

By: Branch, Bonnen of Brazoria, Alvarado,
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H.B. No. 29

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to requiring certain general academic teaching institutions to offer a four-year fixed tuition price plan to undergraduate students.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 54, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 54.017 to read as follows:

Sec. 54.017. FOUR-YEAR FIXED TUITION PRICE PLAN FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT CERTAIN GENERAL ACADEMIC TEACHING INSTITUTIONS. (a) In this section:

(1) "Coordinating board" means the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

(2) "General academic teaching institution" and "public state college" have the meanings assigned by Section 61.003.

(3) "Plan" means a four-year fixed tuition price plan offered under this section.

(b) This section applies only to a general academic teaching institution other than a public state college.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter and except as otherwise provided by this section, the governing board of an institution to which this section applies shall offer each entering undergraduate student, including each undergraduate student who transfers to the institution regardless of the number

1 of semester credit hours transferred by the student, the
2 opportunity to participate in a four-year fixed tuition price plan.

3 (d) Unless the institution does not offer other tuition
4 payment options, an institution to which this section applies shall
5 require an entering undergraduate student to accept or reject
6 participation in the plan before the date of the student's initial
7 enrollment at the institution.

8 (e) A plan offered under this section must provide that:

9 (1) during the four academic years immediately
10 following the date of a student's initial enrollment at the
11 institution, the institution may not charge tuition to the student
12 for a semester or other academic term at a rate that exceeds the
13 rate the institution would have charged the student for the same
14 courses during:

15 (A) the first academic year in which the student
16 enrolled at the institution, if the student initially enrolled for
17 a fall or spring semester; or

18 (B) the academic year immediately following the
19 summer term in which the student enrolled at the institution, if the
20 student initially enrolled for a summer term; and

21 (2) beginning with the fifth academic year following
22 the date the student first enrolls at the institution, the
23 institution may not charge tuition to the student for a semester or
24 other academic term at a rate that exceeds the rate the institution
25 would have charged the student under Subdivision (1) had the
26 student initially enrolled in the institution one year after the
27 student's actual initial enrollment.

1 (f) A fixed tuition price charged to a student by an
2 institution under Subsection (e) does not apply to the student
3 after the student has been awarded a baccalaureate degree by the
4 institution.

5 (g) Each institution to which this section applies shall
6 notify each entering undergraduate student, including each
7 undergraduate student who transfers to the institution, of the plan
8 offered under this section. The notice must:

9 (1) identify any difference between the tuition rate
10 available to the student under the plan and the tuition rates,
11 including estimations of future rates, that will otherwise be
12 charged to the student by the institution if the student elects not
13 to participate in the plan; and

14 (2) include an explanation of the reasons for that
15 difference.

16 (h) Fees charged by an institution to a student
17 participating in a plan under this section may not exceed the fees
18 charged by the institution to a similarly situated student who
19 elects not to participate in the plan, if the institution offers
20 other tuition payment options. For purposes of this subsection,
21 students are similarly situated if they share the same residency
22 status, degree program, course load, course level, and other
23 circumstances affecting the fees charged to the students.

24 (i) Each institution to which this section applies shall
25 adopt any rules the institution considers appropriate for the
26 administration of the institution's plan under this section.

27 (j) This section does not require an institution to which

1 this section applies to offer a variable tuition price plan to
2 undergraduate students enrolled in the institution.

3 (k) This section does not apply to the tuition charged by an
4 institution to which this section applies to a student who enters
5 the institution for the first time before the 2014 fall semester.
6 This subsection expires January 1, 2020.

7 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
8 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
9 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
10 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
11 Act takes effect September 1, 2013.