

By: Branch, Guillen, Lozano

H.B. No. 3025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to measures to facilitate the transfer of students within the public higher education system and the timely graduation of students from public institutions of higher education.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 61.05135 to read as follows:

Sec. 61.05135. STATEWIDE TRANSFER COMPACTS. (a) In this section:

(1) "Career school or college" has the meaning assigned by Section 132.001.

(2) "Qualified degree-granting career school or college" means a career school or college determined by the board under Subsection (c) to be qualified to participate in a statewide transfer compact developed under this section.

(b) The board, in collaboration with institutions of higher education, shall develop transfer compacts that identify learning objectives for coursework in major degree fields that are acceptable across institutions offering coursework or degrees in those fields in an effort to facilitate the universal articulation of specific courses completed at public junior colleges, public state colleges, public technical institutes, general academic teaching institutions, and qualified degree-granting career schools or colleges and transferred to general academic teaching

1 institutions.

2 (c) A career school or college may apply to the board to  
3 participate in a statewide transfer compact developed under this  
4 section. On application by a career school or college, the board  
5 shall review the school's or college's curriculum for the purpose of  
6 determining whether the school or college is qualified to  
7 participate in the compact. The board may determine that the career  
8 school or college is qualified to participate in the compact only if  
9 the board finds that the school or college:

10 (1) is authorized to grant degrees in this state;

11 (2) has adopted and implemented a core curriculum  
12 described by Section 61.822, applying the same assumptions and  
13 defining characteristics applicable to institutions of higher  
14 education; and

15 (3) has appropriately identified for each of its core  
16 curriculum courses the equivalent course number under the common  
17 course numbering system approved by the board under Section 61.832.

18 (d) An institution of higher education or qualified  
19 degree-granting career school or college shall comply with any  
20 applicable compact under Subsection (b) entered into by the  
21 institution, school, or college and the board.

22 (e) A general academic teaching institution designated as a  
23 research institution under the board's higher education  
24 accountability system that elects not to participate in an  
25 applicable transfer compact developed under this section shall:

26 (1) publish on the institution's website for use by  
27 prospective undergraduate students a detailed description,

1 developed by the institution's faculty, of the learning objectives,  
2 content, and prior knowledge requirements for at least 12 courses  
3 for which credit is frequently transferred to the institution from  
4 lower-division institutions of higher education; and

5 (2) establish honors articulation agreements with at  
6 least two public junior colleges designed to strengthen the  
7 lower-division course offerings of those public junior colleges and  
8 to improve the persistence and success rates of students who  
9 transfer to the institution from public junior colleges.

10 SECTION 2. Section 61.0515(a), Education Code, is amended  
11 to read as follows:

12 (a) To earn a baccalaureate degree, a student may not be  
13 required by a general academic teaching institution to complete  
14 more than the minimum number of semester credit hours required for  
15 the degree by the institution's board-recognized accrediting  
16 agency [~~Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or its~~  
17 ~~successor~~] unless academic accreditation or professional licensure  
18 requirements require the [~~the institution determines that there is~~  
19 ~~a compelling academic reason for requiring~~] completion of  
20 additional semester credit hours for the degree.

21 SECTION 3. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is  
22 amended by adding Section 61.05151 to read as follows:

23 Sec. 61.05151. SEMESTER CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED FOR ASSOCIATE  
24 DEGREE. (a) To earn an associate degree, a student may not be  
25 required by an institution of higher education to complete more  
26 than the minimum number of semester credit hours required for the  
27 degree by the institution's board-recognized accrediting agency

1 unless academic accreditation or professional licensure  
2 requirements require the completion of additional semester credit  
3 hours for the degree.

4 (b) The board may review one or more of an institution's  
5 associate degree programs to ensure compliance with this section.

6 (c) Subsection (a) does not apply to an associate degree  
7 awarded by an institution to a student enrolled in the institution  
8 before the 2013 fall semester.

9 SECTION 4. Section 61.052, Education Code, is amended by  
10 amending Subsections (a) and (b) and adding Subsection (b-1) to  
11 read as follows:

12 (a) Each governing board shall submit to the board once each  
13 year on dates designated by the board a comprehensive list by  
14 department, division, and school of all courses, together with a  
15 description of content, scope, and prerequisites of all these  
16 courses, that will be offered by each institution under the  
17 supervision of that governing board during the following academic  
18 year. The list for each institution must also specifically  
19 identify any course included in the common course numbering system  
20 under Section 61.832 that has been added to or removed from the  
21 institution's list for the current academic year, and the board  
22 shall distribute that information as necessary to accomplish the  
23 purposes of Section 61.832.

24 (b) After the comprehensive list of courses is submitted by  
25 a governing board under Subsection (a) [~~of this section~~], the  
26 governing board shall submit on dates designated by the board any  
27 changes in the comprehensive list of courses to be offered,

1 including any changes relating to offering a course included in the  
2 common course numbering system.

3 (b-1) Each governing board must certify at the time of  
4 submission under Subsection (a) that the institution does not:

5 (1) prohibit the acceptance of transfer credit based  
6 solely on the accreditation of the sending institution; or

7 (2) include language in any materials published by the  
8 institution, whether in printed or electronic form, suggesting that  
9 such a prohibition exists.

10 SECTION 5. Section 61.822, Education Code, is amended by  
11 amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (f) to read as  
12 follows:

13 (a) The board, with the assistance of advisory committees  
14 composed of representatives of institutions of higher education,  
15 shall develop a recommended core curriculum of at least 42 semester  
16 credit hours, including a statement of the content, component  
17 areas, and objectives of the core curriculum. At least a majority  
18 of the members of any advisory committee named under this section  
19 shall be administrators or faculty members of an institution of  
20 higher education. An institution shall consult with the faculty of  
21 the institution before nominating or recommending a person to the  
22 board as the institution's representative on an advisory committee.

23 (f) In an effort to facilitate the transfer of major-related  
24 coursework beyond the general education core curriculum, the board,  
25 with the assistance of the advisory committees described by  
26 Subsection (a), shall:

27 (1) develop a course-specific core curriculum for each

1 broad academic discipline within the general core curriculum; and  
2 (2) identify those degree programs offered at  
3 institutions of higher education to which the course-specific core  
4 curriculum, if successfully completed by a student at another  
5 institution of higher education or at a qualified degree-granting  
6 career school or college, as defined by Section 61.05135, is fully  
7 transferrable.

8 SECTION 6. Section 61.832, Education Code, is amended by  
9 adding Subsection (e) to read as follows:

10 (e) A student who transfers from one institution of higher  
11 education to another shall receive academic credit from the  
12 receiving institution for each course that the student has  
13 successfully completed that serves as an equivalent course under  
14 the common course numbering system at the institution from which  
15 the student transfers.

16 SECTION 7. Subchapter Z, Chapter 51, Education Code, is  
17 amended by adding Section 51.9685 to read as follows:

18 Sec. 51.9685. REQUIRED FILING OF DEGREE PLAN. (a) In this  
19 section:

20 (1) "Degree plan" means a statement of the course of  
21 study requirements that an undergraduate student at an institution  
22 of higher education must complete in order to be awarded an  
23 associate or bachelor's degree from the institution, established  
24 through collaboration between the student and an academic advisor  
25 for the student's degree program and approved by the academic  
26 advisor.

27 (2) "Institution of higher education" has the meaning

1 assigned by Section 61.003.

2 (b) Except as otherwise provided by Subsection (c), each  
3 student enrolled in an associate or bachelor's degree program at an  
4 institution of higher education shall file a degree plan with the  
5 institution not later than the semester or term immediately  
6 following the semester or term in which the student earned a  
7 cumulative total of 45 or more semester credit hours for coursework  
8 successfully completed by the student, including transfer courses,  
9 international baccalaureate courses, dual credit courses, and any  
10 other course for which the institution the student attends has  
11 awarded the student college course credit, including by  
12 examination.

13 (c) A student to whom this section applies who begins the  
14 student's first semester or term at an institution of higher  
15 education with 45 or more semester credit hours of course credit for  
16 courses described by Subsection (b) shall file a degree plan with  
17 the institution during the student's first semester at the  
18 institution.

19 (d) A student to whom this section applies may not register  
20 for any course offered by the institution of higher education for a  
21 semester or term succeeding the semester or term in which the  
22 student is required to file a degree plan under this section unless  
23 the student has filed a degree plan with the institution.

24 (e) After filing a degree plan with an institution of higher  
25 education as required by this section, a student to whom this  
26 section applies may not change the student's degree plan or enroll  
27 in a course that is not included in the student's degree plan unless

1 the student has consulted with the student's academic advisor and  
2 satisfied any applicable prerequisite or other requirement imposed  
3 by the institution regarding that degree plan change or course  
4 enrollment, as applicable.

5 (f) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, in  
6 consultation with institutions of higher education, may adopt rules  
7 as necessary for the administration of this section.

8 SECTION 8. The change in law made by this Act to Section  
9 61.0515(a), Education Code, applies beginning with undergraduate  
10 students who initially enroll in a general academic teaching  
11 institution for the 2013 fall semester.

12 SECTION 9. The changes in law made by this Act to Section  
13 61.052, Education Code, apply to the comprehensive lists of courses  
14 offered by public institutions of higher education beginning with  
15 lists required to be submitted for the 2012-2013 academic year.

16 SECTION 10. Not later than May 31, 2012, the Texas Higher  
17 Education Coordinating Board shall develop core curricula for broad  
18 academic disciplines included within the general core curriculum  
19 that conform to the requirements of Section 61.822, Education Code,  
20 as amended by this Act.

21 SECTION 11. Section 61.832(e), Education Code, as added by  
22 this Act, applies beginning with the 2011 fall semester.

23 SECTION 12. Section 51.9685, Education Code, as added by  
24 this Act, applies beginning with undergraduate students who  
25 initially enroll in a general academic teaching institution for the  
26 2011 fall semester.

27 SECTION 13. This Act takes effect immediately if it



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1 receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each  
2 house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution.  
3 If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate  
4 effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2011.