

By: Birdwell

S.B. No. 1710

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1
2 relating to measures to facilitate the transfer of students within
3 the public higher education system and the timely graduation of
4 students from public institutions of higher education.

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

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

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

10 (1) "Career school or college" has the meaning
11 assigned by Section 132.001.

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

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

1 institutions.

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

10 (1) is authorized to grant degrees in this state;

11 (2) has adopted and implemented a core curriculum
12 described by Section 61.822, applying the same assumptions and
13 defining characteristics applicable to institutions of higher
14 education; and

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

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

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

26 (1) publish on the institution's website for use by
27 prospective undergraduate students a detailed description,

1 developed by the institution's faculty, of the learning objectives,
2 content, and prior knowledge requirements for at least 12 courses
3 for which credit is frequently transferred to the institution from
4 lower-division institutions of higher education; and

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

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

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

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

23 Sec. 61.05151. SEMESTER CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED FOR ASSOCIATE
24 DEGREE. (a) To earn an associate degree, a student may not be
25 required by an institution of higher education to complete more
26 than the minimum number of semester credit hours required for the
27 degree by the institution's board-recognized accrediting agency

1 unless academic accreditation or professional licensure
2 requirements require the completion of additional semester credit
3 hours for the degree.

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

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

9 SECTION 4. Section 61.052, Education Code, is amended by
10 amending Subsections (a) and (b) and adding Subsection (b-1) to
11 read as follows:

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

24 (b) After the comprehensive list of courses is submitted by
25 a governing board under Subsection (a) [~~of this section~~], the
26 governing board shall submit on dates designated by the board any
27 changes in the comprehensive list of courses to be offered,

1 including any changes relating to offering a course included in the
2 common course numbering system.

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

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

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

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

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

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

27 (1) develop a course-specific core curriculum for each

1 broad academic discipline within the general core curriculum; and
2 (2) identify those degree programs offered at
3 institutions of higher education to which the course-specific core
4 curriculum, if successfully completed by a student at another
5 institution of higher education or at a qualified degree-granting
6 career school or college, as defined by Section 61.05135, is fully
7 transferable.

8 SECTION 6. Section 61.832, Education Code, is amended by
9 adding Subsection (e) to read as follows:

10 (e) A student who transfers from one institution of higher
11 education to another shall receive academic credit from the
12 receiving institution for each course that the student has
13 successfully completed that serves as an equivalent course under
14 the common course numbering system at the institution from which
15 the student transfers.

16 SECTION 7. The change in law made by this Act to Section
17 61.0515(a), Education Code, applies beginning with undergraduate
18 students who initially enroll in a general academic teaching
19 institution for the 2015 fall semester. An undergraduate student
20 who initially enrolls in a general academic teaching institution
21 before that semester is covered by the law in effect before the
22 effective date of this Act, and that law is continued in effect for
23 that purpose.

24 SECTION 8. The changes in law made by this Act to Section
25 61.052, Education Code, apply to the comprehensive lists of courses
26 offered by public institutions of higher education beginning with
27 lists required to be submitted for the 2014-2015 academic year.

1 Course lists for an academic year before that academic year are
2 covered by the law in effect before the effective date of this Act,
3 and that law is continued in effect for that purpose.

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

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

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