

HB 2998 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce Development

Action Date: 04/18/17

Action: Do pass with amendments and be referred to Ways and Means. (Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 9-0-0-0

Yeas: 9 - Alonso Leon, Bynum, Clem, Heard, Johnson, Reardon, Reschke, Sollman, Whisnant

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to regularly convene community college and public university representatives to facilitate establishment of foundational curricula, determine major courses of study for which unified statewide transfer agreements will be established and to develop those agreements. Requires institutions to collaboratively establish foundational curricula for first year coursework and to develop unified statewide transfer agreement for each major course of study. Specifies community college students should be able to transfer each academic credit contained within foundational curriculum to any public university and have each credit be counted towards student's degree requirements. Specifies each unified statewide transfer agreement must: enable students to transfer from community college to public university without loss of academic credit or requirement to retake course at university, identify optimal number of academic credits student should have when transferring to efficiently achieve bachelor's degree, define classes and completion standards for optimal number of credits that may be taken at community college and ensure if student has completed 90 academic credits or optimal number of credits at community college and then transfers to university, student will receive junior status in major course of study at university and be able to receive bachelor's degree in major course of study by completing additional academic credits identified in unified statewide transfer agreement. Requires institutions to: ensure community college transfer students are able to obtain bachelor's degree with similar number of academic credits as required for students who begin post-secondary education at public university, seek to minimize student debt, seek to increase rate at which community college transfer students receive bachelor's degrees and seek to maintain standards of intellectual and academic rigor at all institutions. Requires community colleges provide students with information on potential major courses of study and existing unified statewide transfer agreements. Requires HECC to provide report to legislature relating to lost academic credits, initial major courses of study for which unified statewide transfer agreements will be established and foundational curriculum recommendations by February 1, 2018. Requires HECC to provide annual report to legislature on whether existing unified statewide transfer agreements are meeting goals. Requires community colleges and public universities to provide joint report to interim committees on higher education by June 1, 2018, that includes best practices for advising students. Requires each institution provide annual report to HECC on number of academic credits that were successfully transferred in each major course of study for which unified statewide transfer agreements are established. Requires HECC to ensure at least one foundational curriculum is established and available by beginning of 2018-2019 academic year. Requires institutions to establish unified statewide transfer agreement for three major courses of study per year, and to develop first agreement by December 1, 2018, second agreement by April 1, 2019 and third agreement by December 1, 2019. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Systemic problem with credit transfer from community colleges to public universities in Oregon
- Perennial nature of credit transfer issues coming before legislative committees
- Student uncertainty with regard to pathway to, and timeline for, degree completion

This Summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.

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- Importance of requiring achievement of specific outcomes by specific dates
- Commendable stakeholder engagement in process of creating amended measure
- Recognition of collaborative, hard work that will be required of institutions and faculty to implement measure

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Replaces measure.

BACKGROUND:

Rates of baccalaureate degree completion and time to completion vary significantly between community college transfer students and students who began post-secondary education at a four-year public university. The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) reports that 62.4 percent of transfer students graduate in six years compared to 82.4 percent of non-transfer students. On average, transfer students graduate having earned 211 credits compared to non-transfer students' 201 credits. Moreover, 63 percent of transfer students enter universities with fewer credits than they had earned at community colleges and 35 percent lose more than one term of coursework.

Oregon has instituted several transfer degrees and modules during recent decades, including the 90-credit Associate of Arts Oregon Transfer (AAOT), 45-credit Oregon Transfer Module (OTM) and Associate of Science Oregon Transfer (ASOT). In addition, many institutions have developed articulated agreements to facilitate successful credit transfer. A Transfer Student Bill of Rights was passed in 2011 establishing methods to resolve credit transfer issues, though it does not induce the work needed to ensure uniform, statewide credit transfer pathways are developed. Despite these efforts, transfer students often find that these agreements may meet admission standards of receiving post-secondary schools, but that general education and major course of study credit transfers are accepted on a course-by-course, institution-by-institution basis. Following a transfer, students may need to complete additional coursework to meet the receiving institution's requirements.