

Enrolled
House Bill 2998

Sponsored by COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER

AN ACT

Relating to transfer of credits to public post-secondary institutions of education; and declaring an emergency.

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. (1) Community colleges and public universities listed in ORS 352.002 shall:

(a) Evaluate existing one-year curricula for students at a public post-secondary institution of education who plan to transfer to a different public post-secondary institution of education; and

(b) Establish a foundational curriculum, or foundational curricula, for the first year of coursework at public post-secondary institutions of education in this state.

(2) A foundational curriculum established under subsection (1) of this section must contain a minimum of 30 college-level academic credits.

(3) Students at a community college who complete a foundational curriculum established under subsection (1) of this section shall:

(a) Be able to transfer each academic credit contained within the foundational curriculum from a community college to any public university listed in ORS 352.002; and

(b) Have each academic credit from the foundational curriculum be counted towards the student's degree requirements at any public university listed in ORS 352.002.

SECTION 2. The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall convene community colleges and public universities listed in ORS 352.002 to ensure that at least one foundational curriculum described in section 1 of this 2017 Act is established and available for use by community college students by the beginning of the 2018-2019 academic year.

SECTION 3. (1) Community colleges and public universities listed in ORS 352.002 shall collaborate to develop a unified statewide transfer agreement, based on the foundational curricula established under section 1 of this 2017 Act, for each major course of study. Each unified statewide transfer agreement developed under this section must:

(a) Enable a student to transfer from a community college to a public university listed in ORS 352.002 without the loss of academic credit or the requirement to retake a course at a public university that the student has successfully completed at a community college, provided that the grade in each course that is transferred meets the degree requirements established by the unified statewide transfer agreement;

(b) Contain provisions that identify the optimal number of academic credits, including credits in the major course of study, that the student should have when the student transfers from a community college to a public university listed in ORS 352.002 in order for the student to efficiently receive a bachelor's degree;

(c) Define the classes and completion standards for the optimal number of academic credits identified in paragraph (b) of this subsection that may be taken at a community college;

(d) Except as provided in paragraph (e) of this subsection, ensure that if a student at a community college has completed 90 academic credits of coursework in conformity with the completion standards identified in paragraph (c) of this subsection and transfers to a public university listed in ORS 352.002, the student will:

(A) Receive junior status in the major course of study at the public university; and

(B) Be able to receive a bachelor's degree in the major course of study by completing the additional academic credits identified in the unified statewide transfer agreement after transferring, based on the total number of academic credits and standards approved by the accrediting body for the public university; and

(e) For unified statewide transfer agreements that in paragraph (b) of this subsection identify an optimal number of academic credits to transfer other than 90, ensure that if a student at a community college has completed the identified number of academic credits of coursework in conformity with the completion standards identified in paragraph (c) of this subsection and transfers to a public university listed in ORS 352.002, the student will:

(A) Receive status at the public university, based on the number of academic credits referenced in the transfer agreement, that is comparable to the status of students with the same number of academic credits in the major course of study who began their post-secondary studies at the public university; and

(B) Be able to receive a bachelor's degree in the major course of study by completing the additional academic credits identified in the unified statewide transfer agreement after transferring, based on the total number of academic credits and standards approved by the accrediting body for the public university.

(2) In designing unified statewide transfer agreements under subsection (1) of this section, community colleges and public universities listed in ORS 352.002 shall:

(a) Focus on ensuring that community college students who transfer to public universities to complete a bachelor's degree are able to obtain the bachelor's degree with a similar number of academic credits to those required for students who begin their post-secondary studies at a public university;

(b) Seek to minimize student debt;

(c) Seek to increase the rate at which community college students who transfer to public universities receive bachelor's degrees; and

(d) Seek to maintain the standards of intellectual and academic rigor at community colleges and public universities.

(3)(a) The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall regularly convene and consult with community colleges and public universities listed in ORS 352.002 in order to determine the major courses of study for which a unified statewide transfer agreement will be established.

(b) Determinations made under this subsection must identify a sufficient number of major courses of study to enable colleges and public universities to comply with subsection (4) of this section.

(c) The commission shall publicly identify the criteria used to make determinations under this subsection, which must include, but need not be limited to, a consideration of:

(A) The major courses of study with the most workforce demand; and

(B) The most common major courses of study among students who transfer from a community college to a public university.

(4) Community colleges and public universities listed in ORS 352.002 shall establish a unified statewide transfer agreement for three major courses of study per year.

SECTION 4. Notwithstanding section 3 (4) of this 2017 Act, community colleges and public universities listed in ORS 352.002 shall develop the first three unified statewide transfer agreements required under section 3 of this 2017 Act under the following time frame:

(1) The first unified statewide transfer agreement must be established by December 1, 2018;

(2) The second unified statewide transfer agreement must be established by April 1, 2019; and

(3) The third unified statewide transfer agreement must be established by December 1, 2019.

SECTION 5. When a student attending a community college informs the community college that the student intends to pursue a bachelor's degree by transferring to a public university listed in ORS 352.002, the community college shall:

(1) Provide the student with information on potential major courses of study that the community college has received from the public university;

(2) Provide the student with a list of existing unified statewide transfer agreements; and

(3) Encourage the student to identify a potential major course of study or unified statewide transfer agreement prior to the student completing 45 academic credits.

SECTION 6. (1) The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall regularly convene representatives from community colleges and public universities listed in ORS 352.002 in order to:

(a) Facilitate the coordination and establishment of foundational curricula described in section 1 of this 2017 Act; and

(b) Facilitate the development, and ensure the continued alignment, of the unified statewide transfer agreements described in section 3 of this 2017 Act.

(2) The commission shall provide staffing for each meeting held under subsection (1) of this section.

(3) The commission shall seek to ensure that community colleges, public universities listed in ORS 352.002 and students are informed and engaged on the current status and developments of foundational curricula and unified statewide transfer agreements.

(4) Each community college and public university listed in ORS 352.002 shall report annually to the commission, for each unified statewide transfer agreement established under section 3 of this 2017 Act, the number of academic credits that were successfully transferred in that major course of study by students who transfer from a community college to a public university.

(5) To the extent relevant data is available, the commission shall report annually to the Legislative Assembly on whether existing unified statewide transfer agreements are meeting the goals set forth in section 3 (2) of this 2017 Act.

SECTION 7. No later than June 1, 2018, community colleges and public universities listed in ORS 352.002 shall submit a joint report to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly relating to higher education regarding best practices for advising students about:

(1) Foundational curricula established under section 1 of this 2017 Act;

(2) Unified statewide transfer agreements established under section 3 of this 2017 Act;

(3) Methods for identifying a major course of study no later than the student's second year of post-secondary education;

(4) Strategies and resources available to enhance student advising effectiveness and increase student access to information about unified statewide transfer agreements; and

(5) Academic support services, with an emphasis on assisting students enrolled in courses or major courses of study with high rates of incompleteness.

SECTION 8. No later than February 1, 2018, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall provide to the Legislative Assembly a written report that:

(1) In consultation with community colleges and public universities listed in ORS 352.002, defines "lost academic credits" for purposes of the report;

(2) States the typical number of lost academic credits by current students who transfer from a community college to a public university listed in ORS 352.002;

(3) Makes a recommendation on whether more than one foundational curriculum should be established;

(4) Makes a recommendation on whether foundational curricula established under section 1 of this 2017 Act should be transferable for students who transfer from one community college to a different community college or from one public university listed in ORS 352.002 to a different public university; and

(5) Lists the initial major courses of study for which unified statewide transfer agreements will be established under section 3 (3) of this 2017 Act.

SECTION 9. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the General Fund appropriation made to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission by section 1 (1), chapter __, Oregon Laws 2017 (Enrolled Senate Bill 5524), for the biennium beginning July 1, 2017, is increased by \$220,490 for the purpose of implementing this 2017 Act.

SECTION 10. This 2017 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2017 Act takes effect on its passage.

Passed by House June 30, 2017

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Timothy G. Sekerak, Chief Clerk of House

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Tina Kotek, Speaker of House

Passed by Senate July 5, 2017

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Peter Courtney, President of Senate

Received by Governor:

.....M.,....., 2017

Approved:

.....M.,....., 2017

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Kate Brown, Governor

Filed in Office of Secretary of State:

.....M.,....., 2017

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Dennis Richardson, Secretary of State