

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
83R1919 AED-D

S.B. 1113
By: Zaffirini
Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Texas Research Incentive Program (TRIP) awards matching funds to an eligible institution designated as an emerging research university under the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's (THECB) Accountability System. Matching funds are based upon gifts or endowments given by private sources for the purpose of enhancing research activities at the institution, including a gift or endowment for endowed chairs, professorships, research facilities, research equipment, program costs, or graduate research stipends or fellowships.

Currently, THECB deems ineligible the funds from gifts assigned to undergraduate research; however, only undergraduate financial aid, such as scholarships and financial aid grants, were intended to be excluded from TRIP matching funds. This restriction is reflected in Section 62.123(b)(2) of the Texas Education Code, which clearly states that eligible institutions are not entitled to matching funds for a gift for undergraduate scholarships or grants. No such exclusion exists in statute for undergraduate research. To best accomplish the goals of TRIP, emerging research universities should be able to match private donations tied to undergraduate research.

S.B. 1113 clarifies the distinction between undergraduate financial aid and undergraduate research and clarifies the eligibility of private gifts that specifically apportion funds for undergraduate research. The clarification would provide experiential, academic opportunities to undergraduate students and incent universities to pursue private matching funding sources for such research. S.B. 1113 also clarifies that scholarships, fellowships, and grants in the form of financial aid are ineligible for matching funds.

As proposed, S.B. 1113 amends current law relating to matching private grants given to enhance an additional research activity at institutions of higher education.

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 62.123(a), Education Code, to entitle an eligible institution that receives gifts or endowments from private sources in a state fiscal year for the purpose of enhancing research activities at the institution, including a gift or endowment for endowed chairs, professorships, facilities, equipment, program costs, graduate stipends or fellowships, or undergraduate research, to receive, out of funds appropriated for the purposes of the program for that fiscal year, a matching grant in an amount determined according to certain rates.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2013.