

University Leadership Assembly

Highlights of 87th Legislative Session

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The rising STAR of Texas

Legislative Updates

The Legislature is currently in Session and is formulating the FY 2023 and FY 2024 state budget.

This Session is also the decennial redistricting of legislative district boundaries which will consume much time and energy.

Little is known about the outcome of the budget process as neither the introduced version of the budget from the House nor the Senate is completely balanced.

The Comptroller's Budget Estimates

The introduced Texas House and Senate budget bills were in very close alignment which is unusual.

- Neither Chamber's introduced budget was balanced with the revenue estimate provided by Comptroller Glenn Hegar in January 2021.
- The revenue estimate has improved over the past year.
 - In July 2020, the estimate suggested a \$4.6 billion deficit for the current biennium which would have to be made up for in the 2022-2023 budget, but that estimated deficit shrank to \$1 billion by January 2021.
- Neither Chamber has yet to include federal stimulus associated with coronavirus aid as part of the budget.

Budget Versions

- The Senate's budget as passed includes \$117.9 billion in general revenue.
- The House version of the budget spends \$119.7 billion in general revenue.
- These versions are roughly \$5-7 billion over the Comptroller's revenue estimate, but neither factors in over \$35 billion in one-time federal funding for coronavirus aid earmarked for Texas, much of which will go to state government.
- Neither Chamber is currently proposing to use any of the State's \$10 billion rainy day fund.

The House is expected to pass its version in the next 2 weeks and then both versions will be reconciled by a joint conference committee.

Non-Formula Requests

Texas State has requested several items outside of the formula. We don't yet know if any of these will be funded:

- Two new academic buildings – one in Round Rock and one in San Marcos.
- The creation of a new Center of Excellence for Community Health and Economic Resilience
- Funding to bring our total state support on a per-student basis up to the average amount other ERUs are provided.
- While we are pleased that the TXSSC and ALERRT funding were both spared the 5 percent cut most non-formula items are proposed to receive, our MARC and CORE research funding, as well as overall funding for TRIP, are currently proposed to get cut.

Tracking Bills

We work with TSUS Governmental Relations to track well over 100 bills that could impact higher education. Some of the most important are:

- **Tuition Revenue Bonds (TRBs) to support capital projects**

We are seeking TRB support for a STEM building on our San Marcos Campus and a Health Professions building on our Round Rock Campus. HB 1530, relates to authorizing the issuance of revenue bonds to fund capital projects.

- **Performance evaluations of tenured faculty**

SB 1159 and SB 1623 will expand the list of good causes for revoking tenure adding, for example, sexual harassment, fiscal malfeasance, and plagiarism.

Tracking Bills

(Continued)

- **American and Texas history curriculum**

SB 1889 will require degree programs to include “survey courses” in American and Texas history.

- **Transferability Report Card**

SB 1963 will require public institutions of higher education to post a “Transferability Report Card” that describes the total number of Semester Credit Hours for which undergraduate students transferring to the institution applied for transfer credit, and the percentage for which students received transfer credit.

Tracking Bills

(Continued)

- **Textbooks and Learning Content Systems**

Several bills have been filed to address transparency in automatic billing related to e-textbooks and access to a learning content management system, and utilization of an opt-in approach instead of the current opt-out approach.

- **Name, Image, and Likeness income for student athletes**

Multiple bills have been filed about Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) income for student-athletes. This issue is a hot topic nationally and at the state level. It appears that SB 1385 has the greatest momentum. This legislation would allow a third party (not the university) to compensate a student-athlete for use of their NIL.

Questions?



We Can't Wait to See Your Faces in Person and Not on Zoom!