

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1409
By: Wu
Higher Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties note that the ability of college students to obtain course credit by examination varies greatly from college to college, which not only affects the transferability of course credits but also puts an unnecessary hurdle in the path of second-career and nontraditional students who may be more likely to demonstrate a mastery over first- or second-year college material.

C.S.H.B. 1409 seeks to remedy this problem by expanding the course credit by examination options available for students at institutions of higher education, which may have the added effect of increasing graduation rates at a time when more higher education funding is tied to performance measurements that include graduation rates.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1409 amends the Education Code to require an institution of higher education that offers freshman-level and sophomore-level courses, in order to maximize opportunities for students to earn undergraduate course credit at the institution, to develop and, at least once during each academic year, administer one or more institution-specific examinations or tests by which entering or current undergraduate students may earn freshman-level or sophomore-level course credit in the same manner as an entering freshman student may earn course credit through a College-Level Examination Program examination or advanced placement examination. The bill authorizes the institution to charge students a reasonable fee for taking such an examination or test, requires the institution to develop and administer examinations or tests for course credit for as many freshman-level and sophomore-level courses as practicable, and authorizes the institution to develop those examinations or tests using source material from other institutions of higher education. The bill requires each institution of higher education that ceases to offer credit through the College-Level Examination Program or the Advanced Placement Program for a specific course to offer credit for the course through an institution-specific examination or test.

C.S.H.B. 1409 makes the requirement for certain institutions of higher education to adopt and implement a policy to grant course credit to certain students applicable to each institution, rather than to each institution that offers freshman-level courses, specifies that the credit is for freshman-level and sophomore-level courses, and extends eligibility for earning such credit to undergraduate students, rather than just to entering freshman students. The bill includes the achievement of required scores on one or more institution-specific examinations or tests administered by the institution among the means by which such students may be granted course credit.

C.S.H.B. 1409 requires each institution to report to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board a list of courses for which the institution offers undergraduate students the opportunity to

earn course credit through an institution-specific examination or test, the institution's adopted policy for granting such credit, and any fee charged for such an examination or test and to include a copy of the list, policy, and applicable fee schedule with the institution's undergraduate student application materials, including application materials available on the institution's Internet website. The bill includes the amount and type of any course credit that could be granted to an applicant for admission at an institution under the policy, as an alternative to the credit that would be granted, among the information the institution is required to provide on request of such an applicant. The bill requires an institution to identify correlations between the subject matter and content of courses offered by the institution and the subject matter and content of institution-specific examinations or tests administered by the institution and to make that information available to the public on the institution's Internet website in a manner that conforms to the requirements relating to Internet access to course information. The bill's provisions apply beginning with the 2014-2015 academic year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2013.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 1409 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. The heading to Section 51.968, Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 51.968. UNDERGRADUATE COURSE CREDIT BY EXAMINATION OR [FOR] HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION OF [STUDENTS COMPLETING] POSTSECONDARY-LEVEL PROGRAM.

SECTION 2. Section 51.968(a)(4), Education Code, is amended.

SECTION 3. Section 51.968, Education Code, is amended by adding Subsections (a-1), (a-2), (a-3), (d-1), and (f-1) and amending Subsections (b), (c), and (e) to read as follows:

(a-1) This section applies only to an institution of higher education that offers freshman-level and sophomore-level courses.

(a-2) To maximize opportunities for students to earn undergraduate course credit at the institution, each institution of higher education shall develop and, at least once during each academic year, administer one or more institution-specific examinations by which entering or current undergraduate

HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

SECTION 1. The heading to Section 51.968, Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 51.968. ALTERNATE METHODS FOR EARNING UNDERGRADUATE COURSE CREDIT [FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS COMPLETING POSTSECONDARY-LEVEL PROGRAM].

SECTION 2. Same as introduced version.

SECTION 3. Section 51.968, Education Code, is amended by adding Subsections (a-1), (a-2), (a-3), (d-1), and (f-1) and amending Subsections (b), (c), and (e) to read as follows:

(a-1) This section applies only to an institution of higher education that offers freshman-level and sophomore-level courses.

(a-2) To maximize opportunities for students to earn undergraduate course credit at the institution, each institution of higher education shall develop and, at least once during each academic year, administer one or more institution-specific examinations **or assessments** by which entering or current

students may earn freshman-level or sophomore-level course credit in the same manner as an entering freshman student may earn course credit through a CLEP examination or advanced placement examination. The institution may charge students a reasonable fee for taking an examination described by this subsection. The institution shall develop and administer examinations for course credit for as many freshman-level and sophomore-level courses as practicable and may develop those examinations using source material from other institutions of higher education.

(a-3) Each institution of higher education that ceases to offer credit through the College-Level Examination Program or the Advanced Placement Program for a specific course shall offer credit for the course through an institution-specific examination administered under Subsection (a-2).

(b) Each institution of higher education [~~that offers freshman-level courses~~] shall adopt and implement a policy to grant [~~undergraduate~~] course credit for freshman-level and sophomore-level courses to undergraduate [~~entering freshman~~] students who have:

(1) successfully completed the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program;

(2)[~~, who have~~] achieved required scores on one or more examinations in the Advanced Placement Program or the College-Level Examination Program;

(3)[~~, or who have~~] successfully completed one or more courses offered through concurrent enrollment in high school and at an institution of higher education; or

(4) achieved required scores on one or more institution-specific examinations administered by the institution under Subsection (a-2).

(c) In the policy, the institution shall:

(1) establish the institution's conditions for granting course credit, including the minimum required scores on CLEP examinations, Advanced Placement examinations, [~~and~~] examinations for courses constituting the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program, and institution-specific examinations administered by the institution under Subsection (a-2); and

undergraduate students may earn freshman-level or sophomore-level course credit in the same manner as an entering freshman student may earn course credit through a CLEP examination or advanced placement examination. The institution may charge students a reasonable fee for taking an examination **or assessment** described by this subsection. The institution shall develop and administer examinations **or assessments** for course credit for as many freshman-level and sophomore-level courses as practicable and may develop those examinations **or assessments** using source material from other institutions of higher education.

(a-3) Each institution of higher education that ceases to offer credit through the College-Level Examination Program or the Advanced Placement Program for a specific course shall offer credit for the course through an institution-specific examination **or assessment** administered under Subsection (a-2).

(b) Each institution of higher education [~~that offers freshman-level courses~~] shall adopt and implement a policy to grant [~~undergraduate~~] course credit for freshman-level and sophomore-level courses to undergraduate [~~entering freshman~~] students who have:

(1) successfully completed the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program;

(2)[~~, who have~~] achieved required scores on one or more examinations in the Advanced Placement Program or the College-Level Examination Program;

(3)[~~, or who have~~] successfully completed one or more courses offered through concurrent enrollment in high school and at an institution of higher education; or

(4) achieved required scores on one or more institution-specific examinations **or assessments** administered by the institution under Subsection (a-2).

(c) In the policy, the institution shall:

(1) establish the institution's conditions for granting course credit, including the minimum required scores on CLEP examinations, Advanced Placement examinations, [~~and~~] examinations for courses constituting the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program, and institution-specific examinations **or assessments** administered by the institution under Subsection (a-2); and

(2) based on the correlations identified under Subsections [Subsection] (f) and (f-1), identify the specific freshman-level or sophomore-level course credit or other academic requirements of the institution, including the number of semester credit hours or other course credit, that the institution will grant to a student who successfully completes a course or program or achieves a required score on an examination as described by Subsection (b) [~~the diploma program, who successfully completes a course through concurrent enrollment, or who achieves required scores on CLEP examinations or Advanced Placement examinations~~].

(d-1) Each institution of higher education shall:

(1) report to the coordinating board:

(A) a list of courses for which the institution offers undergraduate students the opportunity to earn course credit through an institution-specific examination; and

(B) the institution's policy adopted under this section; and

(2) include a copy of the list and policy with the institution's undergraduate student application materials, including application materials available on the institution's Internet website.

(e) On request of an applicant for admission as an entering undergraduate student [~~freshman~~], an institution of higher education, based on information provided by the applicant, shall determine and notify the applicant regarding:

(1) the amount and type of any course credit that would or could be granted to the applicant under the policy; and

(2) any other academic requirement that the applicant would satisfy under the policy.

(f-1) An institution of higher education shall:

(1) identify correlations between the subject matter and content of courses offered by the institution and the subject matter and content of institution-specific examinations administered by the institution under Subsection (a-2); and

(2) make that information available to the public on the institution's Internet website.

(2) based on the correlations identified under Subsections [Subsection] (f) and (f-1), identify the specific freshman-level or sophomore-level course credit or other academic requirements of the institution, including the number of semester credit hours or other course credit, that the institution will grant to a student who successfully completes a course or program or achieves a required score on an examination or assessment as described by Subsection (b) [~~the diploma program, who successfully completes a course through concurrent enrollment, or who achieves required scores on CLEP examinations or Advanced Placement examinations~~].

(d-1) Each institution of higher education shall:

(1) report to the coordinating board:

(A) a list of courses for which the institution offers undergraduate students the opportunity to earn course credit through an institution-specific examination or assessment;

(B) the institution's policy adopted under this section; and

(C) any fee charged for an examination or assessment administered under Subsection (a-2); and

(2) include a copy of the list, policy, and applicable fee schedule with the institution's undergraduate student application materials, including application materials available on the institution's Internet website.

(e) On request of an applicant for admission as an entering undergraduate student [~~freshman~~], an institution of higher education, based on information provided by the applicant, shall determine and notify the applicant regarding:

(1) the amount and type of any course credit that would or could be granted to the applicant under the policy; and

(2) any other academic requirement that the applicant would satisfy under the policy.

(f-1) An institution of higher education shall:

(1) identify correlations between the subject matter and content of courses offered by the institution and the subject matter and content of institution-specific examinations or assessments administered by the institution under Subsection (a-2); and

(2) make that information available to the public on the institution's Internet website in

a manner that conforms to the requirements of Section 51.974.

SECTION 4. The change in law made by this Act applies beginning with the 2014-2015 academic year. An academic year occurring before that academic year is covered by the law in effect immediately before the effective date of this Act, and that law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 5. This Act takes effect September 1, 2013.

SECTION 4. Same as introduced version.

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