

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 30  
By: Branch  
Higher Education  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Each year, thousands of students enter community colleges with the intent of transferring to a four-year university. However, some reports indicate that only a minority succeed in doing so. Interested parties have recommended that Texas should invest in creating a seamless transfer pathway that decreases the time it takes a student to complete a degree and simplifies the process for a student who wants to continue the student's education beyond a certificate or associate degree. C.S.H.B. 30 seeks to implement certain measures to facilitate the transfer of students within the public higher education system and the timely graduation of students from public institutions of higher education.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTIONS 1, 2, and 3 of this bill.

### **ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 30 amends the Education Code to require each general academic teaching institution, not later than May 31, 2015, to publish on the institution's Internet website for use by prospective undergraduate students a detailed description developed by the institution's faculty of the learning objectives, content, and prior knowledge requirements for at least 12 courses offered by the institution for which credit is frequently transferred to the institution from lower-division institutions of higher education; to identify the public junior colleges from which the general academic teaching institution regularly receives transfer students; and to establish, for at least five degree plans for which credit is frequently transferred to the institution from lower-division institutions, articulation agreements with each public junior college from which the general academic teaching institution has received an average of at least five percent of the institution's transfer students in the three preceding academic years. The bill establishes that a general academic teaching institution's participation in an articulation agreement does not affect the institution's admissions policies. The bill requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, in consultation with general academic teaching institutions and public junior colleges, to adopt any rules the coordinating board considers necessary for the administration of these provisions.

C.S.H.B. 30 specifies that, beginning with undergraduate students who enroll in a general academic teaching institution for the 2015 fall semester, the minimum number of semester credit hours required for a bachelor's degree are required by the institution's coordinating board-recognized accrediting agency, rather than the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or its successor. The bill requires the coordinating board to adopt any rules it considers necessary for the administration of provisions relating to the semester credit hours required for a bachelor's degree at a general academic teaching institution.

C.S.H.B. 30 prohibits an institution of higher education, beginning with an associate degree awarded by the institution to a student enrolled at the institution for the 2015 fall semester, from

requiring a student to complete more than the minimum number of semester credit hours required for an associate degree by the institution's coordinating board-recognized accrediting agency unless academic accreditation or professional licensure requirements require the completion of additional semester credit hours for the degree. The bill authorizes the coordinating board to review one or more of an institution's associate degree programs to ensure compliance with this prohibition. The bill requires the coordinating board to adopt any rules the coordinating board considers necessary for the administration of these provisions.

C.S.H.B. 30 requires the list of courses that each governing board of an institution of higher education is required to submit to the coordinating board to specifically identify any course included in the common course numbering system that has been added to or removed from the institution's list for the current academic year and requires the coordinating board to distribute that information as necessary to accomplish the purposes of that common course numbering system. The bill includes, among the changes to the submitted list of courses such a governing board is required to periodically submit to the coordinating board, any changes relating to offering a course included in the common course numbering system. The bill requires each governing board to certify at the time the list is submitted that the institution does not prohibit the acceptance of transfer credit based solely on the accreditation of the sending institution or include language in any materials published by the institution suggesting that such a prohibition exists. The bill's provisions relating to the lists of courses offered by public institutions of higher education apply beginning with those required to be submitted for the 2014-2015 academic year.

C.S.H.B. 30 authorizes administrators of an institution of higher education to serve as representatives of the institution on any advisory committee named to assist the coordinating board in developing a recommended core curriculum. The bill requires the coordinating board, in an effort to facilitate the transfer of major-related coursework beyond the general education core curriculum and with the assistance of the advisory committees, to develop, not later than May 31, 2015, a course-specific core curriculum for each broad academic discipline within the general core curriculum and to identify those degree programs offered at institutions of higher education to which the course-specific core curriculum, if successfully completed by a student at another institution of higher education is fully transferable.

C.S.H.B. 30 requires a student who transfers from one institution of higher education to another, beginning with the 2013 fall semester, to receive academic credit from the receiving institution for each course that the student has successfully completed that serves as an equivalent course under the common course numbering system at the institution from which the student transfers.

#### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2013.

#### **COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE**

While C.S.H.B. 30 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following comparison is organized and highlighted in a manner that indicates the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

##### INTRODUCED

SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 61.05135 to read as follows:

Sec. 61.05135. STATEWIDE TRANSFER COMPACTS. (a) In this section:

(1) "Career school or college" has the

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No equivalent provision, but see SECTION 1 below relating to transfer of credit.

meaning assigned by Section 132.001.

(2) "Qualified degree-granting career school or college" means a career school or college determined by the board under Subsection (c) to be qualified to participate in a statewide transfer compact developed under this section.

(b) The board, in collaboration with institutions of higher education, shall develop transfer compacts that identify learning objectives for coursework in major degree fields that are acceptable across institutions offering coursework or degrees in those fields in an effort to facilitate the universal articulation of specific courses completed at public junior colleges, public state colleges, public technical institutes, general academic teaching institutions, and qualified degree-granting career schools or colleges and transferred to general academic teaching institutions.

(c) A career school or college may apply to the board to participate in a statewide transfer compact developed under this section. On application by a career school or college, the board shall review the school's or college's curriculum for the purpose of determining whether the school or college is qualified to participate in the compact. The board may determine that the career school or college is qualified to participate in the compact only if the board finds that the school or college:

(1) is authorized to grant degrees in this state;  
(2) has adopted and implemented a core curriculum described by Section 61.822, applying the same assumptions and defining characteristics applicable to institutions of higher education; and

(3) has appropriately identified for each of its core curriculum courses the equivalent course number under the common course numbering system approved by the board under Section 61.832.

(d) An institution of higher education or qualified degree-granting career school or college shall comply with any applicable compact under Subsection (b) entered into by the institution, school, or college and the board.

(e) A general academic teaching institution designated as a research institution under the board's higher education accountability system that elects not to participate in an applicable transfer compact developed under this section shall:

(1) publish on the institution's website for use

by prospective undergraduate students a detailed description, developed by the institution's faculty, of the learning objectives, content, and prior knowledge requirements for at least 12 courses for which credit is frequently transferred to the institution from lower-division institutions of higher education; and

(2) establish honors articulation agreements with at least two public junior colleges designed to strengthen the lower-division course offerings of those public junior colleges and to improve the persistence and success rates of students who transfer to the institution from public junior colleges.

No equivalent provision, but see SECTION 1 above relating to transfer compacts.

SECTION 1. Subchapter Z, Chapter 51, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 51.96852 to read as follows:

Sec. 51.96852. TRANSFER OF CREDIT FROM LOWER-DIVISION INSTITUTIONS; ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS. (a) In this section:

(1) "Articulation agreement" means a formal written agreement between a public junior college and a general academic teaching institution identifying courses offered by the public junior college that must be accepted for credit toward specific course requirements at the general academic teaching institution.

(2) "Lower-division institution of higher education" means a public junior college, public state college, or public technical institute.

(3) "Public junior college" and "general academic teaching institution" have the meanings assigned by Section 61.003.

(b) Each general academic teaching institution shall:

(1) publish on the institution's Internet website for use by prospective undergraduate students a detailed description developed by the institution's faculty of the learning objectives, content, and prior knowledge requirements for at least 12 courses offered by the institution for which credit is frequently transferred to the institution from lower-division institutions of higher education;

(2) identify the public junior colleges from which the general academic teaching institution regularly receives transfer students; and

(3) establish, for at least five degree plans for

which credit is frequently transferred to the institution from lower-division institutions of higher education, articulation agreements with each public junior college from which the general academic teaching institution has received an average of at least five percent of the institution's transfer students in the three preceding academic years.

(c) A general academic teaching institution's participation in an articulation agreement under this section does not affect the institution's admissions policies.

(d) In consultation with general academic teaching institutions and public junior colleges, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall adopt any rules the coordinating board considers necessary for the administration of this section.

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 board-recognized accrediting agency [~~Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or its successor~~] unless academic accreditation or professional licensure requirements require the [~~the institution determines that there is a compelling~~ academic reason for requiring] completion of additional semester credit hours for the degree.

SECTION 3. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 61.05151 to read as follows:

Sec. 61.05151. SEMESTER CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED FOR ASSOCIATE DEGREE. (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 board-recognized accrediting agency unless academic accreditation or professional licensure requirements require the completion of additional semester credit hours for the

SECTION 2. Section 61.0515, Education Code, is amended by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (d) 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 board-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.

(d) The board shall adopt any rules the board considers necessary for the administration of this section.

SECTION 3. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 61.05151 to read as follows:

Sec. 61.05151. SEMESTER CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED FOR ASSOCIATE DEGREE. (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 board-recognized accrediting agency unless academic accreditation or professional licensure requirements require the completion of additional semester credit

degree.

(b) The board may review one or more of an institution's associate degree programs to ensure compliance with this section.

(c) Subsection (a) does not apply to an associate degree awarded by an institution to a student enrolled in the institution before the 2015 fall semester.

SECTION 4. Section 61.052, Education Code, is amended.

SECTION 5. Section 61.822, Education Code, is amended by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (f) to read as follows:

(a) The board, with the assistance of advisory committees composed of representatives of institutions of higher education, shall develop a recommended core curriculum of at least 42 semester credit hours, including a statement of the content, component areas, and objectives of the core curriculum. At least a majority of the members of any advisory committee named under this section shall be administrators or faculty members of an institution of higher education. An institution shall consult with the faculty of the institution before nominating or recommending a person to the board as the institution's representative on an advisory committee.

(f) In an effort to facilitate the transfer of major-related coursework beyond the general education core curriculum, the board, with the assistance of the advisory committees described by Subsection (a), shall:

(1) develop a course-specific core curriculum for each broad academic discipline within the general core curriculum; and

(2) identify those degree programs offered at institutions of higher education to which the course-specific core curriculum, if successfully completed by a student at another institution of higher education or at a qualified degree-granting career school or college, as defined by Section 61.05135, is fully transferable.

hours for the degree.

(b) The board may review one or more of an institution's associate degree programs to ensure compliance with this section.

(c) Subsection (a) does not apply to an associate degree awarded by an institution to a student enrolled in the institution before the 2015 fall semester.

(d) The board shall adopt any rules the board considers necessary for the administration of this section.

SECTION 4. Same as introduced version.

SECTION 5. Section 61.822, Education Code, is amended by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (f) to read as follows:

(a) The board, with the assistance of advisory committees composed of representatives of institutions of higher education, shall develop a recommended core curriculum of at least 42 semester credit hours, including a statement of the content, component areas, and objectives of the core curriculum. Administrators of an institution of higher education may serve as representatives of the institution on any advisory committee under this section. At least a majority of the members of any advisory committee named under this section shall be faculty members of an institution of higher education. An institution shall consult with the faculty of the institution before nominating or recommending a person to the board as the institution's representative on an advisory committee.

(f) In an effort to facilitate the transfer of major-related coursework beyond the general education core curriculum, the board, with the assistance of the advisory committees described by Subsection (a), shall:

(1) develop a course-specific core curriculum for each broad academic discipline within the general core curriculum; and

(2) identify those degree programs offered at institutions of higher education to which the course-specific core curriculum, if successfully completed by a student at another institution of higher education, is fully transferable.

SECTION 6. Section 61.832, Education Code, is amended.

No equivalent provision.

SECTION 7. The change in law made by this Act to Section 61.0515(a), Education Code, applies beginning with undergraduate students who initially enroll in a general academic teaching institution for the 2015 fall semester. An undergraduate student who initially enrolls in a general academic teaching institution before that semester is covered by the law in effect before the effective date of this Act, and that law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 8. The changes in law made by this Act to Section 61.052, Education Code, apply to the comprehensive lists of courses offered by public institutions of higher education beginning with lists required to be submitted for the 2014-2015 academic year. Course lists for an academic year before that academic year are covered by the law in effect before the effective date of this Act, and that law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 9. Not later than May 31, 2014, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall develop core curricula for broad academic disciplines included within the general core curriculum that conform to the requirements of Section 61.822, Education Code, as amended by this Act.

SECTION 10. Section 61.832(e), Education Code, as added by this Act, applies beginning with the 2013 fall semester.

SECTION 11. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2013.

SECTION 6. Same as introduced version.

SECTION 7. Not later than May 31, 2015, each general academic teaching institution shall publish on the institution's Internet website the information required by Section 51.96852, Education Code, as added by this Act, and establish articulation agreements in accordance with that section.

SECTION 8. Same as introduced version.

SECTION 9. Same as introduced version.

SECTION 10. Not later than May 31, 2015, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall develop core curricula for broad academic disciplines included within the general core curriculum that conform to the requirements of Section 61.822, Education Code, as amended by this Act.

SECTION 11. Same as introduced version.

SECTION 12. Same as introduced version.