

By: Villarreal

H.B. No. 1868

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT  
2 relating to conditioning certain TEXAS grant awards on a grant  
3 recipient's participation in a student engagement program.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

5 SECTION 1. Section 56.301, Education Code, is amended by  
6 adding Subdivision (2-a) to read as follows:

7 (2-a) "General academic teaching institution" has the  
8 meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

9 SECTION 2. Section 56.305(a), Education Code, is amended to  
10 read as follows:

11 (a) After initially qualifying for a TEXAS grant, a person  
12 may continue to receive a TEXAS grant during each semester or term  
13 in which the person is enrolled at an eligible institution only if  
14 the person:

15 (1) meets financial need requirements as defined by  
16 the coordinating board;

17 (2) is enrolled in an undergraduate degree or  
18 certificate program at an eligible institution;

19 (3) is enrolled for at least three-fourths of a full  
20 course load for an undergraduate student, as determined by the  
21 coordinating board;

22 (4) makes satisfactory academic progress toward an  
23 undergraduate degree or certificate;

24 (5) if applicable under Section 56.3055, participates

1 in a student engagement program as required by that section; and

2 (6) [~~5~~] complies with any additional nonacademic  
3 requirement adopted by the coordinating board.

4 SECTION 3. Subchapter M, Chapter 56, Education Code, is  
5 amended by adding Section 56.3055 to read as follows:

6 Sec. 56.3055. ADDITIONAL CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY

7 REQUIREMENT: STUDENT ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM. (a) Each person who  
8 enrolls as an entering undergraduate student at a general academic  
9 teaching institution and receives a TEXAS grant from that  
10 institution must participate in a student engagement program  
11 sponsored by the institution and selected for the person by the  
12 institution. Subject to Subsection (e), the person must complete  
13 the program during the person's first academic year at the  
14 institution.

15 (b) Before each academic year begins, a general academic  
16 teaching institution awarding TEXAS grants shall:

17 (1) develop one or more student engagement programs  
18 designed to increase student persistence, retention, and  
19 graduation rates; and

20 (2) determine the degree of program participation  
21 necessary for a grant recipient to satisfy Subsection (a) and the  
22 manner in which to document that participation.

23 (c) Not later than the seventh class day of the fall  
24 semester, the institution shall communicate to each applicable  
25 grant recipient information regarding the program or programs  
26 developed by the institution under Subsection (b) and the manner in  
27 which the recipient may satisfy the requirements of this section.

1       (d) A student engagement program may be operated through any  
2 appropriate means, including:

3           (1) mentoring activity;

4           (2) a small group seminar or other learning community;

5 or

6           (3) an undergraduate research project.

7       (e) The coordinating board may adopt rules to administer  
8 this section, including a rule to allow a person to receive a TEXAS  
9 grant without participating in a student engagement program or  
10 after delaying that participation if the person is able to show  
11 hardship or other good cause that affects the person's ability to  
12 satisfy the requirements of this section. For purposes of this  
13 subsection, hardship or other good cause includes a severe illness  
14 or other debilitating condition, responsibility for the care of a  
15 sick, injured, or needy person, or active duty or other service in  
16 the United States armed forces.

17       (f) In adopting rules under Subsection (e), the  
18 coordinating board shall appoint and consult with an advisory  
19 committee composed of institutional business officers, financial  
20 aid administrators, recognized student engagement experts, student  
21 engagement program administrators, and undergraduate students.

22       (g) This section does not apply to a person who first  
23 receives a TEXAS grant for a semester or term before the 2014 fall  
24 semester.

25       (h) Not later than December 31, 2018, each general academic  
26 teaching institution shall submit to the coordinating board a  
27 report that contains the following:

1           (1) the rate of participation of the institution's  
2 TEXAS grant recipients in student engagement programs;

3           (2) persistence, retention, and graduation rates for  
4 its TEXAS grant recipients, as compared to those rates for other  
5 students at the institution with similar characteristics, such as  
6 college readiness, income, or racial or ethnic background; and

7           (3) the institution's plans for improving persistence,  
8 retention, and graduation rates for its TEXAS grant recipients.

9           (i) Each general academic teaching institution shall  
10 attempt to consolidate the report required by Subsection (h) with  
11 its other relevant reports to the coordinating board regarding the  
12 TEXAS grant program.

13           (j) Subsections (g), (h), and (i) and this subsection expire  
14 December 31, 2019.

15           SECTION 4. The change in law made by this Act to Subchapter  
16 M, Chapter 56, Education Code, applies beginning with grants  
17 awarded for the 2014-2015 academic year, but does not affect the  
18 amount of or entitlement to any grant awarded before the effective  
19 date of this Act.

20           SECTION 5. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
21 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
22 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
23 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
24 Act takes effect September 1, 2013.