

Dreams. Delivered.

TO: President Mark Escamilla, Regents
FROM: Claudia Jackson, Executive Director of Strategic Communication and Government Relations
DATE: June 3, 2015
RE: **Legislative Report to the DMC Board of Regents June 2015**



Of the 500+ bills the College monitored during the 84th Texas Legislative Session, nearly twenty percent passed that will impact College funding, students or campus operations. This report highlights those of major interest. If you would like more information on the legislative results, please contact me.

The Governor has three weeks to sign or veto bills that passed both houses of the legislature. After June 22, bills that have passed both houses that are not vetoed will go into effect without the Governor's signature.

BILLS SIGNED OR AWAITING SIGNATURE

Appropriations

HB 1—Appropriations allocated Del Mar College \$14,636,060 per year of the biennium, or a total of \$29,272,120. This includes \$500,000 per year for core operations, \$12,844,189 in contact hour funding and \$1,191,871 for student success points. A curious item of \$100,000 per year for a maritime museum was not in the College's request for funding. This special item may have been requested by another community college and may be deducted once the error is corrected. Del Mar College requested no special funding items in this legislative session. The Senate and House adopted the Conference Report, awaiting signature and publication.

For comparison purposes, state funding over the last two years totaled \$30,386,838, not including employee health insurance and retirement funding.

HB 1903—Although it failed, we understand that key provisions of HB 1903 were ultimately attached as a rider to the final Appropriations bill. HB 1903 proposed to require the distribution of funds to Blinn Junior College Campuses based on the proportion of funds earned through contact hours earned on each campus. This rider language may require all community colleges to report contact hour funding generated by programs on each campus and to justify instances when funds generated on one campus are spent on another campus.

Other Bills of High Interest

SB 11— Stipulates that colleges may not prohibit a licensed carrier from carrying a concealed handgun on the campus unless prohibited by another state statute. Key provisions of SB 11—

- The weapon must remain concealed and may not be in plain view at any time.
- The institution may not establish provisions that generally prohibit licensed carriers from carrying concealed handguns on an entire campus.

- The institution may establish reasonable rules and regulations regarding the carrying of handguns on campus, including the designation of “gun-free zones.”
- The institution must widely distribute the rules and regulations governing handgun possession on campus and report those rules to the legislature biennially.
- Specific language in an earlier version of this bill regarding prohibition of handguns in facilities occupied by early college high school students was deleted.
- As currently written, this bill does not go into effect for public community colleges until August 1, 2017. Awaiting Governor’s signature.

HB 1583— Requires block scheduling for at least five career, technical, nursing and health science courses not previously offered on a block schedule—the block being defined as all morning, all afternoon or all evening hours. The intent is to allow full-time students to enroll in the block of courses, rather than in individual courses. These provisions must be available for students in the fall semester 2016. This bill awaits the Governor’s signature.

Fiscal/Funding Issues

HB 2083—Requires that protests of property tax appraisals be based on generally accepted appraisal methods. Signed into law, effective Jan. 1, 2016.

SB 849—Refers to fees associated with binding arbitration of appraisal review board orders. Awaits Governor’s signature.

SB 1655—Regulates Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board fees for the administration of certificates of authorization and certificates of authority issued to certain postsecondary educational institutions. Sent to Governor for signature.

SB 44—Expands research funding eligible for matching state funds to include undergraduate research. Sent to Governor for signature.

SB 1351—Transfers some duties to the Texas Workforce Commission relating to the Jobs and Education for Texans Grants. Sent to Governor for signature.

HB 706—Establishes procedure for claiming ad valorem tax exemptions for installation of wind or solar-powered energy devices. Sent to Governor for signature.

HB 992—Allows totally-disabled veteran or surviving spouse to claim 100% exemption from ad valorem taxes. Sent to Governor for signature.

SB 833—Extends ad valorem tax exemptions while owner is serving in the military. Sent to Governor for signature.

Handguns

HB 910 and **SB 17**—Allow licensed carriers to openly carry a handgun in Texas. Each passed their respective houses and referred to other house. Sent to Governor for signature.

SB 273—This bill requires the handgun to remain completely concealed on campus. However, this bill also prohibits carrying on the premises of a secondary school located on the college campus. Sent to Governor for signature.

Instructional Programs/Transfer

HB 1054—Revises developmental education programs under the Texas Success Initiative for public institutions of higher education. Sent to Governor for signature.

HB 1606—Continues the functions of the Texas Workforce Investment Council, including assumption of the duties of the Texas Skill Standards Board. Signed into law, effective 9-1-15.

SB 1470—Authorizes the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to voluntarily enter reciprocity agreements with other higher education entities to offer distance education in Texas. Signed into law, effective 5-23-15.

HB 197—Requires colleges to post information regarding mental health resources on their website. Sent to Governor for signature.

HB 505—Removes limits on the number of Dual Credit courses or credit hours a student may enroll in each semester or academic year. Signed into law, effective 5-23-15.

HB 1613—Allows performance on certain college assessment instruments designated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to satisfy requirements concerning high school end-of-course assessment. Sent to Governor for signature.

HB 1912—Regulates the granting of undergraduate course credit by advanced placement examination at public institutions of higher education. Sent to Governor for signature.

SB 453—Reduces the minimum score from 60 to 50 for students to receive college credit through the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP). Sent to Governor for signature.

SB 955—Allows community colleges to open charter schools outside their taxing districts and throughout the state. Sent to Governor for signature.

SB 1776—Relating to the exemption from the assessment requirements of the Texas Success Initiative for students who successfully complete certain college preparatory courses. Sent to Governor for signature.

HB 1287—Requires institutions to link employment data to their websites. Currently, this only relates to universities. Sent to Governor for signature.

SB 1189—Requires majors in transfer programs to meet with an advisor and develop a specific transfer plan to a designated upper-level institution once the student has completed 30 semester hours of course work. Sent to Governor for signature.

Employee Benefits/Healthcare

HB 9—Refers to member contributions to Employees Retirement System of Texas. Sent to Governor for signature.

HB 1707—Allows contributions to Teachers Retirement System to be processed by wire or electronic transfer. Signed by Governor effective 9-1-15.

HB 1937—Regulates procedures and eligibility for terminating participation in the Teacher Retirement System of Texas deferred retirement option plan. Signed into law, effective 9-1-15.

HB 2168—Tweaks the date annuities are payable from the Teachers Retirement System. Sent to Governor for signature.

HB 2390—Addresses civil liability arising from employee wellness system. Sent to Governor for signature.

HB 2974—Establishes a limited-scope committee to study employee benefit plans. Sent to Governor for signature.

SB 664—Allows institutions to terminate employees who falsify military records in the hiring process. Sent to Governor for signature.

Regents/Governance

HB 2134—Allows the College to request clarification of public information requests by email. Passed the House and received in the Senate. Sent to Governor for signature.

SB 97—Prohibits the sale and distribution of vapor products to those under 18 years of age. Signed into law, effective 10-1-15.

HB 685—Expands compliance requirements for public information requests to provide information readily available on the institutions' website in another format, if requested. Passed the House and recommended for Senate Local/Uncontested Calendar. Sent to Governor for signature.

HB 699—Requires higher education institutions and develop a website dedicated to the college's sexual assault policy and to mandate that each entering freshman attend a sexual assault orientation during their first semester. Sent to Governor for signature.

HB 870—Adjusts investment-training requirements for certain local government officers. Sent to Governor for signature.

HB 1378—Relates to annual financial reporting of debt information. Sent to Governor for signature.

HB 2629—Addresses damaging or defacing college buildings and grounds. Passed the House. Sent to Governor for signature.

SB 24—Relates to Regents training programs. Sent to Governor for signature.

SB 27—Provides for online broadcast and archiving of open meetings Sent to Governor for signature.

SB 1714—Simplifies the process for reverse transfer of credits to community colleges utilizing a statewide clearinghouse data sharing system, with written authorization from the student. Sent to Governor for signature.

HB 3348—Allows designated community colleges to offer baccalaureate degrees in certain health science fields. Sent to Governor for signature.

SB 733—Allows some political units to change the dates of their general elections. Sent to Governor for signature.

HB 2049—Relates to indemnification of engineers and architects working for governmental entities. Sent to Governor for signature.

HB 3357—Allows posting of open meetings electronically. Sent to Governor for signature.

Program Specific

HB 495—Extends providing grant funds for nursing education programs including two-year colleges through 2019. Signed into law, effective 5-29-15.

HB 1583—Requires block scheduling for some community college programs. Sent to Governor for signature.

HB 2628—Relating to the development and alignment of curricula for certain educational programs. Sent to Governor for signature.

HB 3078—Establishes an advisory committee to recommend a uniform pre-nursing curriculum across the state. Sent to Governor for signature.

SB 806—Provides a reporting mechanism for awarding military service-members and veterans the maximum college credit for applicable training received while on active duty. Sent to Governor for signature.

Student Services/Financial Aid

HB 700—Advocates repeal of the Texas B-On-Time student loan program. Sent to Governor for signature.

SB 947—Recommends a feasibility study of off-campus work sites for college Work-Study programs. Signed into law, effective 5-22-15.

SB 1750—Adjusts employment requirements for Work-Study programs. Sent to Governor for signature.

SB 1066—Refines eligibility to participate in STEM Challenge Scholarship Program. Signed into law, effective 9-1-15.

SB 1543—Recommends criteria to admit nontraditional students—such as those home schooled—to public higher education institutions. Sent to Governor for signature.

HB 4046—Relates to confidentiality of student records, especially applications for admissions. Sent to Governor for signature.

BILLS THAT DID NOT PREVAIL THROUGH LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

HB 61—Stipulates a common course numbering system for all higher education institutions. Identified as a highest priority by the Texas Association of Community Colleges, this bill was never progressed out of House committees.

SB 1735—Requires military service members, veterans and their dependents to meet specific criteria before tuition waivers will be granted, including residency in the state. This bill died in Conference Committee.

SB 778—Stipulates the measures used to determine the College's performance-based success funding recommendations provided by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Legislative Budget Board.

Passed the Senate and received in the House. Referred to House Higher Education Committee. This bill died in House Higher Education Committee.

HJR 64—Provides ad valorem tax exemptions for certain research technology corporations. Passed the House and received in the Senate. Died in Senate Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee.

SB 1821—Adjusts the local option to exempt ad valorem taxes for honorably-discharged veterans. Passed the Senate and received in the House. Died in House Ways and Means Committee.

SB 691—Expands the eligibility of firefighters currently employed, certified or participating in Emergency Services Retirement System who would be exempt from paying tuition and fees. Died in House Higher Education Committee.

HB 3273—Recommends exempting certain certified or licensed paramedics from tuition and fees. Died in House Higher Education Committee.

HB 3524—Recommends tuition and fee exemptions for disabled peace officers. Died in House Higher Education Committee.

SB 279—Allows colleges to voluntarily exempt portion of appraised property value from ad valorem taxes. Passed the Senate. Died in the House.

HB 3733—Establishes a tuition and fee reimbursement program for some adopted children. Died in House Higher Education Committee.

SB 179—Relating to proficiency required to obtain or renew a concealed handgun carry permit. Passed the Senate and received in the House. Died in House Calendars Committee.

HB 1173—Allows colleges to employ armed marshals to assist with campus security issues. Died in House.

HB 599—Requires that energy savings performance contracts for higher education institutions adhere to guidelines of the State Energy Conservation Office. Died in Senate Business and Commerce Committee.

HB 353—Releases a governmental unit from liability when a volunteer emergency services personnel discharges a handgun during an emergency. Died in Senate State Affairs Committee.

SB 1434—Allows time spent by students participating in certain approved off-campus instructional programs in calculation of the average daily attendance for a school district or open-enrollment charter school. Died in House Public Education Committee.

HB 298—Facilitates the transfer, academic progress, and timely graduation of students in public higher education. Died in Senate Higher Education Committee.

HB 1612—Requires institutions of higher education to provide certain information to students and school districts regarding student performance on Texas Success Initiative. Died in Senate Higher Education Committee.

SB 13—Requires school districts to promote increased enrollment in Dual Credit classes. Died in the House.

HB 3508—Relating to a college readiness memorandum of understanding between a school district and an institution of higher education. Died in House Higher Education Committee.

HB 3467—Authorizes a study of distance learning options. Passed the House and received in the Senate. Died in Senate Higher Education.

HB 442—Relates to assignment of certain death benefits payable by the Employees Retirement System of Texas. Died in Senate State Affairs Committee.

SB 337—Allows directors of special political districts the right to access information, including confidential information according to Chapter 552 of the Government Code. Died in House Special Purpose District Committee.

HB 456—Prohibits use of vapor products on public school campuses. Died on House Calendar.

HB 3521—Allows certain independent school districts to create limited purpose community colleges. Died in House Higher Education Committee.

HB 2138—Creates new financial reporting requirements for all community colleges. Died in Local and Consent Calendar.

HB 1155—Will create a Recruit Texas program to attract employers offering high-skilled jobs. Died in Senate Calendar.

HB 2839—Allows government body to withhold prohibited information without requesting an attorney general's opinion. Died in Senate Business and Commerce Committee.

SB 1041—Requires community colleges to disclose bond debt details in ballot language. Died in House Elections Committee.

SB 289—Prohibits requiring volunteer firefighters or members of industrial emergency response teams to obtain a license or certification. Died in House Higher Education Committee.

HB 3836—Allows some community colleges to offer baccalaureate degrees in early childhood education. Died in Senate Higher Education Committee.

SB 33—Refines the definition of hazing and the policies and processes for reporting that offense to campus officials. Died in House Public Education Committee.

SB 915—Establishes a pilot program to research cost-saving measures for textbooks. Died in House Calendars Committee.

HB 298—Facilitates transfer and timely graduation of students utilizing a course-specific core curriculum that is fully transferable to an upper-level institution. Died in Senate Higher Education Committee.

HB 1896—Adjusts the Texas Educational Opportunity Grant program eligibility not to exceed a student's total assessed financial need. Withdrawn from House Higher Education Schedule.