

By: Faircloth

H.B. No. 2637

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1  
2 relating to authorization by the Texas Higher Education  
3 Coordinating Board for certain public junior colleges to offer  
4 baccalaureate degree programs.

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

6 SECTION 1. Section 130.0012, Education Code, is amended by  
7 amending Subsections (a), (b), and (e) and adding Subsections  
8 (b-4), (b-5), (b-6), and (g-1) to read as follows:

9 (a) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board may  
10 [~~shall~~] authorize public junior colleges to offer baccalaureate  
11 degree programs in the fields of applied science, [~~and~~] applied  
12 technology, and nursing under this section. Offering a  
13 baccalaureate degree program under this section does not otherwise  
14 alter the role and mission of a public junior college.

15 (b) The coordinating board:

16 (1) shall authorize baccalaureate degree programs at  
17 each public junior college that previously participated in a pilot  
18 project to offer baccalaureate degree programs; and

19 (2) may authorize baccalaureate degree programs at one  
20 or more public junior colleges that offer a degree program in the  
21 field of nursing and have demonstrated a workforce need.

22 (b-4) The coordinating board shall establish a pilot  
23 project to examine the feasibility and effectiveness of authorizing  
24 not more than two baccalaureate degree programs, one in the field of

1 applied science or applied technology, and one in the field of  
2 nursing at a public junior college with a main campus located on a  
3 barrier island and at a public junior college with not more than  
4 three main campuses located in a county with a population greater  
5 than 3.3 million.

6 (b-5) Not later than January 1, 2019, the coordinating board  
7 shall prepare a progress report on the pilot project established  
8 under Subsection (b-4). Not later than January 1, 2021, the  
9 coordinating board shall prepare a report on the effectiveness of  
10 the pilot project, including any recommendations for legislative  
11 action regarding the offering of baccalaureate degree programs in  
12 the fields of applied science, applied technology, and nursing by a  
13 public junior college. The coordinating board shall deliver a copy  
14 of each report to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the  
15 speaker of the house of representatives, and the chair of the  
16 standing committee of each house of the legislature with primary  
17 jurisdiction over higher education. Unless the authority to  
18 continue offering a baccalaureate degree program in the fields of  
19 applied science, applied technology, and nursing is continued by  
20 the legislature, a public junior college may not:

21 (1) enroll a new student in a baccalaureate degree  
22 program under the pilot project after the 2022 fall semester;

23 (2) offer junior-level or senior-level courses for  
24 those degree programs after the 2025 fall semester, unless the  
25 coordinating board authorizes the college to offer those courses;  
26 or

27 (3) award a baccalaureate degree under the pilot

1 project after the 2025 fall semester, unless the coordinating board  
2 approves the awarding of the degree.

3 (b-6) This subsection and Subsections (b-4) and (b-5)  
4 expire on the first December 31 following the first regular  
5 legislative session that occurs after the sixth anniversary of the  
6 date a public junior college offering a degree program in the fields  
7 of applied science, applied technology, and nursing under  
8 Subsection (b-4) meets the accreditation requirements of  
9 Subsection (c).

10 (e) In determining what baccalaureate degree programs are  
11 to be offered, the coordinating board shall consider the following  
12 factors:

13 (1) the workforce need for the degree programs in the  
14 region served by the junior college;

15 (2) how those degree programs would complement the  
16 other programs and course offerings of the junior college and  
17 whether the associate degree program offered by the junior college  
18 in the same field has been successful;

19 (3) whether those degree programs would unnecessarily  
20 duplicate the degree programs offered by other institutions of  
21 higher education or whether a partnership with other institutions  
22 of higher education is possible; ~~and~~

23 (4) the ability of the junior college to support the  
24 program with student enrollment and the adequacy of the junior  
25 college's facilities, faculty, administration, libraries, and  
26 other resources; and

27 (5) whether the junior college meets the taxable

1 property valuation amount established in Section 130.032.

2 (g-1) Notwithstanding Subsection (g), a degree program  
3 established under Subsection (b-4) may be funded solely by a public  
4 junior college's proportionate share of state appropriations under  
5 Section 130.003, local funds, and private sources. This subsection  
6 expires January 1, 2022.

7 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
8 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
9 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
10 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
11 Act takes effect September 1, 2017.