

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 61  
By: McClendon  
Higher Education  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

According to interested parties, students in Texas pursuing an undergraduate degree in a state-supported institution of higher education need to be able to select the core courses that will transfer and apply to their degree plan should the student transfer to another institution. The parties suggest that this selection is currently difficult for students and their advisors, as there is no single comprehensive statewide resource that allows for determining the core undergraduate courses that would be compatible between institutions. Postsecondary transfers are common, the parties continue, and negotiating how to transfer applicable courses is time-consuming for both students and schools, indicating a need to implement a more streamlined approach. C.S.H.B. 61 seeks to address that need.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 61 amends the Education Code to clarify that the course numbering system to be approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for lower-division courses to facilitate the transfer of such courses among institutions of higher education is a single common course numbering system. The bill requires the coordinating board to solicit input from institutions of higher education regarding the development of the single common course numbering system and requires each institution of higher education to 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 course number designation and course description are included by the board in that system and to include the applicable course numbers from that system in its course catalogs and other course listings. The bill, in an existing provision limiting the coordinating board's approval of a common course numbering system to a system already in common use in Texas by institutions of higher education, specifies that the system is to be already in use by one or more institutions in Texas.

C.S.H.B. 61 requires each institution of higher education to certify annually to the coordinating 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 coordinating board in the common course numbering system. The bill requires the institution, as part of the certification, to 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 bill requires the institution also to include with its certification a current, publicly accessible website address at which the institution publishes its guidelines regarding the transfer of course credit. The bill authorizes the coordinating board, based on its review of the information certified, to recommend corrective action to an institution's governing board if the institution fails to comply with the requirements relating to the common course numbering system. The bill requires the coordinating board, in its next legislative appropriations request made to the legislature, to identify each institution that fails to comply with the coordinating board's recommended corrective action. These provisions apply beginning with the 2020–2021 academic year.

C.S.H.B. 61 adds a temporary provision, set to expire January 1, 2022, requiring the coordinating board, not later than June 1, 2016, to approve a single common course numbering system and to establish a timetable that requires institutions of higher education to phase in the inclusion of the applicable course numbers from the approved system in their individual guidelines regarding the transfer of course credit and in their individual course numbering systems so that each institution fully complies with the numbering system for each course that is offered during the 2020–2021 academic year or a subsequent academic year and for which a common number designation and course description are included by the coordinating board in that system.

C.S.H.B. 61 removes the coordinating board's authority to grant an institution of higher education, for good cause, an exemption from the requirement to include in the institution's course listings the applicable course numbers from the board-approved common course numbering system. The bill's provisions apply beginning with the 2016–2017 academic year, except as otherwise provided.

#### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2015.

#### **COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE**

While C.S.H.B. 61 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following comparison is organized and formatted in a manner that indicates the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

##### INTRODUCED

SECTION 1. Section 61.822(b), Education Code, is amended.

SECTION 2. 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 identify a course by using the single common course numbering system approved by the board under Section 61.832(a).

##### HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

SECTION 1. Same as introduced version.

SECTION 2. 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 3. 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.

(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 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) [~~e~~] 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.

SECTION 3. 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.

(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) [~~e~~] 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, 2016, 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 2020-2021 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, 2022.

[(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.]

(f) Not later than June 1, 2016, 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 course numbering systems as required by this section so that each institution fully complies with this section for all courses offered for the 2020-2021 academic year and subsequent years.

(f-1) Subsection (f) and this subsection expire January 1, 2022.

[(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.]

No equivalent provision.

SECTION 4. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b) of this section, the changes in law made by this Act apply beginning with the 2016-2017 academic year.

(b) The change in law made by this Act in adding Sections 61.832(f) and (g),

Education Code, apply beginning with the 2020-2021 academic year.

SECTION 4. 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, 2015.

SECTION 5. Same as introduced version.