

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
86R13041 KEL-F

S.B. 1680
By: West
Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Paul Quinn College (PQC) is a private, faith-based, four-year, liberal arts-inspired college founded in 1872. PQC is a federally-qualified Historically Black College (HBCU).

In 2011, PQC relinquished its regional accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). SACSCOC accreditation is a statutory requirement for a private or independent institution of higher education in Texas to be approved to receive funds under the Texas Tuition Equalization Grant (TEG) program for its eligible students.

Although PQC relinquished its regional accreditation in 2011, the institution has remained a nationally-accredited institution and is accredited by the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS) which the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) recognized as an accreditor.

Under the leadership of its current president, Dr. Michael Sorrell, PQC has in the last four years introduced a new model of higher education: the urban "Work College." Federal rules required that PQC be in full compliance with the Federal Work College statute for two years prior to application. PQC met that time table and in Spring 2017, the institution was officially recognized by the United States Department of Education as a Work College under 20 U.S.C Section 1087-58. PQC is the first urban Work College in Texas and only the eighth Work College in the country.

The stated purpose of 20 U.S.C. Section 1087-58 is "to recognize, encourage, and promote the use of comprehensive work-learning-service programs as a valuable educational approach when it is an integral part of the institution's educational program and a part of a financial plan which decreases reliance on grants and loans."

PQC's status as a federally-recognized Work College and its financial model have resulted in a significant increase in enrollment.

In addition to increased enrollment, PQC has continued to strengthen the institution's financial picture. Not only has PQC produced record surpluses the last few years, the institution has also achieved average financial strength scores of 2.8 (out of 3.0) for the past two years.

S.B. 1680 would amend Section 61.222 of the Texas Education Code governing the administration of TEG to allow THECB to approve a private or independent institution of higher education as defined by Section 61.003 that is located within this state, was previously qualified but no longer holds the same accreditation as public institutions of higher education, is currently accredited by an accreditor that is recognized by THECB, is a currently designated as a "Work College" as defined by 20 U.S.C. Section 1087-58, and is currently participating in the federal financial aid program under 20 U.S.C. Section 1070a.

As proposed, S.B. 1680 amends current law relating to the approval of certain private or independent institutions of higher education to participate in the tuition equalization grant program.

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 61.222, Education Code, by adding Subsection (d), as follows:

(d) Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to approve a private or independent institution of higher education as defined by Section 61.003 (Definitions) that previously qualified under Subsection (a) (relating to approval by THECB of certain private or independent colleges or universities) but no longer holds the same accreditation as public institutions of higher education. Requires an institution, to qualify under this subsection, to be:

- (1) accredited by an accreditor recognized by THECB;
- (2) a work college, as that term is defined by 20 U.S.C. Section 1087–58; and
- (3) participating in the federal financial aid program under 20 U.S.C. Section 1070a.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2019.