



The Feasibility of Expanding Texas' Community College Baccalaureate Programs A Report to the 81st Texas Legislature **DRAFT**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study, mandated by House Bill 2425 of the 81st Regular Session of the Texas Legislature, examines the success of baccalaureate programs offered at Texas community colleges under the authority of Section 130.0012 of the Texas Education Code. The study also examines the feasibility of expanding the offering of baccalaureate degrees by other public community colleges. Key issues examined in the document to determine the feasibility of expanding these programs include an analysis of regional and state workforce needs, current and potential university offerings, and other methods for making baccalaureate degrees available, such as distance education programs and multi-institutional teaching centers (MITCS).

The offering of community college baccalaureate degrees in Texas was authorized by the Texas Legislature during the 78th Regular Session in 2003 through the passage of SB 286. Section 130.0012 of the Texas Education Code established a pilot project that allowed three community colleges to offer up to five baccalaureate degrees each in the fields of applied science and applied technology. Although the pilot status has since been removed, the conditions for baccalaureate approval contained in the statute continue to be in effect. Among others, these conditions include: baccalaureate degrees will not alter the role and mission of the community college; obtaining the appropriate accreditation status from the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; and considering regional need and connection to existing programs as well as not unnecessarily duplicating similar programs in the area when creating baccalaureate programs.

During fall 2009, the Coordinating Board conducted an evaluation of the existing community college baccalaureate programs at Brazosport College, Midland College, and South Texas College. This evaluation involved site visits to each of the three community colleges by Coordinating Board staff and a team of three external consultants with expertise in community college and undergraduate education. The consultants noted that because the programs only began graduating students in the 2006-2007 academic year, it is difficult to collect the longitudinal data necessary to fully determine program success and effectiveness. They concluded, though, that all three institutions "were impressive in their commitment to the BAT (Bachelor of Applied Technology) and the quality of the programs." The consultants further noted that "enrollments, retention, and feedback from employers and students and graduation rates have been strong" in each of the current programs.

The Texas Workforce Commission projects that the state and workforce development areas will be in need of several baccalaureate-trained employees in Elementary Education, Middle School Education, Secondary Education, Accounting/Auditing, Business Operations, Computer Systems Analysis, Computer Software Engineering, Construction Management, and Agricultural Management. The state is working to increase baccalaureate degree program offerings in these fields through a variety of methods including online education, off-campus program expansion at higher education centers, increased university and community college partnerships, and, in

DRAFT

the case of Brazosport College, Midland College, and South Texas College, through community college baccalaureate programs.

The expansion of baccalaureate programs at additional community colleges in Texas at this time should be considered carefully and only when all other options such as increased university off-campus offerings at community colleges and MITCs, increased number of distance education programs, and increased availability of on-campus university programs through more flexible scheduling have been exhausted. The expansion of community college baccalaureate programs will raise new costs to the state at a time of budgetary constraints. These new costs are associated with the change in accreditation to a level-two baccalaureate degree granting institution, which can be both expensive and time-consuming, potential faculty workload issues, and the danger of taking institutional resources away from other high priority academic and workforce training needs. Higher education funding can be better leveraged through the expansion of current university programs and the development of additional online programs rather than the authorization of additional community colleges to offer baccalaureate degrees.

The study makes the following recommendations.

- For community colleges:
 - Community Colleges that currently offer baccalaureate degrees should work with the Coordinating Board to develop a system of performance measures and expectations that can be used in future assessment of Texas community college baccalaureate programs.
 - If the expansion or development of additional baccalaureate programs should take place, the three existing community college baccalaureate institutions should work together with the assistance of the Coordinating Board to develop Principles of Good Practice for use by new community college baccalaureate programs.
 - If the authority to offer baccalaureate degrees is expanded to additional community colleges, those institutions should address the following in their proposals:
 - Evidence that the institution is adequately responding to the area's certificate and associate degree demands.
 - Evidence of a significant, long-term workforce need that can only be filled with baccalaureate graduates.
 - Evidence that existing university programs in the area are at capacity, or area institutions are not interested in offering the baccalaureate program.
 - Evidence that alternative delivery methods for the degree program such as online or university off-campus programs at higher education centers or other locations are no longer adequate.
 - Assurance that the program is within the scope of the authorizing legislation.
 - Evidence that the addition of the baccalaureate program will not divert the institution from its core mission of providing lower division education and workforce development and that it will not negatively impact the college's existing workforce education, academic, and developmental education programs.
 - Assurance that there are adequate resources and funding to support the program.

DRAFT

- Assurance that the program is comparable to similar programs offered at universities.
 - Assurance that any additional baccalaureate programs will be delivered in as flexible manner as possible in order to appeal to working adults.
- For universities:
 - Universities must expand flexible course and program offerings through the use of evening and weekend classes and accelerated degree completion programs as well as make all efforts to provide online versions of high-need/high-demand baccalaureate programs.
 - Universities should also continue to develop partnerships with area community colleges through improved articulation agreements and university course offerings hosted on the community college campus.
 - Universities should also consider increasing accessibility by offering more programs at higher education centers where there is regional demand for such programs.
 - For Texas:
 - The Coordinating Board and the Texas Workforce Commission should provide public community colleges and universities with information on area workforce needs and projections so institutions can provide degree programs that will meet area workforce needs.
 - The state should also play a greater role in facilitating the alignment of lower-division curricula with the curricular needs of baccalaureate degree programs through such agreements as the Voluntary Mechanical Engineering Transfer Compact. In November 2009, Texas was one of seven states to receive a productivity grant from Lumina Foundation for Education to integrate the “Tuning” process into such course-level alignment work.
 - The Coordinating Board should promote the development of online degree programs. It would be optimal that Texas reach a point where there is at least one quality online degree program for each of the Texas Workforce Commission’s top 25 high-growth occupations.
 - The state should encourage adults with a significant number of completed semester credit hours and no baccalaureate degree to return to college and complete their degree. Some ways that Texas could help returning adult students would be the creation of a web portal for returning adult students, making more state loans and grants available to part-time students, developing public-private industry partnerships that result in industry-specific marketing campaigns designed to get adult non-degree completers to complete their education, and providing incentive funding for the graduation of returning adult students.

Fall Enrollment

Texas Institution	2009	California Institution	2009
U. OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN	50,995	CAL STATE FULLERTON	36,262
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY	48,702	UCLA	35,936
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON	37,000	CAL STATE LONG BEACH	35,557
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS	34,781	CAL STATE NORTHRIDGE	35,198
TEXAS STATE UNIV - SAN MARCOS	30,803	UC-BERKLEY	35,024
TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY	30,097	CAL STATE SAN DIEGO	33,790
U. OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO	28,955	CAL STATE SAN JOSE	31,280
U. OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON	28,085	CAL STATE SAN FRANCISCO	30,469
U. OF TEXAS AT EL PASO	20,977	CAL STATE SACRAMENTO	29,241
U. OF TEXAS-PAN AMERICAN	18,337	UC-DAVIS	28,863
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY	16,715	UC-SAN DIEGO	27,325
U. OF TEXAS AT DALLAS	15,783	UC-IRVINE	26,345
LAMAR UNIVERSITY	13,992	UC-SANTA BARBARA	22,850
TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY	13,103	CAL STATE PAMONA	22,273
U. OF HOUSTON-DOWNTOWN	12,742	CAL STATE FRESNO	21,500
STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIV	12,694	CAL STATE LOS ANGELES	20,619
TEXAS A&M UNIV-CORPUS CHRISTI	9,468	UC-RIVERSIDE	19,348
TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY	9,394	CAL STATE SAN LUIS OBISPO	19,325
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-COMMERCE	9,075	CAL STATE SAN BERNADINO	17,852
PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY	8,608	CAL STATE CHICO	16,934
TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY	8,598	UC-SANTA CRUZ	16,775
WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY	7,769	CAL STATE EAST BAY	14,749
U. OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE	7,643	CAL STATE DOMINGUEZ HILLS	14,477
U. OF TEXAS AT BROWNSVILLE	6,743	CAL STATE SAN MARCOS	9,767
TEXAS A&M INTERNATIONAL UNIV	6,419	CAL STATE STANISLAUS	8,586
ANGELO STATE UNIVERSITY	6,376	CAL STATE SONOMA	8,546
U. OF TEXAS AT TYLER	6,163	CAL STATE BAKERSFIELD	8,003
MIDWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY	6,042	CAL STATE HUMBOLT	7,954
TEXAS A&M UNIV-KINGSVILLE	5,892	CAL STATE MONTEREY BAY	4,688
U. OF HOUSTON-VICTORIA	3,655	CAL STATE CHANNEL ISLANDS	3,862
U. OF TEXAS-PERMIAN BASIN	3,546	UC-MERCED	3,414
TEXAS A&M UNIV-SAN ANTONIO	2,343	TOTAL Public University	646,812
TEXAS A&M UNIV-CENTRAL TEXAS	2,188		
UNIV. OF NORTH TEXAS AT DALLAS	2,109	California Total Institutions	31
SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY	2,018	Texas Total Institutions	38
TEXAS A&M UNIV AT GALVESTON	1,774		
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-TEXARKANA	1,597	Calif. CCs x 72 Districts (Fall 2009)	1,797,284
SUL ROSS RIO GRANDE COLLEGE	1,045	Texas CC's x 50 Districts (Fall 2009)	669,811
TOTAL Public University	532,226		

California Population 2009 36,961,664

Texas Population 2009 24,782,302

Sources: Office of Chancellor, California Community Colleges; University of Calif. System; California State University System

NOTE 1: California CC enrollment includes non-credit students
 NOTE 2: California Total Institutions Excludes UC San Francisco and Maritime Academy
 NOTE 3: California University Enrollment Totals exclude health-related enrollments