

## Texas Association of Community Colleges – SB 25 / SB 1923: Transfer of Credit

### **SB 25 (as introduced)**

#### ***Areas of Support:***

##### SECTION 1 Recommended Course Sequences

The requirement for recommended course sequences is good start and would be a useful tool for advising. Providing clear pathways and expectations for transfer students can reduce excessive credits that do not apply toward a major upon transfer.

#### ***Recommended additions:***

##### ACGM Crosswalk

In addition to the course sequences recommended under SECTION 1, we would suggest requiring these sequences be placed in the Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM) and be required to be updated when the institution's catalog is updated. This requirement would allow community colleges to remain current in advising. Possible language to consider:

- (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.

##### Transferability Report

Include within the bill a requirement that universities report to the THECB describing any courses for which a student who transfers to the institution from another institution from another institution of higher education is not granted academic credit at the receiving institution. This report is included in SB 502 by Sen. Seliger, currently pending in the Senate Higher Education Committee. Suggested language:

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.

***Areas of Concern:***

**SECTION 1 Articulation Agreements**

While we agree articulation agreements can be effective, we do not believe a mandate for articulation agreements is the best mechanism to achieve improved transfer of credit. Agreements can be cumbersome and number in the dozens by program at each college. Improved clarity in the ACGM described above would be a preferred statewide approach and allow for better advising.

**SECTION 2 – Revisions to the recommended core**

Community colleges are universally opposed to dividing the core into a “general” and “discipline” as it could have the unintended consequence of increasing the complexity of transfer. Transfer friction most often occurs at a departmental level when a particular course within the core is deemed inappropriate or insufficient to fulfill the requirement of a particular discipline. The “discipline” area of the core has the potential to make these issues worse. If the “discipline” area becomes institution-specific it could undermine the original legislative intent of a portable set of courses generally applicable across majors.

***While community colleges oppose dividing the core, doing so should include recommended changes:***

1. Divide the core into a 30 hour “general” and 12 hour “discipline” core, rather than 24 hour and 18 hour.

A divided core of 30 hour “general” core and a 12 hour “discipline” core is preferable to the 24 hour “general” and 18 hour “discipline” core currently in the bill. Under current law, junior college students are required to file a degree plan upon the completion of 30 hours. Given that the required advising that would follow a degree plan would not typically occur until reaching 30 hours, this would be the appropriate place to make a distinction between “general” and “discipline” course work.

2. Transferability of each component of the new core/

We recommended including in statute **assurances** that each component of a divided core would be consistent across the state and could be easily transferred as a block, similar to current statute governing the transferability of the core (Education Code 61.822 (c)). Recommended language:

If a student successfully completes the [“general” or “discipline”] 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 shall not be required to take additional core curriculum courses at the receiving institution.

## **THECB Suggested Draft – CSSB 25**

### ***Areas of Support:***

#### SECTION 4 Tuition Rebate for Courses Not Transferred Toward Degree Plan

TACC supports financial incentives to encourage greater acceptance of transfer credits. The tuition rebate proposed by the THECB would be one such incentive; however, the language could be improved through greater clarity on what entity pays the rebate.

#### SECTION 7 Core curriculum requirements

Requiring core curriculum courses to “ensure a breadth of knowledge rather than being narrowly focused on knowledge or competencies specific to a certain profession or discipline” will promote better consistency across institutions and reduce the likelihood of courses not being accepted and applied to a major.

## **Universities Suggested Draft – CSSB 25**

### ***Areas of Support:***

#### SECTION 6 Reverse Transfer

TACC supports facilitating reverse transfer through better automation, automatic awarding of a degree with student opt-out, and use of the National Student Clearinghouse.

### ***Areas of Concern:***

#### SECTION 1 Recommended Course Sequence (Definition)

The suggested definition contemplates a sequence 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.” The overwhelming majority of community college students are part-time, so a definition applicable to full and part time students would be preferred.

#### SECTION 2 Recommended core curriculum

As with the introduced version of SB 25, community colleges oppose a divided core for the reasons previously stated. While the university draft makes significant improvements through stronger language regarding the applicability and transferability of each component of a divided core, community colleges would prefer language as described above regarding the substitution of core courses at a receiving institution.