

**Interim Committee Charges**  
**Texas House of Representatives**  
**84th Legislature**



**Speaker Joe Straus**  
**November 2015**

## House Committee on Higher Education

1. Conduct a review of current funding formulas for community colleges. Specifically, focus on the elements of the instructional funding structure created by the 83rd Legislature: core operations, student success points, and contact hour funding and also the adequacy of state funding to sustain community colleges in light of the variance in resources available to individual colleges. Make recommendations for possible changes to the funding structure of community colleges or changes in the levels of current funding given the future workforce and higher educational needs of the state. *(Joint charge with the House Committee on Appropriations)*
2. Review the state's community college system, including a discussion of taxing districts, service areas and any barriers to access. Examine the governance structure to ensure that campuses in multi campus districts that are outside of a college taxing district receive fair and equitable treatment. Review the accounting and reporting requirements of community college districts to ensure open government and transparency. Study ways community colleges could offer accessible and affordable baccalaureate degree programs in areas where the state has a significant workforce shortage without compromising quality of education and training. Make recommendations to maximize efficient student pathways and to offer more affordable educational opportunities such as through dual credit and early college start programs.
3. Study the affordability and accessibility of undergraduate college education in Texas, including a focus on middle-class students. Analyze the cost of attendance and tuition rates, comparing Texas institutions to their national peers. Review the availability and effectiveness of financial aid programs, and analyze student debt and default rates. Study and recommend ways to promote timely and cost efficient graduation.
4. Study current policies and initiatives at institutions of higher education, including community colleges, and make recommendations toward the prevention and elimination of sexual assault on college campuses. Identify, evaluate, and recommend reporting mechanisms to ensure that students have safe, appropriate, and accessible avenues for reporting sexual assault. Study the existing campus support systems in place for students who are victims of assault, and provide recommendations of best practices. Evaluate the effectiveness of current policies and make recommendations to support the prevention and elimination of sexual assault at institutions of higher education in Texas.
5. Study the long-term viability of the Hazlewood Act, in particular the legacy tuition exemption provision. Review eligibility requirements and recommend changes to ensure

that the program can remain solvent. Examine the costs of the program to institutions of higher education, including foregone tuition, additional infrastructure, administrative and instructional support costs, and the financial impact on nonveteran/legacy students. Analyze and report any effect changes to this program would have for veterans and their families. Review current data systems related to this exemption and recommend improvements to ensure quality and accuracy of information. *(Joint charge with the House Committee on Defense & Veterans' Affairs)*

6. Review educational opportunities for non-traditional students, including adult learners who did not complete a secondary education credential. Recommend possible funding options to promote degree, credential, and/or certification completion. Develop recommendations to promote programs that simultaneously allow adult learners to complete degrees, credentials, and/or certifications for the purpose of promoting and increasing workforce ready graduates.
7. Conduct legislative oversight and monitoring of the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 84th Legislature, including HB 700, SB 18, HB 100, and the new higher education strategic plan for Texas as proposed by the Higher Education Coordinating Board, 60x30TX. In conducting this oversight, the committee should:
  - a. consider any reforms to state agencies to make them more responsive to Texas taxpayers and citizens;
  - b. identify issues regarding the agency or its governance that may be appropriate to investigate, improve, remedy, or eliminate;
  - c. determine whether an agency is operating in a transparent and efficient manner; and
  - d. identify opportunities to streamline programs and services while maintaining the mission of the agency and its programs.

