

3/20/25

Senate K-16 Hearing on Shared Governance

Hosted by Texas AAUP-AFT
March 18, 2025

Presenters are speaking for themselves
as private individuals



AGENDA

- Breathe – we're stronger together
- Variety of Texas higher ed institutions
- Learning, teaching, and research
- Bills up for hearing on 3/20
- Talking points/testimony training

TX HIGHER ED INSTITUTIONS

- 1.56M students enrolled with >90% being at public institutions
- 0.5M high schoolers in dual credit courses (93% at community colleges)
- Public higher education institutions serve a variety of missions:
 - 74 two-year community & tech. colleges (some offer BA/BS degrees)
 - 37 public four-year universities (BA/BS, graduate, professional degrees)
 - 15 health institutions (14 medical + 1 veterinary; some offer BS degrees)
- Need to seek other funding to offset declining state support
 - \$6,292 in 2002 to \$5,086 in 2021 (adjusted for inflation)
- All higher ed institutions need good policies and environments for learning, teaching and research

FREEDOM TO

LEARN/TEACH

- *Freedom to Learn and Teach:* Encouraging and protecting free inquiry, free expression, intellectual exploration, and open dissent for student learning and the advancement of knowledge
- *Freedom to Research and Create:* Removing barriers hindering researchers to win government and private grants.
- *Faculty Economic Security & Tenure:* Upholding current tenure policies that recruit and retain workforce development instructors.
- *Faculty Senates and Other Advisory Faculty Bodies:* Supporting faculty input to improve curriculum, teaching methods, research, and hiring decisions.

SHARED GOVERNANCE

- Higher ed Administration delegates tasks using a division of labor
- Shared decision-making among students, staff, faculty, administrators, and board of governors based on communication, trust, mutual understanding, and transparency
- Faculty (due to expertise) have primary decision-making authority
 - Curriculum, subject matter, and methods of instruction
 - Matters related to faculty status – appointments, reappointments, non-reappointments, promotions, granting of tenure, dismissal
- Faculty have authority in financial exigency and program closures
- 1966 AAUP Statement of Government of Colleges and Universities adopted by more than 1500 colleges and universities in the US

Bills Being Heard 3/20

SB 37

Creighton

Relating to the governance of public institutions of higher education, including review of curriculum and certain degree and certificate programs, the powers and duties of a faculty council or senate, training for members of the governing board, and the establishment of the Office of Excellence in Higher Education.

SB 1489

Bettencourt

Relating to the governance of public institutions of higher education, including the establishment of a faculty council or senate and the decision-making authority of public institutions of higher education.

SB 452

Middleton

Relating to requiring the approval of the governing board of a public institution of higher education for the hiring of certain institution employees.

SB 724

Kolkhorst

Relating to providing in-person meeting requirements for governing boards of public institutions of higher education; authorizing a civil penalty.

SB 1067

Middleton

Relating to prohibiting public institutions of higher education and employees of public institutions of higher education from soliciting or accepting gifts, grants, donations, or investments from certain foreign entities.

SB 1741

Parker | et al.

Relating to measures to prevent espionage and intellectual property theft at public institutions of higher education.

SB 1273

Hughes

Relating to establishing the Higher Education Research Security Council.

SB 37 OVERVIEW (1/2)

- Texas SB 37 consolidates all power at a public community college, university, or health institution in the governing board.
- Curriculum: SB 37 ...
 - empowers a governing board to manage and oversee the curriculum
 - prohibits core curriculum courses, which are required for Associate and Bachelors degrees, from endorsing specific public policies, ideologies, or legislation
 - removes faculty oversight in the curriculum

SB 37 OVERVIEW (2/2)

- Institutional Governance: SB 37 ...
 - empowers a governing board to overturn any institutional decision
 - empowers the governing board to hire and evaluate the performance of all administrators at an institution
 - requires the president to appoint at least half of the Faculty Senators as well as the Faculty Senate President and the other two officer positions
 - prohibits faculty from being involved in grievances or faculty discipline processes
- New Investigative Unit: SB 37 ...
 - creates a new investigative unit concerning academic discourse to receive complaints and refer findings to the Attorney General.

How to Testify

- ❖ Example [11/7 Hearing Faculty Talking Points](#)
- ❖ Write your testimony beforehand.
- ❖ Please be clear that you're speaking for yourself as a private individual.
- ❖ Max 2 minutes for a Senate hearing and 3 minutes for a House hearing (one page)
- ❖ Review background info for context, like hearing agendas and invited speakers
- ❖ Tell your story! Personal narratives are important to testimonies, so tie how it impacts you and others back to the issues, and make the call to action clear!

Getting Involved in Person

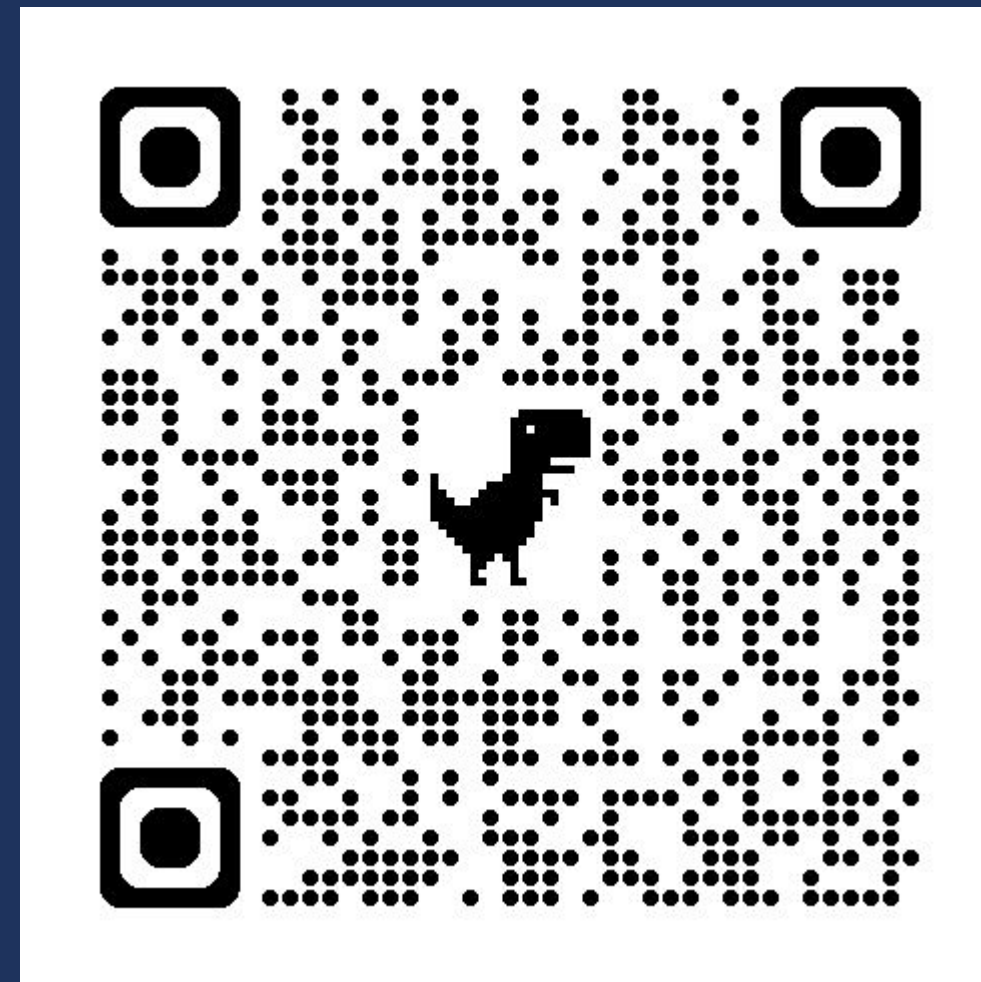
- ❖ The hearing is taking place at the Texas Capitol, room E1.028 at 9 am.
- ❖ Please arrive early to make sure you're registered to testify.
- ❖ Witness registration kiosks are on E1. If you need help finding the kiosks, please reach out to Amanda Garcia or Dr. Brian Evans (512-516-5991) and we'll help you get signed up!

Getting Involved Remotely

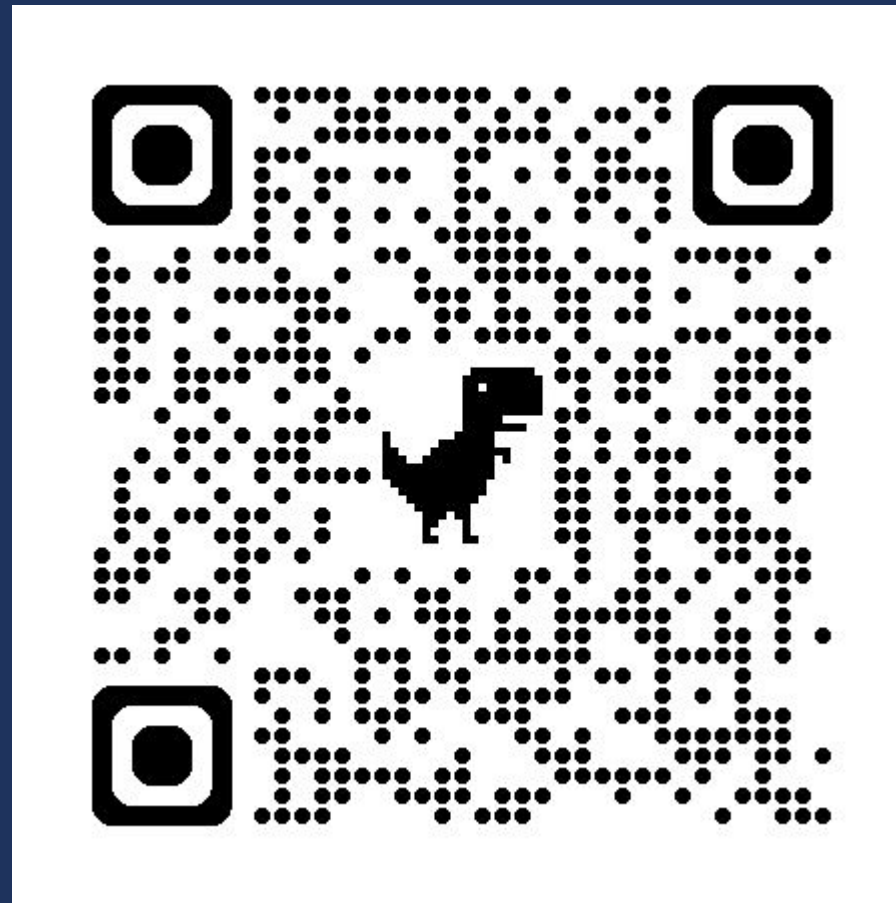
- ❖ Submit written testimony if you're unable to make it
 - <https://forms.gle/G2iqymZz6sJvpKPX9>
- ❖ CALL YOUR SENATOR AND THE SENATORS ON THE SENATE K-16 COMMITTEE
- ❖ Sign the [Texas AFT Educator's Bill of Rights](#) for K-12 and higher ed educators.

Join Texas AAUP-AFT Action Committees

- **Join Texas AAUP-AFT
Action Committees!**
 - Legislative Advocacy
 - Organizing
 - Media & Messaging
 - Legal Analysis
- **1 year commitment**



Thank you!



Texas AAUP-AFT
Higher Education Bill Tracker