. Managing the nine committees at once would require one FTE employee (program director) and 0.5 FTE admin tech employee for fiscal year 2010 through 2012. Salaries and benefits and other costs associated with these FTEs would be \$120,855 in fiscal year 2010 and \$98,819 in fiscal year 2011 and 2012. By the end of the fiscal year 2012, the implementation of the projects required in the bill should be completed, and only the evaluation of the projects would remain. Evaluation could be handled by existing staff.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board has also estimated the travel costs associated with the advisory committees based on the following assumptions. Each committee would have 20 members and each committee would meet once each year. The average travel cost per each member per meeting would be of \$400. Based on these assumptions the travel costs per year would be \$72,000 (20 x 9 x 1 x \$400) per year.

Local Government Impact

No fiscal implication to units of local government is anticipated.

Source Agencies: 710 Texas A&M University System Administrative and General Offices, 720 The University of Texas System Administration, 758 Texas State University System, 769 University of North Texas System Administration, 781 Higher Education Coordinating Board

LBB Staff: JOB, KK, RT, GO