86R26295 KJE-D

By:  Turner of Tarrant H.B. No. 4018

Substitute the following for H.B. No. 4018:

By:  Turner of Tarrant C.S.H.B. No. 4018

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.  Section 51.9685(a)(2), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(2)  "Institution of higher education" has [~~and "public junior college" have~~] the meaning [~~meanings~~] assigned by Section 61.003.

SECTION 2.  Section 51.9685, Education Code, is amended by amending Subsections (b), (c), and (g) and adding Subsection (c-2) to read as follows:

(b)  Except as otherwise provided by Subsection (c), each student enrolled in an associate or bachelor's degree program at an institution of higher education shall file a degree plan with the institution after the 12th class day but before [~~not later than~~] the end of the [~~second regular~~] semester or term immediately following the semester or term in which the student earned a cumulative total of 30 [~~45~~] or more semester credit hours for coursework successfully completed by the student, including transfer courses, international baccalaureate courses, dual credit courses, and any other course for which the institution the student attends has awarded the student college course credit, including course credit awarded by examination.

(c)  A student to whom Subsection (b) [~~this section~~] applies who begins the student's first semester or term at an institution of higher education with 30 [~~45~~] or more semester credit hours of course credit for courses described by Subsection (b) shall file a degree plan with the institution after the 12th class day but before [~~not later than~~] the end of that [~~the student's second regular~~] semester or term [~~at the institution~~].

(c-2)  A student enrolled in a dual credit course at an institution of higher education and to whom Subsection (b) does not apply shall file a degree plan with the institution not later than:

(1)  the end of the second regular semester or term immediately following the semester or term in which the student earned a cumulative total of 15 or more semester credit hours of course credit for dual credit courses successfully completed by the student; or

(2)  if the student begins the student's first semester or term at the institution with 15 or more semester credit hours of course credit for dual credit courses successfully completed by the student, the end of the student's second regular semester or term at the institution.

(g)  The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, in consultation with institutions of higher education, shall [~~may~~] adopt rules as necessary for the administration of this section. In adopting those rules, the coordinating board shall use the negotiated rulemaking procedures under Chapter 2008, Government Code.

SECTION 3.  Subchapter Z, Chapter 51, Education Code, is amended by adding Sections 51.96852, 51.96853, and 51.96854 to read as follows:

Sec. 51.96852.  RECOMMENDED COURSE SEQUENCES. (a) In this section:

(1)  "Coordinating board" means the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

(2)  "Institution of higher education" has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

(b)  Each institution of higher education shall develop at least one recommended course sequence for each undergraduate certificate or degree program offered by the institution. Each recommended course sequence must:

(1)  identify all required lower-division courses for the applicable certificate or degree program;

(2)  include for each course, if applicable, the course number or course equivalent under the common course numbering system approved by the coordinating board under Section 61.832;

(3)  be designed to enable a full-time student to obtain a certificate or degree, as applicable, within:

(A)  for an associate degree or certificate program, two years; or

(B)  for a baccalaureate degree program, four years; and

(4)  include a specific sequence in which courses should be completed to ensure completion of the applicable program within the time frame described by Subdivision (3).

(c)  Each institution of higher education shall:

(1)  include the recommended course sequences developed under this section in the institution's course catalog and on the institution's Internet website; and

(2)  submit the recommended course sequences developed under this section to the coordinating board as provided by coordinating board rule.

(d)  In adopting rules under this section, the coordinating board shall consult with institutions of higher education.

Sec. 51.96853.  TRANSFER OF CREDIT FROM LOWER-DIVISION INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION; ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS. (a) In this section:

(1)  "Articulation agreement" means a formal written agreement between a lower-division institution of higher education and a general academic teaching institution identifying courses offered by the lower-division institution that must be accepted for credit toward specific course requirements at the general academic teaching institution.

(2)  "General academic teaching institution" has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

(3)  "Lower-division institution of higher education" means a public junior college, public state college, or public technical institute, as those terms are defined by Section 61.003.

(b)  Each general academic teaching institution may enter into an articulation agreement with a lower-division institution of higher education for a certificate or degree program for which students transferring from the lower-division institution to the general academic teaching institution receive transfer credit.

(c)  An articulation agreement entered into under Subsection (b) may use fields of study curricula developed by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board under Section 61.823.

(d)  A general academic teaching institution may extend an existing articulation agreement entered into under Subsection (b) to another lower-division institution of higher education with respect to the transfer of courses from that lower-division institution of higher education to the general academic teaching institution, on request by that lower-division institution of higher education.

(e)  An articulation agreement established under this section may enable a transfer student to receive up to 60 semester credit hours for courses completed at the lower-division institution of higher education.

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

Sec. 51.96854.  DECLARATION OF META MAJOR. (a) In this section:

(1)  "Institution of higher education" has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

(2)  "Meta major" has the meaning assigned by Section 61.821.

(b)  Each student enrolled at an institution of higher education in an associate or bachelor's degree program or in a dual credit course shall file with the institution a declaration of the meta major under which the student intends to earn a degree after the 12th class day but before the end of the semester or term immediately following the semester or term in which the student earned a cumulative total of 15 or more semester credit hours for coursework successfully completed by the student, including transfer courses, international baccalaureate courses, dual credit courses, and any other course for which the institution the student attends has awarded the student college course credit, including course credit awarded by examination.

(c)  The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, in consultation with institutions of higher education, shall adopt rules as necessary for the administration of this section. In adopting those rules, the coordinating board shall use the negotiated rulemaking procedures under Chapter 2008, Government Code.

SECTION 4.  Section 61.821, Education Code, is amended by adding Subdivision (4) to read as follows:

(4)  "Meta major" means a collection of programs of study or academic disciplines that share common foundational skills.

SECTION 5.  Section 61.822, Education Code, is amended by amending Subsections (a-1), (b), (c), and (d) and adding Subsections (a-2), (a-3), (b-1), (f), and (g) to read as follows:

(a-1)  The board, with the assistance of advisory committees composed of representatives of institutions of higher education or university systems designated by the applicable institution or system, 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 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.~~]

(a-2)  The recommended core curriculum developed under Subsection (a-1) must have the following components:

(1)  a general core curriculum of at least 24 semester credit hours that includes:

(A)  six semester credit hours in:

(i)  American or Texas history; and

(ii)  government or political science; and

(B)  three semester credit hours in:

(i)  communications;

(ii)  language, philosophy, or culture;

(iii)  creative arts; and

(iv)  a component area provided by board rule; and

(2)  for each meta major under Subsection (a-3), an academic discipline core curriculum of not more than 18 semester credit hours specific to that meta major and that includes:

(A)  six semester credit hours in life sciences or physical sciences; and

(B)  three semester credit hours in:

(i)  mathematics;

(ii)  behavioral science;

(iii)  communications; and

(iv)  a component area provided by board rule.

(a-3)  The board shall develop a recommended academic discipline core curriculum under Subsection (a-2) for each of the following meta majors:

(1)  arts, humanities, communications, and design;

(2)  business;

(3)  education;

(4)  health sciences;

(5)  industry, manufacturing, and construction;

(6)  public safety;

(7)  science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; and

(8)  social and behavioral sciences and human services.

(b)  Each institution of higher education shall adopt a core curriculum of no less than 42 semester credit hours, including specific courses comprising the curriculum. The core curriculum shall:

(1)  include a general core curriculum and for each meta major, an academic discipline core curriculum as described by Subsection (a-2); and

(2)  be consistent with the common course numbering system approved by the board and with the statement, recommendations, and rules issued by the board.

(b-1)  An institution may have a core curriculum of other than 42 semester credit hours only if approved by the board.

(c)  If a student successfully completes the 42-hour core curriculum or the general core curriculum or academic discipline core curriculum at an institution of higher education, that block of courses may be transferred to any other institution of higher education and must be substituted for the receiving institution's core curriculum, general core curriculum, or academic discipline core curriculum, as applicable. A student shall receive academic credit for each of the courses transferred and may not be required to take additional core curriculum, general core curriculum, or academic discipline core curriculum courses, as applicable, at the receiving institution unless the board has approved a larger core curriculum at the institution.

(d)  A student who transfers from one institution of higher education to another without completing the core curriculum of the sending institution shall receive academic credit from the receiving institution toward that institution's general core curriculum or academic discipline core curriculum, as applicable, for each of the courses that the student has successfully completed in the core curriculum of the sending institution. Following receipt of credit for these courses, the student may be required to satisfy any remaining [~~further~~] course requirements in the core curriculum of the receiving institution.

(f)  Each institution of higher education shall:

(1)  identify in the institution's course catalog and on the institution's Internet website:

(A)  each course offered by the institution that fulfills a course requirement in the institution's general core curriculum or academic discipline core curriculum and the specific course requirement that the course fulfills; and

(B)  the meta major with which each degree or certificate program offered by the institution is associated;

(2)  provide to the board in accordance with board rule the institution's general core curriculum and academic discipline core curriculum and the information described by Subdivision (1)(A); and

(3)  advise each student enrolled at the institution regarding the importance of taking coherent sequences of courses in the core curriculum that are aligned with the student's academic and career goals.

(g)  To assist in advising a student regarding the selection of coherent sequences of courses in the core curriculum that are aligned with the student's academic and career goals, the board shall make available to each institution of higher education and to school counselors and other postsecondary advisors employed by a school district or open-enrollment charter school information regarding:

(1)  the general core curriculum and academic discipline core curriculum required under Subsection (b); and

(2)  the transferability of course credit between institutions of higher education for courses in the core curriculum as provided by this section.

SECTION 6.  Section 61.827, Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 61.827.  RULES. (a) The board is authorized to adopt rules implementing the provisions of this subchapter.

(b)  In adopting rules regarding the recommended core curriculum developed under Section 61.822, the board shall use the negotiated rulemaking procedures under Chapter 2008, Government Code.

SECTION 7.  Sections 130.0104(b) and (c), Education Code, are amended to read as follows:

(b)  A multidisciplinary studies associate degree program established at a junior college under this section must require a student to successfully complete:

(1)  the junior college's core curriculum adopted under Section 61.822 [~~61.822(b)~~]; and

(2)  after completion of the core curriculum under Subdivision (1), the courses selected by the student in the student's degree plan completed under Subsection (c).

(c)  In complying with the requirements regarding the filing of a degree plan under [~~Notwithstanding~~] Section 51.9685, [~~before the beginning of the regular semester or term immediately following the semester or term in which~~] a student enrolled [~~successfully completes a cumulative total of 30 or more semester credit hours for coursework~~] in a multidisciplinary studies associate degree program established under this section [~~, the student~~] must meet with an academic advisor to complete a degree plan [~~, as defined by Section 51.9685(a)(1),~~] that:

(1)  accounts for all remaining credit hours required for the completion of the degree program; and

(2)  emphasizes:

(A)  the student's transition to a particular four-year college or university that the student chooses; and

(B)  preparations for the student's intended field of study or major at the four-year college or university.

SECTION 8.  Section 51.9685(c-1), Education Code, is repealed.

SECTION 9.  (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b) of this section, this Act applies beginning with the 2019-2020 academic year.

(b)  Sections 51.96852, 51.96853, and 51.96854, Education Code, as added by this Act, and Section 61.822, Education Code, as amended by this Act, apply beginning with the 2021-2022 academic year.

SECTION 10.  Not later than May 31, 2021, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall develop a recommended core curriculum that conforms to the requirements of Section 61.822, Education Code, as amended by this Act.

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, 2019.