86R11917 KSD-F

By:  Wu H.B. No. 2072

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to measures to facilitate the transfer, academic progress, and timely graduation of students in public higher education.

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

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)  "General academic teaching institution," "public junior college," "public state college," and "public technical institute" have the meanings assigned by Section 61.003.

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

(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, using the negotiated rulemaking procedures under Chapter 2008, Government Code, shall adopt any rules the coordinating board considers necessary for the administration of this section.

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. In adopting rules under this subsection, the board shall use the negotiated rulemaking procedures under Chapter 2008, Government Code.

SECTION 3.  Section 61.05151, Education Code, is amended by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (d) 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 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. In adopting rules under this subsection, the board shall use the negotiated rulemaking procedures under Chapter 2008, Government Code.

SECTION 4.  Section 61.822, Education Code, is amended by amending Subsection (a-1) and adding Subsection (f) to read as follows:

(a-1)  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-1), 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 5.  Not later than May 31, 2021, 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 6.  The changes in law made by this Act to Sections 61.0515(a) and 61.05151(a), Education Code, apply beginning with undergraduate students who initially enroll in an institution of higher education for the 2021 fall semester. An undergraduate student who initially enrolls in an institution of higher education 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 7.  Not later than May 31, 2021, 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 8.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.