

## **House Committee on Higher Education - Formal Requests for Information**

### **Texas Association of Community Colleges**

1304 San Antonio Street, Suite 201

Austin, TX 78701

Tel. 512 476-2572

Email: [dmeador@tacc.org](mailto:dmeador@tacc.org)

### **Interim Charge 1:**

**Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 86th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure intended legislative outcome of all legislation, including the following:**

- **SB 25, which relates to measures to facilitate the transfer, academic progress, and timely graduation of students in public higher education. Monitor the process by which the Higher Education Coordinating Board adopts rules via negotiated rulemaking. Monitor the progress of institutions developing recommended course sequences and the progress of the feasibility study to implement statewide meta majors.**

### ***SB 25 Progress***

Since the enactment of SB 25 (86-R), Texas community colleges and universities have engaged multiple efforts to further improve transfer policies and processes. Several state and regional collaboratives are underway, which individually and in aggregate hold potential for improving student transfer rates and the applicability of credit to a major upon transfer from community college to university. A short listing of these collaborative efforts follows:

- Texas Transfer Workgroup – launched at the invitation of THECB Commissioner Keller, this workgroup is led by the Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC) and Texas A&M University System Office. The workgroup includes four representatives for each of the public community college and university sectors. The workgroup intends to make recommendations to the THECB in October 2020.
- Texas Transfer Alliance – led by the Dana Center at UT Austin, The Aspen Institute, and HCM Strategists, this alliance includes two-year and four-year institutions. The alliance established long-term outcomes goals for effective transfer and launched regional demonstration efforts across the state.
- Texas Student Success Council – led by Educate Texas, the council created a working group on transfer policy. The working group is co-chaired by one representative from each a community college and university. The council is expected to make formal recommendations to the Legislature in 2021.
- Texas Success Center – led by TACC, the center established a network of chief academic officers at community colleges and created a working group on transfer policy. The center

further launched “guided pathways,” designed in part to improve student transfer at 49 of the 50 community colleges.

- Postsecondary Innovation Network – led by UT Austin, this network includes representatives from community colleges and universities. The network advances several innovations with higher education.
- Region/System Initiatives: Houston GPS; North Texas Community College Consortium; UT System Transfer Advisory Group/Transfer Study; and Texas Regional Alignment Network

Of note, prior to the pandemic most provisions of SB 25 had not yet had the benefit of time in implementation to determine their effectiveness in the field. For example, the THECB rules for the requirement that students file a degree plan at 30 SCH (15 SCH for Dual Credit) went into effect on January 8, 2020 ([see here](#)), right before the pandemic. Another example, the course sequencing requirement is not required (per SB 25) until the 2021-22 academic year.

***1. In what ways can data collection and sharing between THECB and TEA improve and assist institutions with college credit transferability?***

A statewide database of degree requirements at institutions of higher education (IHE) and course equivalencies from one institution to the next will help high school guidance counselors, college advisors, and students understand what courses they need to complete throughout their postsecondary pathway. For example, if students plan to take college courses through dual credit while in high school, then enroll in a community college, and later transfer to a university, understanding the courses in the students’ program pathway will improve advising every step of the way. If a university uses course equivalencies rather than the common course numbers as written, students need to look at the course equivalencies (<https://www.tccns.org/>) and translate those courses into requirements for degree pathway. If all IHEs used the same numbering conventions, the equivalency database would be unnecessary, and students could more readily identify courses they need to take to complete a credential. Understanding how credits currently transfer may lead to discussions to improve transfer partnerships and can help hold IHEs accountable for abiding by extant articulation agreements and fields of study.

***2. What role can school counselors and advisors play in the success of transferable credits? Are there ways in which the state can utilize their expertise and student relationships more effectively?***

School counselors and advisors can provide critical information to students, but they need to receive the information in a timely manner and communicate with each student. In many institutions, advising is not mandatory. Even where advising is required, caseloads for school counselors and college advisors are too high to effectively address each student’s unique circumstances. The state could provide additional funding for student services to hire more advisors and then engage them in professional development. The state could also provide technical assistance to institutions to help them determine ways such as group advising to make advising more efficient yet still meet each student’s unique needs.