



13 MAY 14
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FLOOR AMENDMENT NO. _____

BY: _____

1 Amend C.S.S.B. No. 215 (house committee printing) by adding
2 the following appropriately numbered SECTIONS to the bill and
3 renumbering subsequent SECTIONS of the bill accordingly:

4 SECTION _____. Subchapter A, Chapter 56, Education Code, is
5 amended by adding Section 56.009 to read as follows:

6 Sec. 56.009. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR STUDENTS ENROLLED AT
7 WGU TEXAS OR SIMILAR ONLINE COLLEGES OR UNIVERSITIES. (a) In this
8 section, "general academic teaching institution" and "private or
9 independent institution of higher education" have the meanings
10 assigned by Section 61.003.

11 (b) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board by rule
12 shall:

13 (1) provide student financial assistance grants
14 during the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 academic years for students
15 enrolled:

16 (A) at WGU Texas, or a similar nonprofit,
17 tax-exempt, regionally accredited college or university operating
18 in accordance with a memorandum of understanding with this state
19 pursuant to an executive order issued by the governor and offering
20 competency-based, exclusively online or other distance education;
21 and

22 (B) in a degree program approved by the
23 coordinating board for purposes of this section; and

24 (2) in consultation with representatives of the
25 coordinating board's financial aid advisory committee,
26 representatives of financial aid offices of institutions of higher
27 education and private or independent institutions of higher
28 education offering online or other distance education courses and
29 programs similar to those offered by nonprofit colleges or

1 universities described by Subdivision (1)(A), and representatives
2 of financial aid offices of nonprofit colleges or universities
3 described by Subdivision (1)(A):

4 (A) conduct a study regarding, and prepare
5 proposed draft legislation for, the creation of a state-funded
6 student financial assistance program:

7 (i) that is available only to students of
8 nonprofit, tax-exempt, regionally accredited universities or
9 colleges domiciled in this state that offer competency-based,
10 exclusively online or other distance education; and

11 (ii) under which the highest priority is
12 given to awarding grants to those eligible students who demonstrate
13 the greatest financial need; and

14 (B) not later than October 1, 2014, submit to
15 each standing committee of the legislature with primary
16 jurisdiction of higher education a report of the results of the
17 study conducted under Paragraph (A), together with the proposed
18 draft legislation prepared under that paragraph.

19 (c) The rules adopted under Subsection (b)(1) must
20 prescribe eligibility requirements for an award of a grant under
21 that subdivision, including:

22 (1) a requirement that a student:

23 (A) be a resident of this state; and

24 (B) demonstrate financial need; and

25 (2) any additional eligibility requirements, such as
26 academic achievement, satisfactory academic progress, course load,
27 or course completion requirements, that the coordinating board
28 considers reasonable and appropriate for students enrolled in
29 online or other distance education programs.

30 (d) The amount of a grant awarded to a student under
31 Subsection (b)(1) for an academic year may not exceed the lesser of:

1 (1) the amount prescribed under Section 61.227(c) as
2 the maximum annual amount of a tuition equalization grant paid to a
3 student; or

4 (2) the amount of the difference between:

5 (A) the tuition charged to the student by the
6 college or university in which the student is enrolled for that
7 academic year; and

8 (B) the average tuition charged to a similarly
9 situated student by a general academic teaching institution for
10 that academic year, as determined by the coordinating board.

11 (e) This section expires January 1, 2016.

12 SECTION _____. (a) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating
13 Board shall adopt any rules necessary under Section 56.009,
14 Education Code, as added by this Act, as soon as practicable after
15 this Act takes effect. For that purpose, the coordinating board may
16 adopt the initial rules in the manner provided by law for emergency
17 rules.

18 (b) The coordinating board shall begin awarding grants in
19 accordance with Section 56.009(b)(1), Education Code, as added by
20 this Act, as soon as practicable after this Act takes effect.

