

JOINT PROCLAMATION

Pursuant to S.B. 1652, 78th Legislature, Regular Session, we hereby create the **Joint Interim Committee on Higher Education**. The committee shall study the structure and organization of higher education in this state, including the administration and operations of public and independent institutions of higher education; and study the equity and adequacy of higher education funding and its relationship to the purposes of higher education, including providing opportunities to students to achieve their educational goals, furthering knowledge through research, and providing direct services as local, regional, and state engines of economic development. The committee shall also examine the effects of student and community characteristics on the costs of higher education, including the income and education levels of the families of students, unemployment rates, population growth, and other uncontrollable factors. The committee shall identify the number and types of classified and unclassified positions in the administration of each university system and examine each major function, service, or activity performed by university system offices, including: central administration, academic affairs coordination and support, general counsel and other legal services, budgeting, accounting, and data reporting, fiscal management, facilities planning and construction, governmental relations, audit services, real estate management, information technology services, and aircraft operation and usage. The committee shall identify opportunities for legislative and administrative action relating to changes in the organization and operations of institutions of higher education that will improve opportunities for residents of all areas of the state to enroll in and complete programs of higher education, changes in the funding of institutions of higher education and university systems to maximize the state's limited resources to meet the higher education needs of the state,

including incentives for sharing arrangements to improve productivity, accountability measures and performance incentives for institutions of higher education and university systems that are aligned with the purposes of higher education and that are sensitive to mission differentiation among institutions of higher education, the consolidation or reorganization of university system office functions and services, including the consolidation or reorganization of university systems to promote efficiency and productivity; and potential reductions in personnel and other cost savings associated with the committee's recommendations.

The committee's recommendations shall include a plan for deregulation seminaries and similar institutions offering exclusively religious education or training. The plan must permit those institutions to confer or offer to confer religious degrees without accreditation and may include disclosure requirements and other appropriate safeguards to address potential fraud or deception. The requirements or safeguards may not authorize the state or a political subdivision of the state to assert regulatory authority over religious degree programs offered by those institutions.

In accordance with the provisions of H.C.R. 280, 78th Legislature, Regular Session, the co-chairs shall prepare and present to the presiding officers a proposal for budget and staffing. To the greatest extent possible, the committee shall use the existing staff and administrative resources of committee members, of the Senate Education Committee and the House Higher Education Committee, of officers of the Senate and House, and of legislative service agencies. Where appropriate, the committee shall request the assistance of executive agencies related to the committee's charge.


The final report of the committee should be approved by a majority of the members of the committee and include any recommended statutory or regulatory changes. The committee is

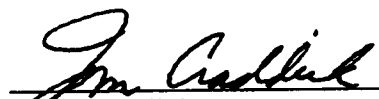
encouraged to complete its work as soon as possible, but a final report should be submitted to The Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of The House of Representatives no later than November 15, 2004. The committee is terminated when the 79th Legislature convenes. The following members are hereby appointed to The Joint Interim Committee on Higher Education:

Senator Florence Shapiro, Co-Chair
Representative Geanie Morrison, Co-Chair

Senator Kip Averitt
Senator Robert Duncan
Senator Kyle Janek
Senator Royce West
Senator Judith Zaffirini

Representative Fred Brown
Representative Tony Goolsby
Representative Roberto Gutierrez
Representative Lois Kolkhorst
Representative Sylvester Turner


David Dewhurst
Lieutenant Governor


Tom Craddick
Speaker of The House