

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**NOTICE OF FORMAL REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

COMMITTEE: Higher Education  
Interim Charge 4  
TIME & DATE: N/A  
Monday, August 3, 2020  
PLACE: N/A  
CHAIR: Rep. Chris Turner

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**Request for Information, Interim Charge Four**

Due to the ongoing pandemic and the uncertainty as to scheduling interim hearings, the Committee is conducting necessary oversight functions through an information-gathering process under Section 301.014, Government Code.

**For this charge, the Committee requests written submissions from public university systems, public universities and health related institutions, and public community, technical and state colleges, pertinent agencies with jurisdiction over the following charges and other relevant associations in regards to the assigned Interim Charge and additional questions as outlined below. All submissions are due on September 1, 2020, by 5 pm (CST).**

**Submissions should be delivered via email to the committee clerk, Julie Young, at [Julie.Young\\_hc@house.texas.gov](mailto:Julie.Young_hc@house.texas.gov) and shall be in word format.** Submissions shall include the submitter name, organization or entity (if applicable and an authorized representative), mailing address, email, and telephone number.

All submissions will be circulated to each Member of the Committee after the September 1, 2020 deadline. A copy of all received comments will be made available to the public by the Committee and the public will have the opportunity to submit comments to the Committee in response to information received from designated parties.

**Interim Charge 4:**

Study the prevalence of online courses and degrees in higher education. Examine how institutions providing online courses and programs are accredited, particularly courses and programs originating from states other than Texas. Evaluate how students whose courses and degrees are primarily online perform in terms of persistence and degree completion

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versus students who take courses in traditional classroom settings. Study labor market outcomes for students with primarily online courses and degrees versus more traditional programs.

1. What are the existing barriers to online learning for students and faculty? What have institutions done to alleviate and eliminate these barriers?
2. What information and data is available regarding long-term student success for those taking courses primarily online -- both in general and specific to Texas institutions?
3. With institutions having shifted instruction to online-only in the Spring of 2020 because of the pandemic, what lessons have been learned?
4. What are the challenges related to technology, quality, accessibility or other considerations? The Committee is seeking the perspectives of college/university administration, faculty and students.
5. Post-pandemic, will the recent shift to online courses lead to expanded online demand and capacity?
6. How can the Legislature address gaps in equity in accessing reliable, affordable Internet access?
7. What sort of differences in quality are we seeing for online nursing programs without a clinical component versus those that do have one or are done in person?
8. What sort of privacy exists for students utilizing some of the more popular online curriculum packages?
9. Has recently adopted legislation on Open Educational Resources been able to make an impact on the quality of online education yet?
10. Do small and rural community colleges have the financial capability to switch to online, as well as in-person, classes, degrees, etc.?
11. How does the impact of COVID-19 affect the small and rural community college's ability to offer online classes and make other changes to adapt to the pandemic?