

By: Branch

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 A, Chapter 54, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 54.016 to read as follows:

Sec. 54.016. FIXED TUITION RATE PROGRAM FOR CERTAIN TRANSFER STUDENTS AT GENERAL ACADEMIC TEACHING INSTITUTIONS. (a)

In this section:

(1) "Coordinating board" means the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

(2) "General academic teaching institution" has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

(3) "Lower-division institution of higher education" means a public junior college, public state college, or public technical institute.

(b) A general academic teaching institution may develop a fixed tuition rate program for qualified students who agree to transfer to the institution after successfully earning an associate degree at a lower-division institution of higher education. Under a program developed under this section, a general academic teaching institution must:

(1) guarantee to a participating student enrolled in

1 an associate degree program at a lower-division institution of  
2 higher education, on successful completion of the associate degree  
3 program, transfer admission to the general academic teaching  
4 institution and acceptance into the student's degree program of  
5 choice; and

6 (2) notwithstanding any other provision of this  
7 chapter, charge tuition to a participating student for any semester  
8 or other academic term at the same rate the general academic  
9 teaching institution would have charged to the student during the  
10 fall semester of the student's freshman year at another institution  
11 of higher education had the student entered the general academic  
12 teaching institution as a freshman student.

13 (c) A general academic teaching institution that develops a  
14 fixed tuition rate program under this section shall prescribe  
15 eligibility requirements for participation in the program and  
16 notify applicants for transfer admission from lower-division  
17 institutions of higher education regarding the program.

18 (d) In consultation with general academic teaching  
19 institutions, the coordinating board shall adopt any rules the  
20 coordinating board considers appropriate for the administration of  
21 this section.

22 SECTION 2. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is  
23 amended by adding Section 61.05135 to read as follows:

24 Sec. 61.05135. STATEWIDE TRANSFER COMPACTS. (a) The  
25 board, in collaboration with institutions of higher education,  
26 shall develop transfer compacts that identify learning objectives  
27 for coursework in major degree fields that are acceptable across

1 institutions offering coursework or degrees in those fields in an  
2 effort to facilitate the universal articulation of specific courses  
3 completed at public junior colleges, public state colleges, and  
4 public technical institutes and transferred to general academic  
5 teaching institutions.

6 (b) An institution of higher education shall comply with any  
7 applicable compact under Subsection (a) entered into by the  
8 institution and the board.

9 SECTION 3. Section 61.0515(a), Education Code, is amended  
10 to read as follows:

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

19 SECTION 4. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is  
20 amended by adding Section 61.05151 to read as follows:

21 Sec. 61.05151. SEMESTER CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED FOR ASSOCIATE  
22 DEGREE. (a) To earn an associate degree, a student may not be  
23 required by an institution of higher education to complete more  
24 than the minimum number of semester credit hours required for the  
25 degree by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or its  
26 successor unless academic accreditation or professional licensure  
27 requirements require the completion of additional semester credit

1 hours for the degree.

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

4 (c) Subsection (a) does not apply to an associate degree  
5 awarded by an institution to a student enrolled in the institution  
6 before the 2011 fall semester. This subsection expires January 1,  
7 2012.

8 SECTION 5. Sections 61.052(a) and (b), Education Code, are  
9 amended to read as follows:

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

22 (b) After the comprehensive list of courses is submitted by  
23 a governing board under Subsection (a) [~~of this section~~], the  
24 governing board shall submit on dates designated by the board any  
25 changes in the comprehensive list of courses to be offered,  
26 including any changes relating to offering a course included in the  
27 common course numbering system.

1 SECTION 6. Section 61.822, Education Code, is amended by  
2 amending Subsections (a), (b), and (c) and adding Subsection (f) to  
3 read as follows:

4 (a) The board, with the assistance of advisory committees  
5 composed of representatives of institutions of higher education,  
6 shall develop a [~~recommended~~] core curriculum of at least 36 [~~42~~]  
7 semester credit hours, including a statement of the content,  
8 component areas, and objectives of the core curriculum. At least a  
9 majority of the members of any advisory committee named under this  
10 section shall be faculty members of an institution of higher  
11 education. An institution shall consult with the faculty of the  
12 institution before nominating or recommending a person to the board  
13 as the institution's representative on an advisory committee.

14 (b) Each institution of higher education shall adopt a core  
15 curriculum of no less than 36 [~~42~~] semester credit hours, including  
16 specific courses comprising the curriculum. The core curriculum  
17 shall be consistent with the common course numbering system  
18 approved by the board and with the statement, recommendations, and  
19 rules issued by the board. [~~An institution may have a core  
20 curriculum of other than 42 semester credit hours only if approved  
21 by the board.~~]

22 (c) If a student successfully completes the 36-hour  
23 [~~42-hour~~] core curriculum at an institution of higher education,  
24 that block of courses may be transferred to any other institution of  
25 higher education and must be substituted for the receiving  
26 institution's core curriculum. A student shall receive academic  
27 credit for each of the courses transferred and may not be required

1 to take additional core curriculum courses at the receiving  
2 institution unless the board has approved a larger core curriculum  
3 at the institution.

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

8 (1) develop a course-specific core curriculum for each  
9 broad academic discipline within the general core curriculum; and

10 (2) identify those degree programs offered at  
11 institutions of higher education to which the course-specific core  
12 curriculum, if successfully completed by a student at another  
13 institution of higher education, is fully transferrable.

14 SECTION 7. Section 61.832, Education Code, is amended by  
15 adding Subsection (e) to read as follows:

16 (e) A student who transfers from one institution of higher  
17 education to another shall receive academic credit from the  
18 receiving institution for each course that the student has  
19 successfully completed that serves as an equivalent course under  
20 the common course numbering system at the institution from which  
21 the student transfers.

22 SECTION 8. Subchapter Z, Chapter 51, Education Code, is  
23 amended by adding Section 51.9685 to read as follows:

24 Sec. 51.9685. REQUIRED FILING OF DEGREE PLAN. (a) In this  
25 section:

26 (1) "Degree plan" means a statement of the course of  
27 study requirements that an undergraduate student at a general

1 academic teaching institution must complete in order to graduate  
2 from the institution, established through collaboration between  
3 the student and an academic advisor for the student's degree  
4 program and approved by the academic advisor.

5 (2) "General academic teaching institution" has the  
6 meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

7 (b) Except as otherwise provided by Subsection (c), each  
8 undergraduate student enrolled in a general academic teaching  
9 institution shall file a degree plan with the institution not later  
10 than the semester or term immediately following the semester or  
11 term in which the student earned a cumulative total of 30 or more  
12 semester credit hours for course work successfully completed by the  
13 student, including transfer courses, advanced placement courses,  
14 international baccalaureate courses, dual credit courses, and any  
15 other course for which the institution the student attends has  
16 awarded the student college course credit.

17 (c) An undergraduate student who begins the student's first  
18 semester or term at a general academic teaching institution with 30  
19 or more semester credit hours of course credit for courses  
20 described by Subsection (b) shall file a degree plan with the  
21 institution during the student's first regular semester at the  
22 institution.

23 (d) A student may not register for any course offered by the  
24 institution for a semester or term succeeding the semester or term  
25 in which the student is required to file a degree plan under this  
26 section unless the student has filed a degree plan with the  
27 institution.

1       (e) After filing a degree plan with an institution as  
2 required by this section, an undergraduate student may not change  
3 the student's degree plan or enroll in a course that is not included  
4 in the student's degree plan unless the student has consulted with  
5 the student's academic advisor and satisfied any applicable  
6 prerequisite or other requirement imposed by the institution  
7 regarding that degree plan change or course enrollment, as  
8 applicable.

9       (f) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board may adopt  
10 rules as necessary for the administration of this section.

11       SECTION 9. The change in law made by this Act to Section  
12 61.0515(a), Education Code, applies beginning with undergraduate  
13 students who initially enroll in a general academic teaching  
14 institution for the 2011 fall semester.

15       SECTION 10. Sections 61.052(a) and (b), Education Code, as  
16 amended by this Act, apply to the comprehensive lists of courses  
17 offered by public institutions of higher education beginning with  
18 lists required to be submitted for the 2012-2013 academic year.

19       SECTION 11. (a) Not later than May 31, 2012, the Texas  
20 Higher Education Coordinating Board shall develop a core  
21 curriculum, including the core curricula for broad academic  
22 disciplines included within the general core curriculum, that  
23 conforms to the requirements of Section 61.822, Education Code, as  
24 amended by this Act.

25       (b) Each public institution of higher education in this  
26 state shall revise its core curriculum as necessary to conform to  
27 the requirements of Section 61.822, Education Code, as amended by

1 this Act, and shall require students to comply with the  
2 institution's revised core curriculum beginning with the 2014 fall  
3 semester, except that an institution shall permit a student who was  
4 enrolled in the institution before the 2014 fall semester to comply  
5 with the core curriculum requirements applicable to that student  
6 before that semester. Each institution of higher education shall  
7 issue course catalogs that reflect the applicable core curriculum  
8 under Section 61.822, Education Code, consistent with this  
9 subsection. This subsection expires at the beginning of the 2016  
10 fall semester.

11 SECTION 12. Section 61.832(e), Education Code, as added by  
12 this Act, applies beginning with the 2011 fall semester.

13 SECTION 13. Section 51.9685, Education Code, as added by  
14 this Act, applies beginning with undergraduate students who  
15 initially enroll in a general academic teaching institution for the  
16 2011 fall semester.

17 SECTION 14. This Act takes effect immediately if it  
18 receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each  
19 house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution.  
20 If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate  
21 effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2011.