

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 2382

C 55 L 04

Synopsis as Enacted

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

Sponsors: By House Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Representatives Kenney, Cox, Fromhold, Nixon, Anderson, Ruderman, Chase, Schual-Berke, Miloscia, Hudgins, Wood, Morrell, Santos, Moeller and Kagi).

House Committee on Higher Education
House Committee on Appropriations
Senate Committee on Higher Education

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 the public institutions of higher education and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). Together, these entities have created the Direct Transfer Agreement, or 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.

Under the agreement, students who transfer to a baccalaureate institution with 90 or more community college credits must complete at least 90 additional credits at a baccalaureate institution to earn a bachelor's degree. This requirement does not apply to students transferring credits earned at another baccalaureate institution.

Transfer Associate Degrees: In the late 1990's, analysis of students' credit accumulation and graduation patterns revealed that when transfer students in science, math, and other highly structured majors arrived at a four-year institution, they needed to take additional lower division course requirements to qualify for entry into 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 at the community college, with the objective of transferring directly into a major once they reach a four-year institution.

Over the last two years, work groups have been developing other specialized transfer associate degrees: in elementary education, secondary education for math and science teachers, and business administration.

Course Equivalency: Outside of DTA associate degrees, each four-year institution determines how courses earned at another college or university meet general education requirements, apply toward requirements for a major, or count toward a baccalaureate degree. At some institutions this determination is made by faculty within each college or department. To assist students, each institution has created guides to illustrate course equivalency: which courses from which institutions are considered equivalent to which courses at the receiving institution. However, there is no statewide system of course equivalency in Washington. In 2001, the Education Commission of the States reported that 26 other states had statewide systems of course equivalency.

Access for Transfer Students: In 1994, the public four-year institutions agreed to continue to accept the same proportion of transfer students from community and technical colleges as they did in 1992. The institutions have since met or exceeded this proportion. In mid-2003, however, the University of Washington and Washington State University announced that because of rising student applications and limited additional state dollars for new enrollment, they plan to limit admission of transfer students back to 1992 levels.

Summary:

Direct Transfer Agreement: Policies adopted by public four-year institutions of higher education regarding transfer of lower-division credits must treat students transferring from community colleges the same as they treat students transferring from public four-year institutions.

Transfer Associate Degrees: The HECB will convene work groups to develop transfer associate degrees for specific academic majors. Work groups include representatives from the SBCTC, COP, and faculty from two- and four-year institutions. Work groups may include representatives from independent four-year institutions. A transfer associate degree must enable a student to complete the lower-division courses or competencies required for general education and preparation for a specific major. Completion of a transfer associate degree does not guarantee the student admission into an institution or into a major that has competitive requirements. The HECB must monitor four-year institutions' implementation of the degrees to ensure compliance.

During 2004-05, the work groups will develop degrees for elementary education, engineering, and nursing. Each year thereafter, work groups 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.

The HECB makes biennial progress reports beginning January 10, 2005. The first report includes measurable indicators of improvement and baseline data. Subsequent reports monitor the indicators and provide other data on improving transfer efficiency. The HECB, in collaboration with the Intercollege Relations Commission, will collect and maintain lists of courses that fall within the associate degrees.

Course Equivalency: The HECB must create a statewide system of course equivalency for public higher education institutions, so that courses from one institution can be transferred and

applied toward academic majors and degrees in the same manner as equivalent courses are transferred and applied at the receiving institutions.

A work group convened by the HECB will identify equivalent courses among all public and two- and four-year institutions and develop strategies for communicating course equivalency to students, faculty, and advisors. The work group may include representatives from independent four-year institutions. The work group must take into account the unique curriculum of The Evergreen State College in developing the course equivalency system.

The HECB makes a progress report by January 10, 2005, including options and cost estimates for ongoing maintenance of the system.

Access for Transfer Students: The HECB must conduct a gap analysis of upper division capacity in the public higher education system to accommodate transfer students. The analysis must examine the full range of options, including costs, to close the gap between demand and supply of upper division capacity. A progress report is due January 10, 2005, and a final report is due December 10, 2006, with recommendations on how to expand capacity in various locations.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	96	0	
Senate	47	0	(Senate amended)
House	94	0	(House concurred)

Effective: June 10, 2004.