

By: Branch, et al.

H.B. No. 30

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT  
2 relating to measures to facilitate the transfer, academic progress,  
3 and timely graduation of students in public higher education;  
4 authorizing a fee.

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

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

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

11 SECTION 2. Section 51.968(a)(4), Education Code, is amended  
12 to read as follows:

13 (4) "Institution of higher education" has the meaning  
14 assigned [~~means an institution of higher education, as defined~~] by  
15 Section 61.003 [~~, that offers freshman-level courses~~].

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

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

21 (a-2) To maximize opportunities for students to earn  
22 undergraduate course credit at the institution, each institution of  
23 higher education may develop and administer one or more  
24 institution-specific examinations or assessments by which entering

1 or current undergraduate students may earn freshman-level or  
2 sophomore-level course credit in the same manner as an entering  
3 freshman student may earn course credit through a CLEP examination  
4 or Advanced Placement examination. The institution may charge  
5 students a reasonable fee for taking an examination or assessment  
6 described by this subsection. The institution may develop and  
7 administer examinations or assessments for course credit for as  
8 many freshman-level and sophomore-level courses as practicable and  
9 may develop those examinations or assessments using source material  
10 from other institutions of higher education.

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

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

21 (1) successfully completed the International  
22 Baccalaureate Diploma Program;

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

26 (3) [~~or who have~~] successfully completed one or more  
27 courses offered through concurrent enrollment in high school and at

1 an institution of higher education; or  
2 (4) achieved required scores on one or more  
3 institution-specific examinations or assessments administered by  
4 the institution under Subsection (a-2).

5 (c) In the policy, the institution shall:

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

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

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

25 (1) report to the coordinating board:

26 (A) a list of courses for which the institution  
27 offers undergraduate students the opportunity to earn course credit

1 through an institution-specific examination or assessment;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

24 (2) make that information available to the public on  
25 the institution's Internet website in a manner that conforms to the  
26 requirements of Section 51.974.

27 SECTION 4. Subchapter Z, Chapter 51, Education Code, is

1 amended by adding Section 51.96852 to read as follows:

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

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

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

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

14 (b) Each general academic teaching institution shall:

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

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

25 (3) establish, for at least five degree plans for  
26 which credit is frequently transferred to the institution from  
27 lower-division institutions of higher education, articulation

1 agreements with each public junior college from which the general  
2 academic teaching institution has received an average of at least  
3 five percent of the institution's transfer students in the three  
4 preceding academic years.

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

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

12 SECTION 5. Section 61.0515, Education Code, is amended by  
13 amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (d) to read as  
14 follows:

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

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

25 SECTION 6. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is  
26 amended by adding Section 61.05151 to read as follows:

27 Sec. 61.05151. SEMESTER CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED FOR ASSOCIATE

1 DEGREE. (a) To earn an associate degree, a student may not be  
2 required by an institution of higher education to complete more  
3 than the minimum number of semester credit hours required for the  
4 degree by the institution's board-recognized accrediting agency  
5 unless academic accreditation or professional licensure  
6 requirements require the completion of additional semester credit  
7 hours for the degree.

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

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

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

15 SECTION 7. Section 61.052, Education Code, is amended by  
16 amending Subsections (a) and (b) and adding Subsection (b-1) to  
17 read as follows:

18 (a) Each governing board shall submit to the board once each  
19 year on dates designated by the board a comprehensive list by  
20 department, division, and school of all courses, together with a  
21 description of content, scope, and prerequisites of all these  
22 courses, that will be offered by each institution under the  
23 supervision of that governing board during the following academic  
24 year. The list for each institution must also specifically  
25 identify any course included in the single common course numbering  
26 system under Section 61.832 that has been added to or removed from  
27 the institution's list for the current academic year, and the board

1 shall distribute that information as necessary to accomplish the  
2 purposes of Section 61.832.

3 (b) After the comprehensive list of courses is submitted by  
4 a governing board under Subsection (a) [~~of this section~~], the  
5 governing board shall submit on dates designated by the board any  
6 changes in the comprehensive list of courses to be offered,  
7 including any changes relating to offering a course included in the  
8 single common course numbering system.

9 (b-1) Each governing board must certify at the time of  
10 submission under Subsection (a) that the institution does not:

11 (1) prohibit the acceptance of transfer credit based  
12 solely on the accreditation of the sending institution; or

13 (2) include language in any materials published by the  
14 institution, whether in printed or electronic form, suggesting that  
15 such a prohibition exists.

16 SECTION 8. Section 61.822, Education Code, is amended by  
17 amending Subsections (a) and (b) and adding Subsection (f) to read  
18 as follows:

19 (a) The board, with the assistance of advisory committees  
20 composed of representatives of institutions of higher education,  
21 shall develop a recommended core curriculum of at least 42 semester  
22 credit hours, including a statement of the content, component  
23 areas, and objectives of the core curriculum. Administrators of an  
24 institution of higher education may serve as representatives of the  
25 institution on any advisory committee under this section. At least  
26 a majority of the members of any advisory committee named under this  
27 section shall be faculty members of an institution of higher



1 education. An institution shall consult with the faculty of the  
2 institution before nominating or recommending a person to the board  
3 as the institution's representative on an advisory committee.

4 (b) Each institution of higher education shall adopt a core  
5 curriculum of not [~~no~~] less than 42 semester credit hours,  
6 including specific courses comprising the curriculum. The core  
7 curriculum shall be consistent with the single common course  
8 numbering system approved by the board under Section 61.832(a) and  
9 with the statement, recommendations, and rules issued by the board.  
10 An institution may have a core curriculum of other than 42 semester  
11 credit hours only if approved by the board.

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

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

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

22 SECTION 9. Section 61.830, Education Code, is amended to  
23 read as follows:

24 Sec. 61.830. PUBLICATION OF GUIDELINES ADDRESSING TRANSFER  
25 PRACTICES. In its course catalogs and on its website, each  
26 institution of higher education shall publish guidelines  
27 addressing the practices of the institution regarding the transfer

1 of course credit. In the guidelines, the institution must identify  
2 a course by using the single common course numbering system  
3 approved by the board under Section 61.832(a).

4 SECTION 10. Section 61.832, Education Code, is amended to  
5 read as follows:

6 Sec. 61.832. COMMON COURSE NUMBERING SYSTEM. (a) The board  
7 shall approve a single common course numbering system for  
8 lower-division courses to facilitate the transfer of those courses  
9 among institutions of higher education by promoting consistency in  
10 course designation and identification.

11 (b) The board shall solicit input from institutions of  
12 higher education regarding the development of the single common  
13 course numbering system.

14 (c) Each institution of higher education other than The  
15 University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M University shall:

16 (1) use the approved common course numbering system  
17 for each course for which a common number designation and course  
18 description are included in that system; and

19 (2) include the applicable course numbers from that  
20 system in its course catalogs and other course listings.

21 (d) The board may approve only a common course numbering  
22 system already in common use in this state by one or more  
23 institutions of higher education.

24 (e) [~~e~~] The board shall cooperate with institutions of  
25 higher education in any additional development or alteration of the  
26 common course numbering system approved under Subsection (a),  
27 including the taxonomy to be used, and in the development of rules

1 for the administration and applicability of the system.

2 (f) A student who transfers from one institution of higher  
3 education to another shall receive academic credit from the  
4 receiving institution for each course that the student has  
5 successfully completed that serves as an equivalent course under  
6 the single common course numbering system at the institution from  
7 which the student transfers.

8 (g) Not later than June 1, 2014, the board shall:

9 (1) approve a single common course numbering system as  
10 required by Subsection (a); and

11 (2) establish a timetable that requires the  
12 institutions of higher education to which Subsection (c) applies to  
13 phase in the inclusion of the applicable course numbers from the  
14 single common course numbering system in their individual course  
15 listings and course numbering systems as required by this section  
16 so that each institution fully complies with this section for all  
17 courses offered for the 2018-2019 academic year and subsequent  
18 years.

19 (g-1) Subsection (g) and this subsection expire January 1,  
20 2020. [~~(d) An institution of higher education shall include in its~~  
21 course listings the applicable course numbers from the common  
22 course numbering system approved by the board under this section.  
23 For good cause, the board may grant to an institution of higher  
24 education an exemption from the requirements of this subsection.]

25 SECTION 11. The change in law made by this Act to Section  
26 51.968, Education Code, applies beginning with the 2014-2015  
27 academic year. An academic year occurring before that academic year

1 is covered by the law in effect immediately before the effective  
2 date of this Act, and that law is continued in effect for that  
3 purpose.

4 SECTION 12. Not later than May 31, 2015, each general  
5 academic teaching institution shall publish on the institution's  
6 Internet website the information required by Section 51.96852,  
7 Education Code, as added by this Act, and establish articulation  
8 agreements in accordance with that section.

9 SECTION 13. The change in law made by this Act to Section  
10 61.0515(a), Education Code, applies beginning with undergraduate  
11 students who initially enroll in a general academic teaching  
12 institution for the 2015 fall semester. An undergraduate student  
13 who initially enrolls in a general academic teaching institution  
14 before that semester is covered by the law in effect before the  
15 effective date of this Act, and that law is continued in effect for  
16 that purpose.

17 SECTION 14. The changes in law made by this Act to Section  
18 61.052, Education Code, apply to the comprehensive lists of courses  
19 offered by public institutions of higher education beginning with  
20 lists required to be submitted for the 2014-2015 academic year.  
21 Course lists for an academic year before that academic year are  
22 covered by the law in effect before the effective date of this Act,  
23 and that law is continued in effect for that purpose.

24 SECTION 15. Not later than May 31, 2015, the Texas Higher  
25 Education Coordinating Board shall develop core curricula for broad  
26 academic disciplines included within the general core curriculum  
27 that conform to the requirements of Section 61.822, Education Code,

1 as amended by this Act.

2 SECTION 16. Section 61.832(f), Education Code, as added by  
3 this Act, applies beginning with the 2013 fall semester.

4 SECTION 17. This Act takes effect immediately if it  
5 receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each  
6 house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution.  
7 If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate  
8 effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2013.