



FINAL REPORT
81st LEGISLATIVE SESSION



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OVERVIEW

Houston Community College (HCC), its board of trustees, chancellor, executive staff, policy team and other key internal and external supporters, worked closely with the Texas Legislature to advance its policy agenda during the 81st legislative session. This concerted effort provided our legislative delegation and other legislative leaders important information about issues facing HCC and community colleges in general.

As a result of our collective efforts during the legislative session, HCC was able to successfully address its most critical issues (*e.g.*, restoration of employee benefits funding, annexation, appropriations, etc.). We were also able to mitigate potential harm due to the filing of certain bills that open the door for continued policy discussions and future effective legislation. In particular:

- HCC's formula funding increased by 10.5%, from \$127.3 million in 2008-2009 to \$140.7 million in 2010-2011;
- HCC received \$1.5 million for un-reimbursed losses resulting from Hurricane Ike;
- Up to \$1.45 million was appropriated to HCC for enrollment growth from new campuses that will be opening over the next two years;
- HCC will receive \$10.3 million in supplemental appropriations to restore fiscal year 2009 funding for higher education group insurance that had been vetoed following the prior session and funding for the coming biennium was again based on eligible employees;
- HCC is eligible for additional funding from a substantial increase in the appropriation for the purpose of reducing the nursing shortage in Texas.

The 81st legislative session adjourned (*sine die*) June 1, 2009. There were 4,836 and 2,583 bills filed in the House and Senate, respectively. Additionally, the Legislature considered 7,981 concurrent resolutions and 4,257 simple resolutions. HCC tracked 281 bills and resolutions, giving priority consideration to (1) *appropriations*, (2) *employee benefits*, (3) *new campus funding*, (4) *professional nursing shortage reduction*, and (5) *affordability*, addressed further in this **81st Texas Legislative Session Final Report** ("*Report*").

Finally, the Report provides a synopsis of bills impacting community colleges generally that could have direct impact on HCC. It identifies and briefly outlines each bill's purpose, and as appropriate, provides the bill's effective date of implementation.

APPROPRIATIONS AND FUNDING PRIORITIES

HCC again urged the Legislature to adopt the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (“THECB”) Commissioner’s recommendation of full formula funding and to incorporate *The New Community College Compact with Texas* proposed by the Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC) – necessary steps to achieving the goals of **Closing the Gaps**. HCC also expressed concerns that various proposals (e.g., completions) to move the funding base away from actual contact hours would adversely affect funding for institutions serving large numbers of non-traditional and disadvantaged students.

In the final analysis, funding will continue to be based on actual contact hours. In addition, the Legislative Budget Board is instructed to “implement a contact hour based formula allocation . . . employing contact hours generated in the academic year prior to each fiscal year.” This could result in additional formula funding in the second year of the biennium (2011), if enrollment and contact hours grow in the first year.

The **total full formula recommendation for community colleges** was **\$2.573 billion**, and under either the Commissioner’s or TACC’s recommendations, the total anticipated state appropriation for HCC was approximately **\$180 million**, for base funding and achieved innovation and outcomes funding incentives. The collapse of the national economy shortly before the session convened and the resulting drastic decrease in the state government revenue forecast – **\$9 billion less in general revenue** compared to the prior biennium – made these levels unattainable and put maintaining previous appropriations levels at serious risk. Only the infusion of federal “stimulus” funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) prevented a repeat of the reductions in funding for higher education that occurred during the previous fiscal crisis in 2003. Following are the final funding allocations for the state of Texas and HCC for the fiscal years 2010 and 2011 – the biennium.

APPROPRIATIONS (2010-2011)

State of Texas Appropriations

- **\$182.3 billion** from all fund sources in SB 1, the General Appropriations Act, an increase of **\$12.6 billion** or **7.4 %** above the 2008-09 biennium. The governor subsequently vetoed \$288.9 million of that amount.
- **\$80.7 billion** from general revenue funds in SB 1, a decrease of 1.9% or about \$1.6 billion from the prior biennium, of which the governor vetoed \$97.2 million.
- **\$12.1 billion** in federal ARRA funds were appropriated for the 2010-2011 biennium, of which \$6.4 billion were substituted for state general revenue and \$5.7 billion went directly to various agencies and school districts.
- An additional **\$2.4 billion** in federal funds, mostly from ARRA, was distributed through HB 4586, the supplemental appropriations bill. Included in this legislation was funding to restore the vetoed higher education group insurance appropriation and funding for Hurricane Ike relief.
- Community college funding totaled \$1.859 billion for the biennium, an increase of \$140 million, or 8.1%. \$118.5 million of the increase was for enrollment growth, \$15.2 million was for formula hold-harmless and \$6 million was appropriated for a small institution supplement.

HCC APPROPRIATIONS

- HCC Academic Education 2010: \$45,753,415
- HCC Academic Education 2011: \$45,753,415
- HCC Vocational/Technical Education 2010: \$24,583,697
- HCC Vocational/Technical Education 2011: \$24,583,698
- HCC Line Item Totals 2010-11: **\$140,674,225**
(+10.55% compared to biennium 2008-09)
- Biennium 2008-2009 line item funding: \$127,254,865
- Additional rider funding for new campuses: \$726,843, per year
(\$1,453,686 for the biennium)
- Restored funding for FY2009 higher education group insurance: \$10,278,053
- Supplemental appropriation for un-reimbursed Hurricane Ike losses: \$1,507,670

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

The supplemental appropriations bill fully restored the Higher Education Group Insurance (HEGI) funding for FY2009 that was vetoed following the 80th session in 2007. Although legislation to permanently base HEGI funding on all eligible employees failed to pass, the wording of that legislation was included as a rider in the general appropriations bill (SB 1) for the first time.

GENERAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS:

- **\$156,290,646** appropriated for community colleges for fiscal year 2010.
- **\$166,918,409** appropriated for community colleges for fiscal year 2011.
- **\$152,976,878** appropriated to restore vetoed funds for fiscal year 2009.
- **\$323,209,055** appropriation for the 2010-2011 biennium is **\$16.25 million** more than the 2008-09 appropriations (including the FY2009 funds restored in the supplemental appropriation)
- Increase provides for rate increases of 6.5% in FY2010 and 6.8% in FY2011
- Appropriation for community colleges is equal to 83.5% of ERS premium levels (down from about 90% the prior biennium), compared to 95% for UT and A&M system components and 97.5% for other state higher education institutions

HCC EMPLOYEE BENEFITS:

- HCC Group Insurance FY10: **\$10,601,440**
- HCC Group Insurance FY11: **\$11,322,338**
- The HCC group health insurance appropriation is **\$1.37 million** more than the 2008-09 appropriations; a **6.65%** increase.
- Restored funding for FY2009 higher education group insurance: **\$10,278,053**

TEACHER RETIREMENT SYSTEM & OPTIONAL RETIREMENT PROGRAM

- Teacher Retirement System: Estimated **\$127,417,684** for the state matching contribution for public community college employees.
- Optional Retirement Program: Estimated **\$71,929,798** for the state matching contribution for public community college employees.

HCC NEW CAMPUS FUNDING

HCC received an appropriation of up to \$1,453,686 to fund new contact hours generated at four new campuses for the 2010-2011 biennium. This represents 41.5% of the total amount appropriated statewide for new campuses.

PROFESSIONAL NURSING SHORTAGE REDUCTION PROGRAM

Overall funding for the nursing shortage reduction more than tripled, from \$14.7 million to \$49.7 million. The limitation on the percentage of the initial \$14.7 million that could be allocated to community colleges, originally 30%, was increased from 40% last biennium to 50% for the coming two years.

The 10% increase results from advocacy efforts by HCC and others. If the THECB is unable to allocate the balance of the funds to general academic and health-related institutions, it may allocate any unused funds to community colleges.

An additional \$6,985,200 in FY2010 and \$2,496,912 in FY2011 is appropriated to provide \$20,000 for each additional graduate in two-year programs and \$10,000 for each additional graduate in one-year programs in colleges with nursing graduation rates below 70% in 2008.

Total Appropriation: \$49,700,000 – \$27,350,000 for FY2010 and **\$22,350,000** for FY2011.

AFFORDABILITY

Funding for the Texas Grant program was increased by \$185.9 million, about 43.5%, and will serve about 11,800 additional students. Funding for the Texas Educational Opportunity Grant, which is aimed specifically at community college students, was increased by \$10 million, a 71.4% increase. Overall, financial aid was increased by \$259.6 million and now totals over \$1 billion for the biennium.

APPROPRIATIONS

SB 1 (OGDEN)

General Appropriations Bill

- HCC position: Neutral
- Provides approximately \$182 billion from all funding sources, \$80.6 billion from general revenue (after vetoes)
- Provides \$140 million base funding for HCC plus \$1.4 million for new campuses and additional funding for nursing program expansion, funding for employee group insurance based on eligible employees

Status: Effective Date: September 1, 2009.

HB 4586 (PITTS)

Supplemental Appropriations

- HCC position: Neutral
- Appropriates funding to restore vetoed FY2009 higher education group insurance funding, including \$10.3 billion for HCC
- Provides \$1.5 million to HCC for un-reimbursed losses due to Hurricane Ike

Status: Effective immediately.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE AUTHORITY AND GOVERNANCE

HB 962 (GUILLEN)

Relating to the purchase of library goods and services by public junior colleges.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Exempts community college purchases or licensure of library goods and services from Chapter 44, Education Code purchasing requirements
- Makes all community college purchases or licensure of library goods and services subject to the same requirements imposed on public senior colleges or universities

Status: Effective immediately.

HB 1423 (GUILLEN)

Relating to granting charters to public junior colleges for open-enrollment charter schools.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Establishes procedures and requirements for community colleges to operate open enrollment charter schools

Status: Effective immediately.

HB 1568 (GONZALES)

Relating to authorizing an exemption from tuition and fees charged by a junior college district for employees of the district.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Authorizes community colleges to waive all or part of tuition for employees of the college

Status: Effective immediately.

HB 1935 (VILLAREAL)

Relating to the establishment of certain programs to support adult and postsecondary education and workforce development in high-demand occupations and green jobs.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Creates the Jobs for Education and Texans (JET) Grant Program
- Provides for grants to non-profit organizations and to community colleges for the support of or to fund the initial costs of new career and technology programs, with emphasis on occupations that are in locally high demand or that are in new, emerging industry

Status: Effective Date: September 1, 2009.

HB 2425 (MORRISON)

Relating to engineering recruitment programs at public or private institutions of higher education and to certain degree programs at public junior colleges.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Includes private institutions in engineering recruitment program
- Requires THECB to study the feasibility of expanding community college baccalaureate programs

Status: Effective immediately.

HB 2480 (HOCHBERG)

Relating to agreements with public junior colleges for courses for joint high school and junior college credit.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Permits community colleges to operate a dual-credit program with a school district in the service area of another community college if that college is unable to provide the requested course to the satisfaction of the school district

Status: Effective immediately.

HB 2805 (MALDONADO)

Relating to the administration, powers, duties, operation, and financing of the East Williamson County Multi-Institution Teaching Center.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Expands the powers of a multi-institutional center operated jointly by a specific community college, a general academic institution and Texas State Technical College

Status: Effective immediately.

SB 755 (VAN DE PUTTE)

Relating to the requirements for a funeral establishment license.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Permits community colleges to operate a funeral establishment on community college property in conjunction with an accredited education program in funeral services

Status: Effective immediately.

BILLS IMPACTING HIGHER EDUCATION IN GENERAL

HB 51 (BRANCH)

Relating to measures to enhance and maintain the quality of state universities, including funding and incentives to support emerging public research universities

- HCC position: Neutral
- Includes the governor's higher education incentive funding plan
- Incentive funding limited to general academic institutions

Status: Effective Date: September 1, 2009.

HB 101 (BROWN, FRED)

Relating to the formula funding for public institutions of higher education for certain credit hours that do not count toward a degree.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Exempts hours earned in a dual-credit program from the limitation on semester hours eligible for state funding

Status: Effective immediately.

HB 269 (LUCIO III)

Relating to course credit for certain students at a public institution of higher education.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Requires institutions of higher education to grant credit for up to 12 hours of required non-major or minor physical education to honorably discharged military veterans
- Requires the THECB to establish fee and tuition limits for ROTC courses
- Requires institutions of higher education to count ROTC courses, including courses for which no credit is received toward a degree, in determining full-time student status

Status: Effective immediately.

HB 746 (BROWN, FRED)

Relating to expanding the availability of classrooms and other facilities for use by public junior colleges.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Permits higher education institutions to provide underutilized space to community colleges requesting space to teach core curriculum or continuing education courses
- Directs the THECB to set a maximum rate that may be charged for the space

Status: Effective immediately.

HB 1096 (VO)

Relating to the provision of notice regarding the availability of higher education textbooks through multiple retailers.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Requires institutions of higher education to provide written or electronic notice of the availability of required or recommended textbooks through both affiliated and non-affiliated retailers, including online retailers, subject to THECB rules

Status: Effective immediately.

HB 2504 (KOLKHORST)

Relating to requiring a public institution of higher education to establish uniform standards for publishing cost of attendance information, to conduct student course evaluations of faculty, and to make certain information available on the Internet.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Requires institutions of higher education to post online for each course offered for credit:
 - 1) a course syllabus
 - 2) departmental budget
 - 3) curriculum vitae of the regular instructor
 - 4) end-of-course student evaluations of faculty
- Requires institutions of higher education to establish and maintain an online list of work-study opportunities
- Requires THECB to establish standards for making cost of attendance information posted on each institution's website are comprehensive, readily understandable and consumer-friendly

Status: Effective immediately; course information effective Fall 2010; work-study information when practicable.

HB 4149 (ROSE)

Relating to certain studies and reports by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board regarding achievable cost-saving measures at public institutions of higher education and the use and availability of electronic textbooks at institutions of higher education.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Requires THECB to conduct studies of achievable cost savings at institutions of higher education and of the use and availability of electronic textbooks in higher education

Status: Effective immediately.

HB 4189 (ROSE)

Relating to the conduct of compliance programs by institutions of higher education and to the vaccination of students of institutions of higher education against bacterial meningitis.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Requires first-time or transfer students residing in on-campus housing at institutions of higher education to be vaccinated for bacterial meningitis, subject to certain exceptions

Status: Effective immediately.

HB 4328 (STRAMA)

Relating to the establishment of the Interagency Literacy Council for the study, promotion, and enhancement of literacy in this state.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Establishes the Interagency Literacy Council, tasked with developing a comprehensive statewide action plan for the improvement of literacy

Status: Effective immediately.

HB 4471 (KOLKHORST)

Relating to the professional nursing shortage reduction program.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Requires the THECB to establish procedures for awarding grants to increase the number of nursing program graduates and for establishing new nursing programs

Status: Effective immediately.

SB 44 (ZAFFIRINI)

Relating to the participation of students in funding awarded under the advanced research program.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Expands the advanced research program to include research conducted by students

Status: Effective immediately.

SB 174 (SHAPIRO)

Relating to accountability of institutions of higher education, including educator preparation programs, and online institution resumes for public institutions of higher education.

- HCC position: Neutral

- Adds a new Chapter 51A to the Education Code requiring institutions of higher education to establish online “resumes.” New Subchapter C of Chapter 51A contains detailed requirements for information and data to be included in online resumes of community colleges

Status: Effective immediately; THECB must post online resumes by February 1, 2010.

SB 175 (SHAPIRO)

Relating to the automatic admission of undergraduate students to certain general academic teaching institutions and to scholarship and other programs to facilitate enrollment at institutions of higher education.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Creates a temporary exception to “Top Ten Percent” rule for UT Austin
- Requires general academic institutions to provide automatic enrollment to “Top Ten Percent” students who complete their core curriculum at a community college with at least a 2.5 GPA if the student previously applied to the institution
- Establishes a “Top Ten Percent” scholarship program

Status: Effective immediately; change to UT admission effective Fall 2011; automatic admission of transferors’ effective Spring 2010; scholarship program beginning Fall 2010 or later.

SB 291 (NELSON)

Relating to hepatitis B vaccination for students enrolled in certain health-related courses of study at an institution of higher education.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Limits required hepatitis B vaccination to students who might be exposed to human or animal blood or bodily fluids.

Status: Effective immediately.

SB 482 (ELLIS/SHAPIRO)

Relating to the Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Establishes commission to assist schools and institutions of higher education regarding Holocaust and genocide courses of study and awareness programs

Status: Effective Date: September 1, 2009.

SB 1796 (ZAFFIRINI)

Relating to the approval of certain construction, repair, or rehabilitation projects at public institutions of higher education in this state.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Raises the threshold for THECB approval of projects to \$4 million and permits THECB to raise it further

Status: Effective Date: September 1, 2009.

SB 2240 (ZAFFIRINI)

Relating to the financing of educational and related facilities by higher education facility authorities or nonprofit corporations performing the functions of those authorities and the governance of higher education facility authorities.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Prohibits the attorney general from approving and the comptroller from registering bonds issued by a municipality's higher education facility authority unless the attorney general finds that the bonds have been issued in accordance with statute, are valid and binding obligations and are secured. Requires notice of submission of bonds to the attorney general be given to the governor, lieutenant governor, speaker and LBB

Status: Effective immediately.

SB 2258 (ZAFFIRINI)

Relating to intensive summer programs for public school students and to college readiness programs at public institutions of higher education.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Limits authority of commissioner of education to intensive summer programs operated by school districts and requires THECB to establish parallel program for intensive summer programs operated by institutions of higher education

Status: Effective immediately.

SB 2262 (ZAFFIRINI)

Relating to the administration of mathematics, science, and technology teacher preparation academies at institutions of higher education.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Decreases the minimum number of years of teaching experience required of a participant from five years to two years and moves the section to the higher education portion of the education code, placing it totally under the jurisdiction of the THECB

Status: Effective immediately.

SB 2298 (WATSON)

Relating to compensation of certain state employees.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Relaxes limitations on merit and compensatory pay for work performed in response to a natural disaster

Status: Effective immediately.

BILLS IMPACTING TUITION, FEES AND FINANCIAL AID

HB 2013 (KEFFER)

Relating to tuition and laboratory fee exemptions at public institutions of higher education for certain volunteer firefighters enrolled in fire science courses.

- HCC position: Neutral

- Includes volunteer firefighters in the existing tuition and fee exemptions and establishes academic requirements

Status: Effective immediately; exemption begins with Fall 2009 semester.

HB 2347 (THIBAUT)

Relating to tuition and fee exemptions at public institutions of higher education for certain peace officers enrolled in criminal justice or law enforcement course work and for certain educational aides.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Provides peace officers tuition and fee exemptions for criminal justice or law enforcement courses similar to the existing tuition and fee exemptions for firefighters and establishes academic requirements
- Shifts responsibility for determining eligibility of educational aides for tuition and fee exemptions from the THECB to the enrolling institution

Status: Effective immediately; exemption for educational aides begins with Fall 2009 semester; exemption for peace officers begins with Fall 2011 semester.

HB 3353 (NAISHTAT)

Relating to an environmental service fee at public institutions of higher education.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Allows institutions of higher education to establish an environmental service fee, subject to statutory limits, if approved by student vote. Revenue may be used for recycling, energy efficiency, renewable energy, or related activities

Status: Effective immediately.

HB 3452 (GATTIS)

Relating to the establishment of the Texas Armed Services Scholarship.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Establishes the Texas Armed Forces Scholarship for students who enroll in ROTC and commit to serve in the Texas National Guard or Texas Guard
- Two recipients each are selected by the governor and lieutenant governor and one by each legislator

Status: Effective Date: September 1, 2009.

HB 3951 (TURNER, CHRIS)

Relating to requiring a public institution of higher education to designate a person trained in student financial assistance programs for military veterans and their families.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Requires each institution to designate a person trained in student financial assistance programs for military veterans to assist students and their families in understanding federal and state financial aid programs and requires trained person to be available during business hours in financial aid office

Status: Effective immediately; trained person must be in place by January 1, 2010.

HB 4244 (HOCHBERG)

Relating to certain competitive scholarship recipients at public institutions of higher education.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Makes allowing resident tuition for non-resident scholarship holders at the discretion of the institution

Status: Effective immediately; applies to students who first enroll in Fall 2009 or after.

SB 43 (ZAFFIRINI)

Relating to tuition and fee exemptions at public institutions of higher education for students who have been under the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Extends tuition and fee exemption for foster students to those enrolling by age 25, including dual credit courses

Status: Effective immediately.

SB 45 (ZAFFIRINI)

Relating to tuition exemptions at public institutions of higher education for students enrolled in certain inter-institutional academic programs.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Allows institutions to waive tuition and fees for students enrolled in inter-institutional programs who are primarily students of another participating institution

Status: Effective immediately.

SB 93 (VAN DE PUTTE)

Relating to tuition and fee exemptions for certain military personnel and their dependents or spouse and permitting those personnel to assign the exemption to a child.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Expands the definitions of residency and of fees in qualifying for the tuition and fee exemption and extends the exemption to spouses of military personnel who died, became missing in action or permanently disabled in the service
- Requires refund of tuition and fees paid by eligible students for Fall 2009 who become eligible for exemption by this Act

Status: Effective immediately.

SB 194 (SHAPLEIGH)

Relating to a prohibition against certain activities by a person in the financial aid office of a public institution of higher education or of a career school or college.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Employees of financial aid offices may not own stock in or solicit or accept gifts from a student loan lender

Status: Effective immediately.

SB 297 (VAN DE PUTTE)

Relating to resident tuition rates at public institutions of higher education for certain veterans and service members and their spouses and children.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Extends resident tuition to military veterans eligible for Post-9/11 Educational Assistance who file a letter of intent to establish residency, and to the veteran's spouse or child
- Provides exemption from tuition and fees for child of resident soldier deployed in combat

Status: Effective immediately.

SB 305 (SHAPLEIGH)

Relating to an online list of work-study employment opportunities available to students at a public institution of higher education.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Requires institutions of higher education to establish and maintain an online list of work-study opportunities

Status: Effective immediately.

SB 1304 (PATRICK, DAN)

Relating to notice to students of a public institution of higher education of the required use of a portion of a student's tuition payments to provide student financial aid.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Requires institutions of higher education to notify students in their tuition bill or receipt that a portion of their tuition is set aside for scholarships

Status: Effective immediately.

SB 1760 (WATSON)

Relating to the dissemination of information regarding the cost of attending public and private institutions of higher education and regarding the availability of financial aid to assist in paying that cost.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Requires THECB to establish standards for making sure that cost of attendance information posted on each institution's website is comprehensive, readily understandable and consumer-friendly

Status: Effective immediately.

SB 1798 (ZAFFIRINI)

Relating to certifying the eligibility of certain educational aides to receive an exemption from tuition and fees charged by public institutions of higher education.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Shifts responsibility for determining eligibility of educational aides for tuition and fee exemptions from the THECB to the enrolling institution

Status: Effective immediately.

SB 2182 (SHAPLEIGH)

Relating to an environmental service fee at public institutions of higher education.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Allows institutions of higher education to establish an environmental service fee, subject to statutory limits, if approved by student vote. Revenue may be used for recycling, energy efficiency, renewable energy or related activities

Status: Effective Date: September 1, 2009.

SB 2244 (ZAFFIRINI)

Relating to the eligibility of employees of certain businesses or organizations established as part of the state's economic development program and of dependants of those employees to pay resident tuition at public institutions of higher education.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Limits eligibility for in-state tuition to employees and their families of businesses established in Texas at least five years before the student's enrollment

Status: Effective January 1, 2010, applies beginning Fall semester 2010.

BILLS IMPACTING ELECTIONS

HB 1720 (BOHAC)

Relating to the use of public funds by a political subdivision for political advertising or communications that contain false information relating to a ballot measure; providing a criminal penalty.

- HCC position: Neutral
- An officer or employee of a political subdivision who authorizes or spends public funds on a false description of a ballot measure commits a Class A misdemeanor
- The Ethics Commission shall provide an advisory opinion in response to a written request as to whether a communication violates this provision

Status: Effective Date: September 1, 2009.

HB 3062 (BOHAC)

Relating to the notice of an election provided to a voter registrar.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Requires a political subdivision that orders an election to provide to the voter registrar the same 60 or more days notice that is provided to the county clerk

Status: Effective Date: September 1, 2009.

SB 1970 (DUNCAN)

Relating to certain election practices and procedures; providing penalties.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Makes numerous changes to election procedures, particularly regarding special elections, moot elections and recounts

- Seeks to promote more efficient elections based on questions frequently presented to election officials

Status: Effective Date: September 1, 2009.

BILLS IMPACTING TAXES

HB 1038 (PAXTON)

Relating to the determination of the market value of a residence homestead for purposes of ad valorem taxation.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Requires appraiser to include value of foreclosed and distressed homes in determining market value of a residence homestead

Status: Effective Date: January 1, 2010.

HB 1257 (LEGLER)

Relating to the payment in installments of ad valorem taxes on certain property owned by a business entity and located in a disaster area and to the ad valorem taxation of a residence homestead rendered uninhabitable or unusable by a casualty or by wind or water damage.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Establishes criteria for maintaining a homestead exemption on a homestead rendered uninhabitable or unusable by wind or water damage
- Establishes criteria for maintaining the prior value of a homestead that has been replaced after being rendered uninhabitable or unusable by wind or water damage

Status: Effective immediately.

HB 1801 (BOHAC)

Relating to exemptions from the sales tax for a limited period for certain backpack and school supplies specified by the Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Adds school supplies to and defines backpacks for purposes of the sales tax holiday

Status: Effective Date: July 1, 2009.

HB 2291 (GATTIS)

Relating to the procedure to be used by a taxing unit in adopting an ad valorem tax rate.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Requires both the spoken and written motions to set a tax rate above the effective tax rate to state the percentage of tax rate increase and requires posting of the percentage increase on the internet home page of the taxing unit

Status: Effective immediately.

HB 3613 (OTTO)

Relating to the determination of the market value of a residence homestead for ad valorem tax purposes on the basis of the property's value as a residence homestead and to an exemption from ad valorem taxation of the residence homesteads of certain totally disabled veterans and to the amount of the exemption from ad valorem taxation to which a disabled veteran is entitled based on disability rating.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Provides a complete exemption from property taxes for a totally disabled veteran
- Requires a residential homestead be valued only on its value as a residence, not its highest and best use

Status: Effective Date: January 1, 2010; contingent upon voter approval of HJR 36.

HJR 36 (OTTO)

Proposing a constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for the ad valorem taxation of a residence homestead solely on the basis of the property's value as a residence homestead; authorizing the legislature to authorize a single board of equalization for two or more adjoining appraisal entities that elect to provide for consolidated equalizations; and authorizing the legislature to provide for the administration and enforcement of uniform standards and procedures for appraisal of property for ad valorem tax purposes.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Requires a residential homestead be valued only on its value as a residence, not its highest and best use

Status: Effective Date: January 1, 2010; contingent upon voter approval.

BILL IMPACTING PURCHASING

HB 987 (CREIGHTON)

Relating to competitive procurement requirements for local governments.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Raises the thresholds requiring competitive bidding or "best value" to purchases of greater than \$50,000

Status: Effective immediately.

BILL IMPACTING NURSING

HB 3961 (MCREYNOLDS)

Relating to the regulation of nursing.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Makes numerous changes to the regulation of nursing, including a study of alternate ways to ensure the clinical competency of graduates of nursing educational programs

Status: Effective immediately.

BILLS IMPACTING PUBLIC EDUCATION

HB 3 (EISSLER)

Relating to public school accountability, curriculum, and promotion requirements.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Makes numerous changes to public school accountability and curriculum requirements and procedures, including establishing college readiness as the standard for performance

Status: Effective immediately.

HB 3646 (HOCHBERG)

Relating to public school finance and programs.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Makes numerous changes to public school finance, including exempting districts from paying for tuition for their dual-credit students for the next two years

Status: Effective Date: September 1, 2009.

HB 103 (BROWN, FRED)

Relating to health benefit plans for students at institutions of higher education and the operation of certain health benefit plans through student health centers at certain institutions of higher education.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Would have required student health centers to collect revenue from other health insurance for which students might be eligible
- Only would have applied to general academic institutions with at least 20,000 students

Status: Vetoed.

HB 518 (KOLKHORST)

Relating to programs to provide student loan repayment assistance for certain correctional officers, for certain speech-language pathologists and audiologists, and for certain mathematics and science teachers.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Would have established grant programs administered by the THECB for repaying tuition of correctional officers, speech-language pathologists and audiologists, and mathematics and science teachers

Status: Vetoed.

SB 1343 (HINOJOSA)

Relating to the formula funding for public institutions of higher education for certain credit hours that do not count toward a degree.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Would have exempted hours earned toward a community college associate degree or in a dual-credit program from the limitation on semester hours eligible for state funding

Status: Vetoed.

SB 1760 (WATSON)

Relating to the administration of the Texas Save and Match Program.

- HCC position: Neutral
- Would have established guidelines and protections for savings program matched by state funds to assist with higher education tuition and fees

Status: Vetoed.

HB 6 (EILAND)

Relating to appropriations for damages and disruptions suffered by state agencies and institutions of higher education caused by natural disasters.

- HCC position: Support
- Would have appropriated general revenue funds to cover un-reimbursed costs from Hurricane Ike
- Incorporated into HB 4586 by Pitts using federal ARRA funds

Status: Failed Passage

HB 2083 (SOLOMONS) and SB 41 (ZAFFIRINI)

Relating to determination of state contributions for participation by certain junior college employees in the state employees' group benefits program.

- HCC position: Support
- Would have placed in statute a requirement that appropriations for higher education group insurance be based on all eligible employees
- Was amended into SB 42, which also failed to pass

Status: Failed Passage

HB 1814 (VO)

Relating to the ballot language for junior college district annexation elections.

- Would have required ballot proposing annexation of territory to community college to include the name of the college and the maximum allowable tax rate
- Subsequently amended to the most recent adopted tax rate, with no mention of benefits resulting from annexation

Status: Failed Passage

SB 1895 (GALLEGOS)

Relating to the governing boards of independent school districts and junior college districts in counties with a population over 3.3 million.

- Would have required community college trustees who seek another office to resign and shortened trustee terms from six years to four
- Subsequently amended to delete the resign-to-run provision

Status: Failed Passage

HB 4054 (ALLEN)

Relating to the use of state institutions of higher education to provide training to state agency employees.

- HCC position: Support
- Would have required state agencies to use institutions of higher education to provide training to administrators and employees under certain conditions

Status: Failed Passage

HB 152 (BONNEN)

Relating to providing for a student who qualifies for automatic admission to an institution of higher education to maintain that status for transferring between institutions in certain circumstances.

HB 1737 (GONZALES)

Relating to the formula funding for public institutions of higher education for certain credit hours that do not count toward a degree.

HB 2075 (SHELTON)

Relating to limitations on the number of courses that students may drop under certain circumstances at certain public institutions of higher education.

HB 2143 (MCCLENDON)

Relating to the establishment of a student outcomes pilot program at Alamo Community College.

HB 2518 (MENEDEZ)

Relating to authorization by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for certain public junior colleges to offer baccalaureate degree programs.

HB 2812 (SWINFORD)

Relating to the curriculum, funding, promotion, and economic impact of career and technology education in public educational institutions.

HB 3257 (MCCLENDON)

Relating to the establishment of a branch campus of Alamo Community College.

HB 3754 (HOWARD, DONNA)

Relating to amending the insurance code to include members of a junior college board.

HB 4245 (KEFFER)

Relating to a pilot program to expand access to career and technical education partnerships in rural areas.

SB 1819 (VAN DE PUTTE)

Relating to the establishment of a student outcomes pilot program at Alamo Community College.

SB 1857 (JACKSON, MIKE)

Relating to the service areas of certain junior college districts.



Our Vision

Houston Community College will be the most relevant community college in the country. We will be the opportunity institution for every student we serve - essential to our community's success.