87R3540 MM-D

By:  Gervin-Hawkins H.B. No. 811

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a single common course numbering system for and the transfer of course credit among public institutions of higher education in this state.

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

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

(a)  The board shall develop and implement a policy regarding [~~encourage~~] the transferability of [~~lower division~~] course credit among institutions of higher education.

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

(f)  If a student successfully completes a course at an institution of higher education for which a common number designation and course description are included in the single common course numbering system described by Section 61.832, that course may be transferred to any other institution of higher education that offers a course with the same common course number and must be substituted for the receiving institution's course.

SECTION 2.  Section 61.826(a), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  The board by rule shall adopt procedures to be followed by:

(1)  institutions of higher education in resolving disputes concerning the transfer of [~~lower division~~] course credit; and

(2)  the commissioner of higher education or the commissioner's designee in making a final determination concerning transfer of the course credit if the transfer is in dispute.

SECTION 3.  Section 61.830, Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 61.830.  PUBLICATION OF GUIDELINES ADDRESSING TRANSFER PRACTICES. In its course catalogs and on its website, each institution of higher education shall publish guidelines addressing the practices of the institution regarding the transfer of course credit. In the guidelines, the institution must use [~~identify a course by using~~] the single common course numbering system as required by Section 61.832 to identify each of its offered courses for which a common number designation and course description are included by the board in that system [~~approved by the board~~].

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

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

(a-1)  The following types of courses are exempt from the single common course numbering system approved under Subsection (a):

(1)  courses in career and technical education, except as provided by Section 61.8235;

(2)  courses in applied performing arts;

(3)  clinical coursework in health-related subject areas;

(4)  skill-related courses in criminal justice-related subject areas;

(5)  graduate courses; and

(6)  special topics courses, including course credit received for completing an internship, an apprenticeship, a practicum, a thesis, a dissertation, or a course offered by a study abroad program.

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

(c)  Each institution of higher education shall:

(1)  use the approved common course numbering system in the institution's guidelines regarding the transfer of course credit for each course for which a common number designation and course description are included by the board in that system; and

(2)  include the applicable course numbers from the approved common course numbering system in its course catalogs and other course listings.

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

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

(f)  Each institution of higher education must certify annually to the board the accuracy of the institution's identification, in its course catalogs and other course listings, of each course offered by the institution for which a common number designation and course description are included by the board in the common course numbering system. As part of the certification required by this subsection, the institution shall specify each of its offered courses for which a common number designation and course description are included in that system and each of its offered courses for which a common number designation and course description are not included in that system. The institution also shall include with its certification a current, publicly accessible website address at which the institution publishes its guidelines regarding the transfer of course credit.

(g)  The board may, based on the board's review of the information certified under Subsection (f), recommend corrective action to an institution's governing board if the institution fails to comply with the requirements of this section. In its next legislative appropriations request made to the legislature, the board shall identify each institution that fails to comply with the board's recommended corrective action.

(h)  Not later than June 1, 2022, the board shall:

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

(2)  establish a timetable that requires institutions of higher education to phase in the inclusion of the applicable course numbers from the approved common course numbering system in their individual guidelines regarding the transfer of course credit and in their individual course numbering systems as required by this section so that each institution fully complies with this section for each course that is offered during the 2026-2027 academic year or a subsequent academic year and for which a common number designation and course description are included by the board in that system.

(h-1)  Subsection (h) and this subsection expire January 1, 2028.

[~~(d)  An institution of higher education shall include in its course listings the applicable course numbers from the common course numbering system approved by the board under this section. For good cause, the board may grant to an institution of higher education an exemption from the requirements of this subsection.~~]

SECTION 5.  (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b) of this section, the change in law made by this Act applies beginning with the 2022-2023 academic year.

(b)  The change in law made by this Act in adding Sections 61.832(f) and (g), Education Code, applies beginning with the 2026-2027 academic year.

SECTION 6.  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, 2021.