

Howdy, Advocates!

Many of you are new to our team, and we are grateful that you have signed up to become Advocates or to receive this newsletter. Whoop!

The pace and volume of work in the Texas Capitol has increased, and the end of the 86th Legislative Session is just 40 days away. As many of you know, the members have largely concentrated on legislation related to property tax reform and funding for public (K-12) education. The vast majority of bills that have been filed do not relate to higher education. While we will not know the final general revenue outcomes until the chambers complete conference committees and floor votes, both the Texas House and Senate have proposed small to moderate increases in funding for Texas A&M over the 2020-2021 biennium. One of the next items up for debate in the legislature is tuition revenue bonds, and you can learn more about them by clicking [here](#).

At the federal level, debate continues around the potential reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA). Several veteran-based service organizations have provided input about the proposals provided by each party, as well as their impacts on student veterans. Please read the article below for additional information.

In national higher education news, some states have begun to fund their public universities at levels equal to, or greater than, funding levels prior to the Great Recession of 2008. According to a study published by the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, nine states have recovered in per-student state appropriations. To see where Texas ranks among the 50 states, please read the article below or click [here](#).

Last, but definitely not least, over 6,300 students were presented with their Aggie Rings last week. All of our Public Policy Internship Program and Agriculture and Natural Resource Policy interns in Washington, D.C. received a surprise when Congressman Bill Flores '76 and Congressman Will Hurd '99 were there for the special occasion!

Thank you again for your continued support and investment in Texas A&M. The Texas A&M Advocacy Network will continue to monitor these issues and provide updates as appropriate.

Gig 'em,

Dave Fujimoto '17

Director of Strategic Engagement



NEWSLETTER | APRIL 16, 2019

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
 TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Legislative Update

The end of the 86th Texas Legislative Session (May 27th) is just 40 days away, and over 7,200 bills have been filed between the Texas House and Senate (around 650 more than during the 85th regular session).

Fortunately, most of the filed bills do not relate to higher education, but some do. We appreciate those on campus who help provide analysis on these bills for legislators, who have asked us to gauge impacts.

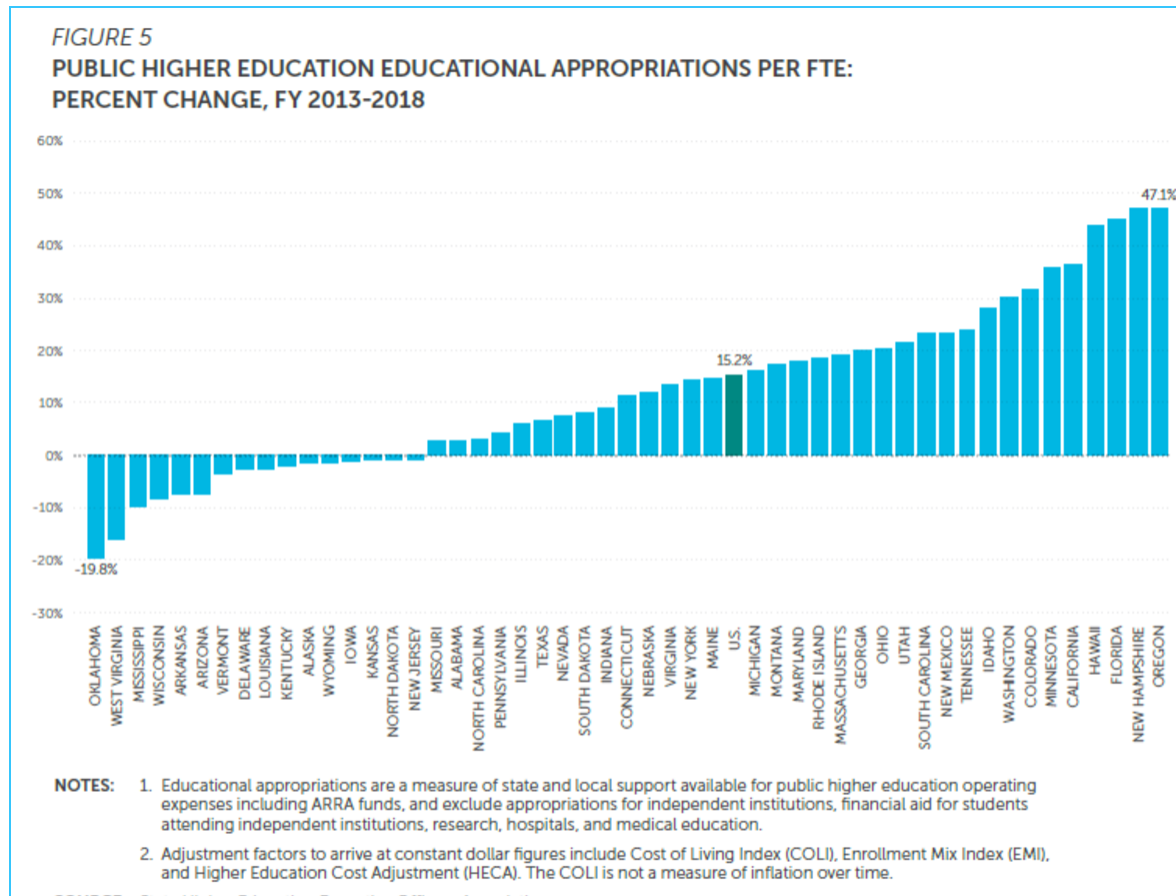
A critical part of the session is now approaching and there is about a month to go until we get some appropriation answers.

As you can see below, Texas A&M, Texas A&M at Galveston (TAMUG) and Texas A&M Health Science Center (TAMHSC) each fare well in one bill and better in another. We won't know the final general revenue (GR) outcomes until they are resolved in conference. The House has named its conferees, and we're expecting the Senate names soon.

- In the House's FY 20-21 proposal, Texas A&M has a 6.7% increase in GR from FY 18-19, TAMUG has a 1% increase, and TAMHSC has a 1% increase.
- In the Senate's FY 20-21 proposal, Texas A&M has a 5.3% increase in GR from FY 18-19, TAMUG has a 4% increase, and TAMHSC has a 1.2% increase.
- The Senate proposed more money for the general academic formulas than the House---this benefits all institutions.
- The House proposed more money for "research funds" than the Senate, which benefits Texas A&M through the Texas Research University Fund (TRUF).
- The action for the small school supplement greatly benefits TAMUG.
- There is no additional funding in either bill for "non-formula" items, or special items as they were previously known. If there is to be additional funding, it will be as a result of conference committee.

The Government Relations team is also tracking over 400 other filed bills that could potentially impact institutions of higher education in Texas (if passed into law).

New Study: Per-student Public Spending Recovers Halfway Since Great Recession



"A decade after the 2008 recession, fewer than one in five states has fully recovered when it comes to per-student appropriations for higher education.

"A new study finds that just nine states have bounced back from pre-recession funding levels, and another 11 have yet to increase per-student funding to even the low point of the recession.

"In the middle: 30 states that have higher per-student appropriations than at their low point in 2012 or 2013, but which now fund postsecondary education at a lower level than their pre-recession high of 2007 or 2008."

To read more about this survey and find additional data about Texas, please click [here](#).



Groups Unite on HEA Priorities for Military-connected Students

"Strengthening the GI Bill, institutional accountability, and protecting military-connected veterans from unethical and illegal practices were among the top concerns that various veteran and military-service groups want to see addressed in a reauthorized Higher Education Act.

"At a brief press conference [last week] at the Longworth House Office Building, representatives of several advocacy groups and nonprofits spoke about common concerns among their constituents. The show of unity included organizations such as the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, Veterans Education Success, Student Veterans of America, the American Legion, the National Military Family Association and organizations representing vets from the Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan wars."

To learn more about student veterans and the Higher Education Act, please click on this [link](#).

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