HB 1407  ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Author: Sheffield  Sponsor: Seliger

HB 1407 creates a new emergency medical services assistance program within the Department of State Health Services (DSHC) to provide financial and educational assistance to Emergency Medical Service (EMS) providers. The legislation allows DSHS to contract with up to three institutions of higher education to develop and offer a distance-learning emergency medical services curriculum that provides remote courses of instruction to EMS providers in rural areas.

SB 810  PURCHASE AND USE OF OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Author: Kolkhorst  Sponsor: Howard

SB 810 establishes a grant program to encourage the use of open educational resources at Texas public institutions of higher education and makes a variety of statutory changes related to course listings and textbooks.
**Requirements of Institutions of Higher Education**
Specifically, SB 810 requires institutions of higher education to list on the course schedule, beginning in the Spring 2018 semester, whether the required course textbook is an open educational resource. An institution of higher education or a college bookstore that publishes a textbook list with a course schedule on the Internet with a search function shall ensure the system permits a search based on whether a course or section of a course requires or recommends only open educational resources or provide a searchable list of courses and sections of courses that require or recommend open educational resources. Institutions of higher education are required to make reasonable efforts to disseminate information regarding courses that require or recommend only open educational resources to students.

**Grant Program**
SB 810 also directs the THECB to establish a grant program to encourage faculty at institutions of higher education to adopt, modify, redesign, or develop courses that use only open educational resources. Faculty members may apply for the grant but forfeit any grant awarded if no longer employed by an institution of higher education.

Faculty members who receive a grant shall ensure that any open educational resource used is provided to a student at no cost other than the cost of printing.

The THECB shall submit a report by December 1 of each even-numbered year, to the governor, lieutenant governor, speaker of the house and each standing legislative committee with primary jurisdiction over higher education. The report must include the total number of grants distributed, the number of students who completed a course adopted, modified, redesigned, or developed under the grant program, any money saved by students, a list of any subject areas that would benefit from having open educational resources available, and recommendations on future steps for expanding the use of open educational resources.

SB 810 limits the THECB to using $200,000 for the grant program in the fiscal biennium ending August 31, 2019.

**State Repository of Open Educational Resources**
The bill further requires the THECB to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of creating a state repository of open educational resources. The THECB is required to collaborate with relevant state agencies, textbook publishers, representatives of the open educational resource community and other stakeholders, including the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and representatives of public institutions of higher education. The THECB is
limited to using $100,000 for purposes of the study. The report is due to the Legislature by September 1, 2018.

SB 810 makes a variety of changes applicable to instructional materials used by public secondary schools. Those changes are not summarized.

**Code Reference:**
- Amends Sections 51.452(a), 51.453, 51.454(a) of the Texas Education Code
- Adds Sections 51.451, 51.452(d), 61.0668, 61.0669 and Subdivision (4-a) to the Texas Education Code
- (Only statutory changes related to higher education are noted)

**Effective Date:**
June 9, 2017

**Appropriation:**
SB 1 appropriates $100,000 in each fiscal year of the biennium, 2018-19 and $100,000 in fiscal year 2018 for the feasibility study. Adds one full-time employee in fiscal year 2018 and one full-time employee in fiscal year 2019.

**THECB Rulemaking:**
Yes

**THECB Reporting Requirement:**
Yes

**Lead THECB Division:**
Innovation and Policy Development

**SB 1782**

**ELIMINATION OF CERTAIN FORMULA FUNDING AND DROPPED COURSE RESTRICTIONS FOR RETURNING ADULT STUDENTS AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TO THE TUITION RATE THAT MAY BE CHARGED TO THOSE STUDENTS FOR CERTAIN EXCESSIVE UNDERGRADUATE HOURS**

**Author:** West  
**Sponsor:** Clardy

SB 1782 requires the THECB to adopt rules to require a public institution of higher education to permit a student who has reenrolled in an institution following a break in enrollment, subject to certain conditions, to drop one additional course beyond the maximum number of courses permitted to be dropped under state law without penalty. In addition, the bill prohibits the THECB from excluding semester credit hours for any course taken up to three times by such a student from the number of semester credit hours reported to the LBB for formula funding purposes. The bill also excludes the first additional 15 semester credit hours earned by these returning adult students from being counted as excess undergraduate credit hours.