

SUBJECT: Higher education distance learning master plan

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 8 ayes — Rangel, Ogden, Gallego, Goolsby, Harris, Kamel, Moreno, Reyna,
0 nays
1 absent — Rodriguez

WITNESSES: For — Dr. Charles Zucker, Texas Faculty Association; J. William Wenrich, Dallas County Community College
Against — None

DIGEST: CSHB 85 would require the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to develop a master plan for distance learning and other methods of electronic instruction for institutions of higher education.

The master plan would have to include recommendations on distance learning that address coordinating and integrating resources, developing and acquiring infrastructure and equipment, setting up uniform standards and technology, training faculty and staff, assessing the needs for distance learning, administering and funding, public utility policies on distance learning and needed statutory or regulatory changes to implement the master plan.

The coordinating board would be required to create an advisory committee made up of experts in distance learning, including a representative of each university system and each senior college and university, and representatives from all other institutions of higher education in the state, including private schools. The president or chancellor of the institution would have to approve any employee appointed to the advisory committee.

The coordinating board would be required to present an approved master plan to the Legislature by December 31, 1996.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSHB 85 would help the state assess and evaluate its needs for telecommunication instruction and related issues as they apply to institutions of higher education. A master plan would provide the 75th Legislature information needed to make decisions to assure that institutions of higher education in Texas have a well-coordinated and technologically advanced and integrated tele-learning system. The bill would help assure statewide interconnection and coordination for tele-education and tele-medicine for all institutions of higher education.

Distance learning classes are one of the fastest growing segments of higher education. The coordinating board reports that 59 of the state's 111 public colleges, universities and health science centers offer more than 1,800 courses using all forms of video.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No apparent opposition

NOTES:

The committee substitute expanded the membership of the advisory committee, required the board approve the master plan and made technical changes.