TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF REGENTS AGENDA

COMMITTEE: Academic Affairs, Research and Student Life

ITEM: Higher Education Research Security and Compliance (HERSC) – HB 127 Quarterly Update

DATE PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED: August 19, 2026, HB 127 Board Certification

SUMMARY: Texas House Bill 127 (HB 127), enacted by the 89th Texas Legislature and signed into law on June 20, 2025, took effect on September 1, 2025. The legislation strengthens research security at public institutions of higher education by establishing measures to protect against foreign adversary threats, safeguard intellectual property, and promote the integrity of university research.

On August 19, 2026, Dr. Michelle John, Vice President for Research and Innovation, and Attorney Shawn Thierry (now Judge Thierry) briefed the Texas Southern University Board of Regents on House Bill 127 (HB 127) and certification requirements. The Chair of the Board of Regents, The Honorable James M. Benham, and the President of Texas Southern University, President James W. Crawford, III signed the university's HB 127 Certification. Atty. Shawn Thierry (now Judge Theirry) submitted the signed Higher Education Research and Protection Law Certification of Compliance to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

A key provision of HB 127 established the Higher Education Research Security Council (HERSC) under Chapter 51B of the Texas Education Code. The Council is charged with advancing research security through the development of best practices and model policies, training and technical assistance, and a framework for assessing institutional research security practices across Texas higher education institutions.

On October 6, 2026, HERSC convened in Austin, Texas, to review accomplishments from its inaugural year, identify outstanding requirements, establish its 2026–2027 academic year work program, and adopt a coordinated roadmap for implementing the remaining provisions of HB 127. The Council also discussed strategic priorities for 2027, as outlined below.

HERSC FY 2027 Priorities: The FY 2027 implementation plan will focus on strengthening institutional readiness and establishing consistent statewide compliance practices. Key priorities include:

- Finalizing HB 127 standards and model policies addressing academic partnerships, and covered researcher screening.
- Developing practical compliance workflows, evidence checklists, and governing board certification tools.
- Providing training and tiered technical assistance, including shared-service options for smaller institutions.
- Updating the education-software review with THECB and providing guidance regarding institutional contracting controls.
- Assessing statewide readiness and monitoring quarterly milestones, implementation gaps, and corrective actions.
- Submitting the required Council report by December 1, 2026, including findings and recommendations for state leadership.

- Establishing the Year 3 roadmap for full implementation, capability testing, and development of institutional accreditation development.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION: Execution of the HB 127 Certification, dated August 19, 2026

FISCAL IMPACT: No Fiscal Impact

ACTION REQUESTED: Information

Legal Certification: Based on available information to date, this action item and its implementation will not be in violation of any applicable federal, state, or local law, or regulation.

GENERAL COUNSEL	**DATE** 10/21/2026

Fiscal Certification: This fiscal note shown above details the true and actual positive or negative fiscal effect that implementation of this proposal will achieve.

J Maina Chubb **INTERIM CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**	**DATE** 10/21/2026
James Crawford (Oct 22, 2026 13:12:17 CDT) **PRESIDENT**	**DATE** 10/22/2026