January 6, 2011

This email message is being sent on behalf of MacGregor M. Stephenson, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Academic Affairs and Research, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

To: Chief Academic Officers, Public Universities

From: MacGregor M. Stephenson

Subject: Review of Bachelor Programs' SCH

In 2005, the 79th Regular Session of the Texas Legislature enacted Texas Education Code (TEC) 61.0515, which placed a limit on the number of semester credits hours (SCH) public universities may require for completion of baccalaureate degrees. In 2008, Coordinating Board staff asked universities to review each baccalaureate program and provide a list of programs whose requirements exceeded 120 SCH, as well as the compelling academic reasons for allowing an exception to the limit. The minimum SCH from these and subsequent programs are now included in the THECB program inventory.

We anticipate that Coordinating Board staff will be called upon during the upcoming legislative session to provide information regarding the results of the 2005 statute implementation. Recently, staff analyzed the information submitted by the universities in addition to current program inventories. This analysis revealed that 81 percent of baccalaureate programs meet the 120 SCH requirement. Nine percent of baccalaureate programs require 121 to 124 SCH. The remaining 10 percent of baccalaureate degree programs require 125 SCH or more for completion.

Upon closer examination of similar programs at the six-digit CIP code level, staff noticed wide discrepancies of SCH within similar programs. We realize that the program inventory may not have accurate information; therefore, in anticipation of potential tighter legislation and rules regarding cost efficiencies in higher education, we would like to ensure that our data are current and correct. Please review all bachelor's degree programs offered at your institution in the attached document (120 SCH Analysis of Excessive SCH.xlsx).

Submit the Administrative Change Form (http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/AdministrativeChangeRequest) by March 1, 2011 to:

- 1) update or correct minimum SCH (including those incorrectly listed as 120 SCH), and/or
- 2) notify THECB of planned and approved changes to be implemented in Fall 2011.*
- * Changes to approved programs must continue to comply with the *Standards for Bachelor's and Master's Programs*.

You may contact Lucy Heston (<u>lucy.heston@thecb.state.tx.us</u>) or Emma Schoen (<u>emma.shoen@thecb.state.tx.us</u>) if you have questions regarding this information.

Attachment