

- SUBJECT:** Allowing university courses in junior college service district
- COMMITTEE:** Higher Education — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — Morrison, Goolsby, F. Brown, Dawson, Gallego, Giddings, Harper-Brown, J. Jones, Rose
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** None
- BACKGROUND:** Education Code, ch. 130 establishes junior college district areas. Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) policy and procedures grant to a college the right of first refusal to offer a course or program in its own district.
- DIGEST:** HB 1725 would authorize the THECB to approve a request by an institution of higher education located in a county with a population of 35,000 or less to offer lower-division-level vocational or technical courses or programs in the service area of a junior college district if certain criteria were met. The THECB would be required to establish criteria for approval and monitoring of the programs.
- THECB would have to approve a request by an institution to conduct such a course or program if:
- not more than a year before, the governing board of the junior college district had received a community request proposing that it conduct the same type of course in the county or municipality named in the request;
 - the junior college district did not begin to offer the same type of course or adopt a plan to offer it within one year of receiving the request; and
 - the board determined that the course was consistent with the role and mission of the requesting institution and would fill an unmet need.

A community request for a course or program would consist of a resolution adopted by the commissioners court of a county or the governing body of the municipality. It also could consist of a petition requesting a junior college to conduct the course or program. The petition would have to be approved by one or more employers that together employed at least 100 full-time employees in the county or municipality. It would have to certify that an unmet need existed for such a course and that the course would provide relevant skills to the workforce of each of the employers.

The board, for good cause, could direct an institution that conducted a course or program authorized by the bill to discontinue conducting the course. Good cause could include that the course did not meet enrollment or performance review standards or other criteria established by the board. The board also could determine that the local junior college district had proposed to offer the same program, or something similar, in the same county or municipality and had the resources to do it.

This bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2005.

NOTES:

The companion bill, SB158 by Fraser, is pending in the Senate Education Subcommittee on Higher Education.