

SUBJECT: Adding Prairie View A&M to the Research Development Fund

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 9 ayes — Branch, Patrick, Alonzo, Clardy, Darby, Howard, Martinez, Murphy, Raney
0 nays

WITNESSES: For — None
Against — None
On — Corey Bradford, Prairie View A&M University

BACKGROUND: In 2003, the 78th Legislature enacted HB 3526, by Hamric (regular session) to create the Research Development Fund (RDF). The RDF replaced the Texas Excellence and University Research Funds. The RDF distributes funds to eligible institutions under a uniform allocation method based on a three-year average of each institution's restricted research expenditures.

Currently, all general academic teaching institutions are eligible to receive distributions from the RDF, except the University of Texas at Austin, Texas A&M University, and Prairie View A&M.

CSSB 1 currently contains a \$65.3 million appropriation to the RDF to be distributed over fiscal 2014-15 to eligible institutions.

DIGEST: HB 870 would add Prairie View A&M to the list of higher education institutions eligible to receive distributions from the Research Development Fund.

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, 2013.

SUPPORTERS SAY: HB 870 would give Prairie View A&M access to much-needed research

dollars from the Research Development Fund (RDF). Historically, Prairie View A&M was excluded from the fund because it receives distributions, along with UT at Austin and Texas A&M, from the Permanent University Fund (PUF), which makes distributions from the state's return on invested oil and gas royalties. However, UT-Austin and Texas A&M receive additional research dollars from other state funds in which Prairie View A&M does not participate. On top of its PUF funding, UT-Austin received \$18.3 million in additional research dollars and Texas A&M received \$3 million for each year of the current biennium. Prairie View A&M did not receive additional state research funding beyond its PUF allocations.

Based on current funding formulas, Prairie View A&M would receive \$1 million if it were allowed to participate in the RDF, according to the Legislative Budget Board. These dollars would provide funds for individual faculty projects and laboratory and equipment upgrades.

While other RDF institutions would see a slight reduction in their share of RDF funds, it would be small, roughly \$23,000 to \$31,000 a year. Prairie View A&M's total RDF share would amount to only 2.2 percent to 2.9 percent of the total appropriated amount.

Granting Prairie View A&M access to more than one source of supplemental research funding would fit a precedent. Many of the state's institutions of higher education draw funds from multiple sources. For instance, several institutions participate in both the Texas Research Incentive Program Fund and the National Research University Fund.

Providing Prairie View A&M access to the RDF in addition to the PUF would help it to emerge from its past as an underfunded historically black college. These investments in research and research capacity would contribute to the university growing from a regional institution to a statewide university with national ambitions.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

It is inappropriate to grant Prairie View A&M access to the RDF. Historically, institutions of higher education either had access to the generous PUF or they did not. To make up for lack of access to the PUF, the Legislature made appropriations through the RDF to help non-PUF institutions bolster their research efforts. It would be inequitable to other institutions to let Prairie View A&M benefit from both funding systems.