

By: Wu

H.B. No. 298

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to measures to facilitate the transfer, academic progress,
and timely graduation of students in public higher education.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter Z, Chapter 51, Education Code, is
amended by adding Section 51.96852 to read as follows:

Sec. 51.96852. TRANSFER OF CREDIT FROM LOWER-DIVISION
INSTITUTIONS; ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS. (a) In this section:

(1) "Articulation agreement" means a formal written
agreement between a public junior college and a general academic
teaching institution identifying courses offered by the public
junior college that must be accepted for credit toward specific
course requirements at the general academic teaching institution.

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

(3) "Public junior college" and "general academic
teaching institution" have the meanings assigned by Section 61.003.

(b) Each general academic teaching institution shall:

(1) publish on the institution's Internet website for
use by prospective undergraduate students a detailed description
developed by the institution's faculty of the learning objectives,
content, and prior knowledge requirements for at least 12 courses
offered by the institution for which credit is frequently

1 transferred to the institution from lower-division institutions of
2 higher education;

3 (2) identify the public junior colleges from which the
4 general academic teaching institution regularly receives transfer
5 students; and

6 (3) establish, for at least five degree plans for
7 which credit is frequently transferred to the institution from
8 lower-division institutions of higher education, articulation
9 agreements with each public junior college from which the general
10 academic teaching institution has received an average of at least
11 five percent of the institution's transfer students in the three
12 preceding academic years.

13 (c) A general academic teaching institution's participation
14 in an articulation agreement under this section does not affect the
15 institution's admissions policies.

16 (d) In consultation with general academic teaching
17 institutions and public junior colleges, the Texas Higher Education
18 Coordinating Board shall adopt any rules the coordinating board
19 considers necessary for the administration of this section.

20 SECTION 2. Section 61.0515, Education Code, is amended by
21 amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (d) to read as
22 follows:

23 (a) To earn a baccalaureate degree, a student may not be
24 required by a general academic teaching institution to complete
25 more than the minimum number of semester credit hours required for
26 the degree by the institution's board-recognized accrediting
27 agency [~~Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or its~~

1 ~~successor~~] unless the institution determines that there is a
2 compelling academic reason for requiring completion of additional
3 semester credit hours for the degree.

4 (d) The board shall adopt any rules the board considers
5 necessary for the administration of this section.

6 SECTION 3. Section 61.05151, Education Code, is amended by
7 amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (d) to read as
8 follows:

9 (a) To earn an associate degree, a student may not be
10 required by an institution of higher education to complete more
11 than the minimum number of semester credit hours required for the
12 degree by the institution's board-recognized accrediting agency
13 ~~[Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or its successor]~~
14 unless the institution determines that there is a compelling
15 academic reason for requiring completion of additional semester
16 credit hours for the degree.

17 (d) The board shall adopt any rules the board considers
18 necessary for the administration of this section.

19 SECTION 4. Section 61.822, Education Code, is amended by
20 amending Subsection (a-1) and adding Subsection (f) to read as
21 follows:

22 (a-1) The board, with the assistance of advisory committees
23 composed of representatives of institutions of higher education,
24 shall develop a recommended core curriculum of at least 42 semester
25 credit hours, including a statement of the content, component
26 areas, and objectives of the core curriculum. Administrators of an
27 institution of higher education may serve as representatives of the

institution on any advisory committee under this section. At least a majority of the members of any advisory committee named under this section shall be faculty members of an institution of higher education. An institution shall consult with the faculty of the institution before nominating or recommending a person to the board as the institution's representative on an advisory committee.

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

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

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

SECTION 5. Not later than May 31, 2017, each general academic teaching institution shall publish on the institution's Internet website the information required by Section 51.96852, Education Code, as added by this Act, and establish articulation agreements in accordance with that section.

SECTION 6. The changes in law made by this Act to Sections 61.0515(a) and 61.05151(a), Education Code, apply beginning with undergraduate students who initially enroll in an institution of higher education for the 2017 fall semester. An undergraduate student who initially enrolls in an institution of higher education before that semester is covered by the law in effect before the

1 effective date of this Act, and that law is continued in effect for
2 that purpose.

3 SECTION 7. Not later than May 31, 2017, the Texas Higher
4 Education Coordinating Board shall develop core curricula for broad
5 academic disciplines included within the general core curriculum
6 that conform to the requirements of Section [61.822](#), Education Code,
7 as amended by this Act.

8 SECTION 8. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
9 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
10 provided by Section [39](#), Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
11 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
12 Act takes effect September 1, 2015.