



TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE

81ST TEXAS LEGISLATURE

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is grateful for the steadfast support of the Texas Legislature for higher education and the students of Texas, especially in tough economic times. Without that support, Texas would not be as close as it is to reaching the goals of the state's higher education plan, *Closing the Gaps by 2015*, and certainly could not continue that progress as effectively.

With a continued commitment to higher education for its people, the state has much to gain in terms of economic, social and civic improvements. A recent analysis¹ of just the economic benefits of achieving the goals of *Closing the Gaps* revealed economic results that were far more dramatic than those projected when *Closing the Gaps* was first adopted. The analysis found the state will experience healthy economic growth if current trends stay the same. But if the goals of *Closing the Gaps* are reached, the economic benefits to the state are astounding. With the achievement of those goals, the state will enjoy additional gains by 2030 of one million permanent jobs, \$489 billion in total spending, \$194 billion in gross state product, and \$122 billion in personal income. For every dollar invested in higher education, the state can expect an eight-fold return.

With the goals of *Closing the Gaps* and the economic future of the state firmly in mind, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board makes dozens of recommendations to the legislature through various means such as formula funding recommendations, the agency's legislative appropriations request, and numerous studies and reports. From all these recommendations, the key recommendations listed below encompass those priorities and strategies that the Coordinating Board believes will best enable the 81st Texas Legislature to leverage the state's investments in higher education and to ultimately reach the goals of *Closing the Gaps by 2015*.

1. Increase and improve financial and educational support for students, including those in high-need fields

- a. Dramatically increase funding for TEOG and emphasize the program's focus on needy students at community colleges
- b. Use TEXAS Grant entirely for needy students attending four-year programs and adjust the merit component to encourage better preparation in high school

¹ *A Tale of Two States – and One Million Jobs!*, the Perryman Group, 2007

- c. Expand college work-study programs to leverage state money and to include a public/private partnership component
- d. Expand provision of residency training (also known as GME or graduate medical education) as well as other health-care related programs
- e. Bolster *Teach for Texas* so that more teachers serve in critical shortage needs areas

2. Institute more effective and strategic methods for funding higher education

- a. Adopt Board's formula funding recommendations which are set at a level that will help stabilize tuition and fee increases and keep college affordable
- b. Allocate funds based on students completing courses rather than just starting them
- c. Provide performance funding to institutions based on completions (number of students graduating from degree or certification programs)
- d. Develop more coherent method for funding capital projects consistent with long-term needs
- e. Ensure community colleges have resources to meet expected enrollment by fully adopting Coordinating Board funding recommendations for community colleges because (1) as many as 70 percent of Texas students enter post-secondary education through community colleges and (2) many community colleges have unpredictable and inadequate funding through taxing districts/annexation

3. Provide strong P-12 academic foundation to improve learning outcomes and overall student success in higher education

- a. Expand collaborations between public and higher education through P-16 councils, dual credit programs, and early college high schools
- b. Support implementation of post-secondary readiness standards at the regional and local district level including aligning teacher preparation programs with these standards
- c. Develop a robust adult basic education program so that more parents have the academic skills to help in their children's learning
- d. Improve the provision of developmental education

4. Expand collaborations in higher education

- a. Facilitate and increase transfers and assure transfer students will be successful on university campuses
- b. Expand other collaboration strategies such as dual admissions and the transferable core curriculum

5. Develop a strategic plan for delivering higher education

- a. Ensure the existing flagships are competitively funded
- b. Identify Texas' next national research universities (Tier One)