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Texas House of Representatives
Committee on Higher Education
Interim Charge One, Request for Information

The University of Texas System

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Interim Charge 1:

Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 86th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure intended legislative outcome of all legislation, including the following:

HB 1638 (85R), which relates to statewide goals for dual credit programs. Review best practices for providing opportunities to high school students to earn college credit while ensuring that courses taken reflect authentic, college-level rigor.

In August 2018, the University of Texas System (UT System) released a study on dual credit that is among the most comprehensive in the nation. The study sheds light on how dual credit programs affect graduation rates and student debt as well as the pros and cons of dual credit from both student and faculty perspectives. The study also looked at the consequences of the exponential enrollment growth in dual credit programs, among other factors. For its study, the UT System looked at the outcomes of approximately 135,000 students who entered a UT academic institution between 2010 and 2015 and tracked the students for six years.

Findings of the study include:

- Dual credit students are two times more likely than students entering college with no dual credit to graduate in four years.
- Among students who graduate in four years, dual credit students, on average, graduate one semester earlier compared to students with no prior college credit.
- Students reported that dual credit provides early exposure to college that benefited them when taking college courses after graduating from high school.
- Dual credit does not significantly reduce student loan debt when taking into account students' financial aid, unless students enter with at least 60 or more semester credit hours.

The full report is posted on the [UT System website](#) and includes additional findings, as well as a detailed explanation of the methodology.

The study was one of many efforts the UT System spearheaded to examine the impact of dual credit on student success. The UT System and the Texas Association of Community Colleges convened a task force in February 2017, to bring together diverse stakeholders to assess the landscape, examine data and develop policy and practice solutions. Its report made recommendations in three areas: access and equity, funding, and alignment. It also made a foundational recommendation to create a statewide dual credit advisory committee to provide enhanced coordination, cohesion and communication to better serve students and help achieve the goals of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's 60x30TX Higher Education Plan. The task force [issued recommendations](#) on how Texas can address dual credit opportunities and challenges.

SB 18, which relates to the protection of expressive activities at public institutions of higher education. Monitor the process by which institutions of higher education implement policies to protect the expressive rights of persons guaranteed by the constitutions of the United States and of this state.

1. What have institutions done to protect the expressive rights of persons while also maintaining an orderly and safe learning environment?

The University of Texas System Board of Regents in consultation with the U. T. System Office of General Counsel approved all institutional policies pursuant to SB 18 at its regular meeting on May 6, 2020. The adopted policies can be found at https://www.utsystem.edu/sites/default/files/offices/board-of-regents/board-meetings/agenda-book-items/AcademicInstitutions_Policies-Regarding-Speech-Expression-Public-Assembly.pdf.

The applicable U.T. System Board of Regents' Rules and Regulations can be found at <https://www.utsystem.edu/board-of-regents/rules/40501-speech-and-assembly>, <https://www.utsystem.edu/board-of-regents/rules/80101-category-of-facilities-and-authorized-users>, and <https://www.utsystem.edu/board-of-regents/rules/80103-solicitation>. A summary of the substantive changes to these Rules follows below.

Regents' Rule 40501 – Speech and Assembly

Provides that the common outdoor areas of campus are traditional public forums. Notes approval of or fee for use of a facility by an off-campus speaker must comply with the provision of the bill that adds Texas Education Code § 51.9315(h). Defines Off-Campus speaker for purposes of the Rule as an individual unaffiliated with UT System who is presented as a speaker by a registered student, faculty, or staff organization.

Regents' Rule 80101 – Category of Facilities and Authorized Users

Provides that the common outdoor areas of campus are traditional public forums.

Regents' Rule 80103 – Solicitation

Provides that engaging in expressive activities, as defined by SB 18, in a common outdoor area of a campus is one of the exceptions to the general solicitation prohibition.

Additionally, the bill requires that, by December 1, 2020, each institution submit to the Governor and Legislature and post on its website a report regarding its implementation of the bill.

SB 25, which relates to measures to facilitate the transfer, academic progress, and timely graduation of students in public higher education. Monitor the process by which the Higher Education Coordinating Board adopts rules via negotiated rulemaking. Monitor the progress of institutions developing recommended course sequences and the progress of the feasibility study to implement statewide meta majors.

1. In what ways can data collection and sharing between THECB and TEA improve and assist institutions with college credit transferability?
 - The state of Texas has an excellent data collection system that collects both K-12 and postsecondary data. These data are stored at the Texas Education Research Centers (ERC). Due to the limited data access, restrictions, and costs (\$10,000 per year per UT System researcher/\$15,000 per year per outside UT System researcher) associated with the ERC, this comprehensive and robust Texas dataset is not reaching its full potential to examine the transfer student pipeline.
 - College credit transferability has become even more complicated in Texas due to the dramatic increase in dual credit participation leading to college credit. Rather than depending on students to self-report which courses they have taken at a 2-year institution, it would be beneficial to gain access to students' academic records (e.g., course credit) via a secured data portal. The portal would provide admissions officers and academic advisors real-time data to assist students who matriculate to 4-year institutions.

Additional Information:

In 2019, 45% of the undergraduates who were new to a UT System academic institution were transfer students. Motivated by an interest in helping the System transfer students succeed, as well as supporting the implementation of SB 25, the UT System has a number of projects underway focused on [transfer student success](#). These include:

- **The UT System Transfer Advisory Group**, convened in August 2019 to: guide implementation of SB 25, including the development of course sequences; ensure continuity of transfer student matriculation, progress, performance, completion and post-graduate success; identify and direct effective and targeted resources and support to transfer students, including a focus on advising and collaboration with two-year feeder colleges.
- **UT System Transfer Study** Chancellor Milliken has charged the UT System Office of Institutional Research and Analysis to conduct a study of transfer student success in the UT System. For the study, UT System staff: 1) conducted an environmental scan of policies and practices related to transfer students as context for understanding and improving transfer in the UT System, and to aid with the development of recommendations; 2) developed an overview of transfer student definitions used across the UT System, by the THECB, IPEDS, and the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC); 3) conducted a feeder school analysis to better understand migration patterns and outcomes of transfer students; 4) analyzed student success leading indicators and momentum metrics for the UT System and by institution, and disaggregated by race/ethnicity, sex, and other characteristics, as appropriate; and 5) developed

predictive models to identify transfer student success indicators associated with retention and graduation rates, in-resident hours (attempted and completed), time-to-degree, and course-related outcomes.

- The UT System is part of the [Texas Transfer Alliance](#), a collaboration of Texas universities and community colleges focused on improving transfer student outcomes. The Alliance aims to foster the conditions for scaled and measurable improvements in attainment rates for baccalaureate-seeking community college students, especially the large number of low-income students and students of color who begin education in the two-year sector. The Alliance is led by the Charles A. Dana Center at The University of Texas at Austin, and includes representatives from The University of Texas System, The Texas A&M University System, the University of North Texas System, the Texas State University System, and the Texas Association of Community Colleges. Among its activities, the project pairs two- and four-year transfer partners to advance shared transfer goals. Four University of Texas System institutions—UT Arlington, UT Dallas, UTEP and UT San Antonio—are part of this transfer partnership strategy.