

HOUSE BILL REPORT

EHB 1453

As Passed House:

March 10, 2003

Title: An act relating to improving articulation and transfer between institutions of higher education.

Brief Description: Improving articulation and transfer between institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: By Representatives Kenney, Cox, Fromhold, Jarrett, McCoy, Berkey, Hudgins, Wood, Priest, Conway, Linville, McIntire, Benson, Rockefeller, Anderson, Lantz, Morrell, Wallace and Upthegrove.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/4/03, 2/11/03 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/10/03, 95-0.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Requires the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and the Council of Presidents to convene work groups to: (1) Develop a general education transfer curriculum acceptable at all public four-year institutions of higher education; and (2) develop transfer associate degrees that meet all lower division prerequisites for particular majors at public four-year institutions.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Kenney, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Cox, Ranking Minority Member; Priest, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Boldt, Buck, Chase, Clements, Condotta, Gombosky, Jarrett, Lantz, McCoy and Morrell.

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

Direct Transfer Agreement: The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) is responsible for establishing a statewide transfer of credit policy and agreement, in cooperation with public institutions of higher education and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). Together, these entities have created the Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA).

Any student who completes an approved DTA associate degree at a community college is considered to have satisfied the lower division general education requirements at a public four-year institution. These students are generally admitted as juniors when they transfer.

Most students complete a DTA associate degree before they transfer, but about 30 percent transfer before completing a degree. For these students, unless the community college has a special articulation agreement, each four-year institution makes a separate determination regarding whether the students' courses meet its general education requirements.

Transfer Associate Degrees: In the late 1990s, analysis of students' credit accumulation and graduation patterns revealed that transfer students in science, math, and other highly structured majors did not graduate as efficiently as non-transfer students. When they arrived at a four-year institution, these students needed to take additional lower division course requirements to qualify for their major.

To address this problem the Council of Presidents (COP), the HECB, and the SBCTC convened a work group to develop a statewide Associate of Science Transfer Degree (AS-T), which was adopted in 2000. Under the AS-T students take more math and science prerequisites while at the community college, with the objective of transferring directly into a major once they reach the four-year institution.

Currently the work group is developing other specialized transfer associate degrees in: elementary education, secondary education for math and science teachers, and business administration. The work group has no set time line for finishing its work.

Summary of Engrossed Bill:

The HECB, the SBCTC, and the COP must convene work groups to accomplish two initiatives related to transfer of courses between public institutions of higher education.

General Education Transfer Curriculum: By the 2004-05 academic year, a work group must identify a curriculum that will satisfy the lower division general education requirements at all public four-year institutions. A student can complete the curriculum and have all courses fully transfer, even if the student did not complete an associate degree. Courses can be taken at different two or four-year institutions. A student who

completes the curriculum is not guaranteed admission to an institution or a major.

Transfer Associate Degrees: A work group develops associate degrees for particular academic majors. These transfer associate degrees meet all lower division course requirements for the major. The degrees also enable transfer students to complete lower division general education requirements that a non-transferring student would typically complete. Completion of the transfer associate degree does not guarantee the student admission into an institution, or into a major that has competitive requirements, such as grade point average.

During 2003-04, the work group will develop degrees in: elementary education, secondary education with math or science endorsement, and business administration. Each year thereafter, the work group will develop additional degrees with a priority for majors in high demand by transfer students, or majors where the current general associate transfer degree does not adequately prepare students.

Prior to registration, community and technical colleges will notify students about which courses fall within the general education transfer curriculum or one of the transfer associate degrees.

The HECB, the SBCTC, and the COP make biennial progress reports on the initiatives beginning December 1, 2003. The first report includes measurable indicators of improvement and baseline data. Subsequent reports monitor the indicators and provide other data on improving transfer efficiency.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The institutions have been working gradually to improve transfer, but these initiatives take the next step forward. Articulation agreements are in place, but more work is needed to smooth the transfer process. Transfer plays an increasing role for those seeking a baccalaureate degree. These strategies will improve the efficiency of the transfer process by trying to reduce the number of students who take classes thinking they will count toward general education requirements and then they don't. Transfer associate degrees try to reduce the gap in graduation efficiency between transfer and non-transfer students. We're trying to create space for additional students within the higher education system. These initiatives reflect ongoing work and respond to some key issues in improving transfer.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Kenney, prime sponsor; Jan Yoshiwara, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Terry Teale, Council of Presidents; and Bruce Botka, Higher Education Coordinating Board.