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College Relations

TO: Dr. Mark Escamilla, President and CEO
FROM: Claudia Jackson, Executive Director of Strategic Communication and Government Relations
DATE: June 7, 2017
RE: 85th Legislative Session

At the close of the 85th Legislative Session, the Del Mar College base funding proposal awaiting Governor Greg Abbott's signature on this date totals $31,735,466 for the biennium, due in large part to the College's growing enrollment and improved performance on Student Success Initiatives. This compares to funding for Fiscal Years 2015 and 2016 of $29,272,871, not including employee health insurance and retirement funds.

Of the 500+ bills we tracked with potential to impact College operations this session, only 28 have been signed into law and another 40 are awaiting a signature. The attached list reflects the status of those bills as of this date.

Key College initiatives expected to be enacted include HB 2994 that ensures state reimbursement for workforce credential and continuing education courses for 16- and 17-year old students.

Components of HB 2975 requiring colleges to report funding expenditures and student performance by individual campuses were amended onto SB 634 involving reporting requirements for Skills Development Fund programs. It is uncertain whether that amendment will be accepted, or if the Senate bill will be enacted.

Some bills provide positive opportunities for the College, such as allowing the Board to consider security plans, including technology security in closed session, expanding Skills Development Grant funding to promote instructional programs for high-demand occupations, and including career, technology and workforce education as part of the core mission of public education.

Several bills still under consideration could bring challenges for the College, such as allowing independent school districts to establish their own community colleges, allowing Texas State Technical College to expand their technical and vocational education sites and allowing hospitals to offer dual credit classes in high schools.

Late yesterday, Governor Abbott called a Special Session of the Legislature begining July 18. Although no higher education issues were specifically listed, property tax reform and caps on state and local spending were included. The property tax issue is expected to include proposed changes to the roll-back rate provisions.