

By: Branch

H.B. No. 2755

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1
2 relating to authorizing participation in state-funded student
3 financial assistance programs by certain students of Western
4 Governors University Texas or similar online nonprofit
5 universities.

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

7 SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 56, Education Code, is
8 amended by adding Section 56.009 to read as follows:

9 Sec. 56.009. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR STUDENTS ENROLLED AT
10 WESTERN GOVERNORS UNIVERSITY TEXAS OR SIMILAR ONLINE UNIVERSITIES.

11 (a) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board by rule shall
12 provide for the participation in the state-funded student financial
13 assistance programs that the coordinating board is authorized under
14 this title to administer, including a program under this chapter or
15 under Chapter 52 or 61, by students enrolled:

16 (1) at Western Governors University Texas, or a
17 similar nonprofit university operating in accordance with a
18 memorandum of understanding with this state pursuant to an
19 executive order issued by the governor and offering exclusively
20 online or other distance education; and

21 (2) in a degree program approved by the coordinating
22 board for purposes of this section and accredited by an appropriate
23 accrediting organization recognized by the coordinating board.

24 (b) In the rules adopted under this section, the

1 coordinating board may modify course load, course completion, or
2 other eligibility requirements as appropriate for students
3 enrolled in online or other distance education programs, and may
4 prorate amounts of aid awarded considering course loads and costs
5 of enrollment for those students.

6 SECTION 2. (a) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating
7 Board shall adopt any rules necessary under Section 56.009,
8 Education Code, as added by this Act, as soon as practicable after
9 this Act takes effect. For that purpose, the coordinating board may
10 adopt the initial rules in the manner provided by law for emergency
11 rules.

12 (b) The coordinating board shall begin awarding student
13 financial aid in accordance with Section 56.009, Education Code, as
14 added by this Act, as soon as practicable after this Act takes
15 effect.

16 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
17 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
18 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
19 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
20 Act takes effect September 1, 2013.