

By: Branch

H. B. No. 3025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT

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

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

6 SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 54, Education Code, is
7 amended by adding Section 54.016 to read as follows:

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

10 In this section:

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

24 (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.