

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6675

As Reported by House Committee On:

Higher Education

Appropriations

Title: An act relating to allowing public technical colleges to offer associate transfer degrees.

Brief Description: Allowing public technical colleges to offer associate transfer degrees.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators McAuliffe, Shin, Pflug, Berkey, Fairley and Tom).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/21/08, 2/25/08 [DP];

Appropriations: 3/3/08 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows technical colleges to offer associate transfer degrees that prepare students for entry into professional fields.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Wallace, Chair; Sells, Vice Chair; Anderson, Ranking Minority Member; Hankins, Hasegawa, Jarrett, McIntire, Roberts, Schmick and Sommers.

Staff: Andi Smith (786-7304).

Background:

There are 34 community and technical colleges in the state, including 29 community colleges and 5 technical colleges. Currently, students that graduate from a technical college can transfer their workforce courses into specific bachelor's of applied science programs that are specifically designed to match up with the focus in the workforce degree. Otherwise, the technical coursework does not generally transfer.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

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 (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.

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, the HECB, and the SBCTC convened a workgroup 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.

More recently, the HECB asked that the Joint Access Oversight Group develop Major Related Programs (MRPs). An MRP is based on the DTA or AS-T but specifies the prerequisite coursework that will provide the best preparation for entry into certain competitive majors. In 2005 the workgroups completed four MRPs: nursing, elementary education, pre-engineering, and engineering technology. In 2007 the group completed additional programs in secondary education, earth and space science, and construction management.

Summary of Bill:

In addition to offering technical degrees, technical colleges are allowed to offer transfer degrees that prepare students for professional bachelor's degrees. Professional degrees, in this context, are those that prepare students for a specific field or occupation including engineering, engineering technology, pre-nursing, business, construction management, and teacher preparation for secondary education in science, technology, and math areas.

The SBCTC adopts rules creating consistency between community and technical colleges offering associate degrees that prepare students for these degrees. The SBCTC may address issues related to tuition and fee rates, tuition waivers, enrollment counting including the use of credits instead of clock hours, and degree granting authority.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: New fiscal note requested on February 26, 2008.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The five technical colleges approached the SBCTC and requested authority to offer transfer degrees. The SBCTC convened a task force and studied the issue for about six months; they looked at employer demand, student demand, gaps in the pathways that are needed but not implemented, as well as their faculty. The study concluded there is an unmet demand in some high-demand baccalaureate level degrees and it will be increasing. The pathways for technical college graduates are very narrow. Technical schools already have much of the capacity already to offer the academic degrees. The bill helps establish the five technical colleges as "equal players" among the community and technical college system. We can say "yes" to technical students who want to move on to their baccalaureate degree without starting over. The bill is consistent with the "High Skills High Wages" strategic planning document. The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board doesn't want students to have to start over again at technical colleges.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Jan Yoshiwara, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; John Walstrum, Clover Park Technical College; and Maddy Thompson, Workforce Board.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 33 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Dunshee, Vice Chair; Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Haler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Chandler, Cody, Conway, Darneille, Ericks, Fromhold, Grant, Green, Haigh, Hunt, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Kretz, Linville, McDonald, McIntire, Morrell, Pettigrew, Priest, Ross, Schmick, Schual-Berke, Seaquist, Sullivan and Walsh.

Staff: Debbie Driver (786-7143).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Appropriations Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Higher Education:

No new changes were recommended.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill allows the technical colleges to expand their course offerings to provide associate transfer degrees. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges conducted a study to determine whether or not technical colleges should offer transfer degrees. One of the conclusions of the study was that technical college graduates had limited opportunities to transfer to four-year degree programs. As part of the study, the State Board looked at current course offerings and program mix and determined that the technical colleges have most of the capacity to offer the associate transfer degrees. Colleges traditionally make decisions regarding program mix and course offerings which means they will be able to offer these programs using their existing budgets.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Jan Yoshiwara, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.