

By: Shofner

H.B. No. 1705

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the accreditation of certain postsecondary educational institutions in this state or of certain programs offered by those institutions.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Sections 61.003(13), Education Code, are amended to read as follows:

(13) "Recognized accrediting agency" means [~~the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and~~] any [~~other~~] association or organization so designated by the board.

SECTION 2. Section 61.0515(a), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) To earn a baccalaureate degree, a student may not be required by a general academic teaching institution to complete more than the minimum number of semester credit hours required for the degree by the institution's recognized accrediting agency [~~Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or its successor~~] unless the institution determines that there is a compelling academic reason for requiring completion of additional semester credit hours for the degree.

SECTION 3. Section 61.05151(a), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) To earn an associate degree, a student may not be required by an institution of higher education to complete more than the minimum number of semester credit hours required for the degree by the institution's recognized accrediting agency [~~Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or its successor~~] unless the institution determines that there is a compelling academic reason for requiring completion of additional semester credit hours for the degree.

SECTION 4. Section 61.8235(f), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(f) A student enrolled in a board-established program of study who transfers from a public junior college, public state college, or public technical institute to another public junior college, public state college, or public technical institute that offers a similar program, regardless of whether the institution has adopted the board-established program of study, shall receive academic credit from the institution to which the student transferred for each of the courses that the student has successfully completed in the program of study curriculum. Unless otherwise required by the institution's recognized accrediting agency [~~Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools~~], the student may complete the program of

study at the institution to which the student transferred by completing only the remaining number of semester credit hours the student would need to complete the program of study at the institution from which the student transferred.

SECTION 5. Section 107.151(c), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(c) Notwithstanding any other provision of this subchapter, the university may operate as a general academic teaching institution only after the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board certifies that the university is accredited by a recognized accrediting agency, as defined by Section 61.003, [~~the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges~~] and has been approved by the coordinating board to offer one or more degree programs. Until the coordinating board certifies that the conditions of this subsection have been met, the board of regents may operate a branch campus of Texas Woman's University in the city of Dallas.

SECTION 6. Section 107.201(c), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(c) Notwithstanding any other provision of this subchapter, the university may operate as a general academic teaching institution only after the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board certifies that the university is accredited by a recognized accrediting agency, as defined by Section 61.003, [~~the Southern~~

~~Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges]~~ and has been approved by the coordinating board to offer one or more degree programs. Until the coordinating board certifies that the conditions of this subsection have been met, the board of regents may operate a branch campus of Texas Woman's University in the city of Houston.

SECTION 7. Section 130.301, Education Code, is amended by adding Subdivision (3) to read as follows:

(3) "Recognized accrediting agency" has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

SECTION 8. Section 130.305, Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 130.305. ACCREDITATION. A public junior college offering a baccalaureate degree program under this subchapter must meet all applicable accreditation requirements of a recognized accrediting agency [~~the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools~~].

SECTION 9. Section 130.307(c), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(c) Before a public junior college may be authorized to offer a baccalaureate degree program under this subchapter, the public junior college must submit a report to the coordinating board that includes:

(1) a long-term financial plan for receiving

accreditation from a recognized accrediting agency [~~the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools~~];

(2) a long-term plan for faculty recruitment that:

(A) indicates the ability to pay the increased salaries of doctoral faculty;

(B) identifies recruitment strategies for new faculty; and

(C) ensures the program would not draw faculty employed by a neighboring institution offering a similar program;

(3) detailed information on the manner of program and course delivery; and

(4) detailed information regarding existing articulation agreements and dual enrollment agreements indicating:

(A) that at least three articulation agreements have been established with general academic teaching institutions or medical and dental units, or the reasons why no articulation agreements have been established; and

(B) that, with the agreement of the applicable general academic teaching institution or medical and dental unit, established articulation agreements are at capacity.

SECTION 10. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.