By:  West **DRAFT C.S.S.B. No. 25**

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 H, Chapter 51, Education Code, is amended by adding Sections 51.400 and 51.4033 to read as follows:

Sec. 51.400.  DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

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

(2)  "General academic teaching institution," "institution of higher education," and "medical and dental unit" have the meanings assigned by Section 61.003.

SECTION 2. Sec. 51.4033.  REPORT OF NONTRANSFERABLE CREDIT. (a) Not later than December 1 of each year and in the form prescribed by the coordinating board, each general academic teaching institution and medical and dental unit shall provide to the coordinating board a report describing any courses for which a student who transfers to the institution from another institution of higher education is not granted academic credit at the receiving institution.

(b)  A report required by this section must indicate:

(1)  the course name and type;

(2)  which institution of higher education provided academic credit for the course; and

(3)  the reason why the receiving institution did not grant academic credit for the course.

SECTION 3.  Each public institution of higher education and medical and dental unit required to submit a report under Section 51.4033, Education Code, as added by this Act, shall submit the first report not later than December 1, 2020.

SECTION 4. Chapter 51, Education Code, is amended by adding 51.762(j)to read as follows:

(j) an applicant may indicate their interest in allowing information to be shared to other institutions of higher education for admissions into degree programs if the applicant is not admitted to the degree program at the preferred institution.

SECTION 5. Section 51.9685(a)(2), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(2)  "Institution of higher education" has [~~and "public junior college" have~~] the meaning [~~meanings~~] assigned by Section 61.003. Section 51.9685(a)(2), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(2)  "Institution of higher education" has [~~and "public junior college" have~~] the meaning [~~meanings~~] assigned by Section 61.003.

SECTION 6.  Sections 51.9685(b), (c), and (g), Education Code, are amended to read as follows:

(b)  Except as otherwise provided by Subsection (c), each student enrolled at an institution of higher education in an associate or bachelor's degree program ~~at an institution of higher education~~ shall file a degree plan with the institution ~~not later than~~ after the 12th class day and before the end of that semester or term ~~the second regular semester or term~~ immediately following the semester or term in which the student earned a cumulative total of 30 [~~45~~] or more semester credit hours for coursework successfully completed by the student, including transfer courses, international baccalaureate courses, dual credit courses, and any other course for which the institution the student attends has awarded the student college course credit, including course credit awarded by examination.

(c)  A student to whom this section applies who begins the student's first semester or term at an institution of higher education with 30 ~~45~~ or more semester credit hours of course credit for courses described by Subsection (b) shall file a degree plan with the institution not later than after the 12th class day and before the end of that semester or term ~~the second regular semester or term~~ at the institution.

(c-2) A student enrolled in a course for joint high school and junior college credit under Section 130.008 or any dual credit at an institution of higher education and to whom Subsection (b) or (c) does not apply shall file a degree plan with the college not later than:

(1) the end of the second regular semester or term immediately following the semester or term in which the student earned a cumulative total of 15 or more semester credit hours of course credit for dual credit courses successfully completed by the

student; or

(2) if the student begins the student’s first semester or term at the college with 15 or more semester credit hours of course credit for dual credit courses successfully completed by the student, the end of the student ’s second regular semester or term at the college.

SECTION 7.  Section 130.0104(b) and (c), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b)  A multidisciplinary study associate degree program established at a junior college under this section must require a student to successfully complete:

(1)  the junior college's core curriculum adopted under Section 61.822 [~~61.822(b)~~]; and

(c)  In complying with the requirements regarding the filing of a degree plan under [~~Notwithstanding~~] Section 51.9685, [~~before the beginning of the regular semester or term immediately following the semester or term in which~~] a student enrolled [~~successfully completes a cumulative total of 30 or more semester credit hours for coursework~~] in a multidisciplinary studies associate degree program established under this section[~~, the student~~] must meet with an academic advisor to complete a degree plan[~~, as defined by Section 51.9685(a)(1),~~] that:

(1)  accounts for all remaining credit hours required for the completion of the degree program; and

(2)  emphasizes:

(A)  the student's transition to a four-year college or university that the student chooses; and

(B)  preparations for the student's intended field of study or major at the four-year college or university.

(g)  The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, in consultation with institutions of higher education, shall [~~may~~] adopt rules as necessary for the administration of this section, including rules to ensure compliance with this section.

SECTION 8. Chapter Z, Chapter 51, Education Code, is amended by adding Sections 51.96852 and 51.96853 to read as follows:

Sec. 51.96852.  RECOMMENDED COURSE SEQUENCES. (a) In this section, "institution of higher education" has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

(b) recommended course sequence” means a suggested arrangement of lower and upper division courses that would enable a full-time student to complete the required courses for a 60-hour degree or certificate program within two years, or a 120-hour degree program within four years.

(c) A recommended course sequence shall include, where applicable, the Texas Common Course numbering system course number for each course included within the recommended course sequence.

(d) Each institution of higher education shall develop a recommended course sequence for each undergraduate certificate or degree program offered by the institution. Each recommended course sequence must 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.

(c) An institution of higher education may develop multiple recommended course sequences for a specific certificate or degree program offered by the institution.

(d)  Each institution of higher education shall include the recommended course sequences developed under this section in the institution's course catalog and on the institution's Internet website.

(e) Each institution of higher education shall report the recommended courses sequences established in this section to the coordinating board in a manner prescribed by the board.

SECTION 9. Sec. 51.96853.  TRANSFER OF CREDIT FROM LOWER-DIVISION INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION; ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS. (a) In this section:

(1)  "Articulation agreement" means a formal written agreement between a lower-division institution of higher education and a general academic teaching institution identifying courses offered by the lower-division institution that must be accepted for credit toward specific course requirements at the general academic teaching institution.

(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, as those terms are defined by Section 61.003.

(b)  Each general academic teaching institution may enter into an articulation agreement with any lower-division institution of higher education for a certificate or degree program for which students transferring from the lower-division institution to the general academic teaching institution regularly receive transfer credit.

(c)  An articulation agreement established may enable a transfer student to receive up to 60 semester credit hours for courses completed at the lower-division institution of higher education.

(d) A lower-division institution of higher education that has not established an articulation agreement with a general academic teaching institution may, with the agreement of the general academic teaching institution, be governed by the terms of an articulation agreement that exists between the general academic teaching institution and another lower-division institution of higher education.

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

(f) Each general academic teaching institution shall utilize the field of study in creating articulation agreements.

SECTION 10.  Section 61.059(p), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(p)  In its instruction and operations formula applicable to an institution of higher education, the board may not include any semester credit hours earned for dual course credit by a high school student for high school and college credit at the institution unless those credit hours are earned through any of the following:

(1)  a course in the core curriculum of the institution providing course credit;

(2)  a course offered by the institution providing course

credit in:

(A)  a field of study curriculum developed by the board under Section 61.823; or

(B)  a program of study curriculum established by the board under Section 61.8235;

(3)  a career and technical education course that applies to any certificate or associate degree offered by the institution providing course credit; or

(4) [~~(3)~~] a foreign language course.

SECTION 11.  Section 61.821(1), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(1)  "Core curriculum" means the lower division curriculum in liberal arts, humanities, and sciences and political, social, and cultural history that provides the knowledge and academic competencies foundational for all future learning and that all undergraduate students of an institution of higher education are required to complete before receiving an academic undergraduate degree.

SECTION 12.  Sections 61.822(b) and (c), Education Code, are amended to read as follows:

(b)  Each institution of higher education shall adopt a core curriculum of no less than 42 semester credit hours, including specific courses comprising the curriculum. The core curriculum must:

(1)  consist of general education courses that:

(A)  are selected for inclusion in the core curriculum based on a coherent rationale; and

(B)  ensure a breadth of knowledge rather than being narrowly focused on knowledge or competencies specific to a certain profession or discipline;

(2) [~~shall~~] be consistent with the common course numbering system approved by the board; and

(3)  be approved by the board in accordance with the statement, recommendations, and rules issued by the board. [~~An institution may have a core curriculum of other than 42 semester credit hours only if approved by the board.~~]

(c)  If a student successfully completes the 42-hour core curriculum at an institution of higher education, that block of courses may be transferred to any other institution of higher education and must be substituted for the receiving institution's core curriculum. A student shall receive academic credit for each of the courses transferred and may not be required to take additional core curriculum courses at the receiving institution [~~unless the board has approved a larger core curriculum at the institution~~].

SECTION 13.  Section 61.822, Education Code, is amended by adding Subsections (a-2), (b-1), (b-2), (b-3), (b-4), (d-1), (d-2), (f), and (g);

(a-2) The recommended core curriculum developed under Subsection (a-1) must be reviewed and approved by the coordinating board and have the following components:

(1)  a general core curriculum of at least 24 semester credit hours that includes:

(A)  six semester credit hours in each of the following component areas:

(i)  American or Texas history as prescribed in 51.302;

(ii)  government or political science as prescribed in 51.301; and

(iii)  communications; and

(B)  three semester credit hours in each of the following component areas:

(i)  language, philosophy, or culture; and

(ii)  creative arts; and

(2)  for each broad academic discipline, an academic discipline core curriculum not to exceed 18 semester credit hours specific to that discipline and that includes relevant courses in mathematics, social and behavioral sciences, and physical sciences.

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

(b-1) The core curriculum adopted by each institution of higher education shall include a general core curriculum and a broad academic discipline core curriculum that is transferable and applicable to a student’s major across the state as described by Subsection (d);

(b-2) Each institution of higher education shall identify each course that the institution of higher education offers that will fulfill requirements of the general core curriculum at that institution of higher education, and the specific general core curriculum requirement that the course will fulfill. The institution of higher education shall include these courses in the institution of higher education's course catalog and on the institution of higher education's Internet website and provide a list of these courses and the associated general core requirements to the board.

(b-3) An institution of higher education shall identify each degree or certificate offered by the institution of higher education that corresponds to a disciplinary core area identified by Subsection (a-2) and advise students about the importance of taking coherent sequences of core courses that align with students’ academic and career goals.

(b-4) An institution of higher education is not required to offer courses, certificates, or degree programs for every disciplinary core area identified under this section.

(d-1) A student who transfers from one institution of higher education to another shall receive academic credit from the receiving institution for each of the general education core courses that the student has successfully completed in the general core curriculum of the sending institution, and apply the course to the general core curriculum requirement that the course would have fulfilled for the student at the sending institution.

(d-2) A student who transfers from one institution of higher education to another shall receive academic credit from the receiving institution for each of the disciplinary core courses that the student has successfully completed in the disciplinary core curriculum of the sending institution and apply the course to the equivalent course requirement in the receiving institution’s degree or certificate program requirements.

(f) To assist in advising students regarding the selection of coherent sequences of core courses aligned with students’ academic and career goals, the board shall make information about the structure and transferability of the recommended core curriculum, including the general core curriculum and the disciplinary core areas identified under Section (a-2), available to school counselors and other postsecondary advisors employed by school districts and open enrollment charters and to each institution of higher education.

(g) The board by rule shall develop a policy to encourage the use of negotiated rulemaking procedures under Chapter 2008, Government Code, for the adoption of any rules necessary to implement this section.

SECTION 15.  Section 61.823, Education Code, is amended by adding Subsection (f) to read as follows:

(f)  A community college shall adopt in whole or in part each field of study curriculum developed by the board under this section for an academic area in which the college or institution offers the program or courses in that program.

Sec. 61.8232.  STUDY ON TRANSFER ADMISSION GUARANTEE. (a) The board shall conduct a study on the feasibility of guaranteeing transfer admission to an institution of higher education for students who complete certain courses in the core curriculum or a field of study curriculum at another institution of higher education.

(b)  Not later than September 1, 2020, the board shall submit to the members of the legislature a report on the results of the study and recommendations for legislative or other action. The report must include recommendations regarding eligibility criteria for a student to receive or an institution of higher education to participate in the transfer admission guarantee.

(c)  This section expires September 1, 2021.

SECTION 16. (a) For each Bachelor offering, a public institution must crosswalk their degree to the ACGM to identify courses students can take at any community college in the state.

(b) the coordinating board shall define the template and institutions must transmit information annually to the board for the upcoming academic year by March.

(c) Any institution of higher education accepting a transfer student shall adhere to the crosswalk in existence when the student first enrolled at the initial institution.

SECTION 17. Sec. 61.833. CREDIT TRANSFER FOR ASSOCIATE DEGREE. (a) In this section:

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

(2) "Reverse transfer data sharing platform" means:

(A) the National Student Clearinghouse~~; or~~

~~(B) a similar national electronic data sharing, and exchange platform operated by an agent of the institution that meets nationally accepted standards, conventions, and practices~~.

SECTION 18. Sec. 51.9715. RELEASE OF STUDENT ACADEMIC INFORMATION. (a) An institution of higher education may request the submission of a signed consent form authorizing the institution to release academic course, grade, and credit information with each:

(1) application for undergraduate transfer admission to the institution, if the institution is a general academic teaching institution, to be used for the purposes of Section [61.833](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/GetStatute.aspx?Code=ED&Value=61.833); or

(2) request from a student for a release of the student's transcript by the institution.

(b) An institution of higher education may release student information in accordance with Subsection (a) through~~:~~

(1) the National Student Clearinghouse; or

(2) an alternative platform developed by the coordinating board.

SECTION 19.  Section 51.9685(c-1), Education Code, is repealed.

SECTION 20. Sections 51.762, 51.96852, 51.96853, 51.9715, 61.822, Education Code, as added or amended by this Act, apply beginning with the 2020-2021 academic year.

SECTION 21. Not later than December 31, 2020, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall develop a recommended core curriculum that conforms to the requirements of Section 61.822, Education Code, as amended by this Act.

SECTION 22. The coordinating board may adopt rules to implement the processes under this subchapter.

SECTION 23.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.