

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
86R13000 KJE-D

S.B. 25
By: West
Higher Education
3/21/2019
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) proposed the ambitious 60x30 higher education goal for the state, with the primary goal that by 2030, 60 percent of Texans age 25 to 34 will have a certificate or degree. One of the key strategies outlined in the 60X30TX plan is streamlined and coordinated transfer pathways between two-year colleges and four-year universities. In practice, semester credit hours are often stranded at the point of transfer, resulting in frustration for students, and a waste of taxpayer dollars estimated to be \$58 million annually.

S.B. 25 is outlined in two steps and aims to first, simplify the Texas Common Core Curriculum and second, establish stronger Transfer Pathways. First, S.B. 25 would restructure the Texas Common Core.

The second step includes transfer pathways to get students from lower division to upper division. These pathways are designed to increase student success by improving alignment among student course-taking, by giving students recommended course sequencing.

These reforms would dramatically increase predictability and consistency for Texas students about which courses are transferable and applicable toward degree requirements. The student-centered system envisioned would provide students and advisers with clear and transparent information about expectations and requirements.

As proposed, S.B. 25 amends current law relating to measures to facilitate the transfer, academic progress, and timely graduation of students in public higher education.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter Z, Chapter 51, Education Code, by adding Sections 51.96852 and 51.96853, as follows:

Sec. 51.96852. RECOMMENDED COURSE SEQUENCES. (a) Defines "institution of higher education" for purposes of this section.

(b) Requires each institution of higher education to develop a recommended course sequence for each undergraduate certificate or degree program offered by the institution. Requires each recommended course sequence to identify the required courses for the applicable certificate or degree program in the general core curriculum or the academic discipline core curriculum as described by Section 61.822 (Transfer of Credits; Core Curriculum).

(c) Requires each institution of higher education to include the recommended course sequences developed under this section in the institution's course catalog and on the institution's Internet website.

Sec. 51.96853. TRANSFER OF CREDIT FROM LOWER-DIVISION INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION; ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS. (a) Defines "articulation agreement," "general academic teaching institution" and "lower-division institution of higher education" for purposes of this section.

(b) Requires each academic teaching institution to:

(1) identify each lower-division institution of higher education from which the general academic teaching institution regularly receives at least 20 percent of its transfer students; and

(2) establish an articulation agreement with each lower-division institution of higher education identified under Subdivision (1) for each certificate or degree program for which at least five percent of students transferring from the lower-division institution to the general academic teaching institution receive transfer credit.

(c) Requires an articulation agreement established under Subsection (b)(2) to enable a transfer student to receive up to 60 semester credit hours for courses completed at the lower-division institution of higher education.

(d) Provides that a general academic teaching institution's participation in an articulation agreement under this section does not affect the institution's admissions policies.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 61.822, Education Code, by adding Subsections (a-2) and (b-1) and amending Subsection (b), as follows:

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

(1) a general core curriculum of at least 24 semester credit hours that includes certain specified credits; and

(2) for each broad academic discipline, an academic discipline core curriculum of at least 18 semester credit hours specific to that discipline and that includes relevant courses in mathematics and physical sciences.

(b) Requires the core curriculum adopted by each institution of higher education to:

(1) include a general core curriculum and an academic discipline core curriculum as described by Subsection (a-2); and

(2) creates this subdivision from existing text and makes no further changes.

(b-1) Creates this subsection from existing text and makes no further changes.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 130.0104(b), Education Code, to require that a multidisciplinary studies associate degree program established at a junior college under this section require a student to successfully complete certain requirements, including the junior college's core curriculum adopted under Section 61.822, rather than under Section 61.822(b).

SECTION 4. Provides that Sections 51.96852 and 51.96853, Education Code, as added by this Act, and Section 61.822, Education Code, as amended by this Act, apply beginning with the 2020–2021 academic year.

SECTION 5. Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, not later than May 31, 2021, to develop a recommended core curriculum that conforms to the requirements of Section 61.822, Education Code, as amended by this Act.

SECTION 6. Effective date: September 1, 2019.