

HB 2651 -- HIGHER EDUCATION CORE CURRICULUM

SPONSOR: Fitzwater (49)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Higher Education by a vote of 12 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Select Committee on Education by a vote of 10 to 0.

This bill establishes a standard core curriculum and a common course numbering system for lower division courses at community colleges and public four-year institutions of higher learning. The Coordinating Board of Higher Education will work in conjunction with an advisory committee, composed of representatives from community colleges and public four-year institutions, to develop a recommended core curriculum.

The core curriculum must be comprised of at least 42 semester credit hours and will cover mathematics, English, communications, humanities, biological and physical science, social science, and computer technology. All undergraduate students of the above institutions must complete the core curriculum as a requirement of graduation.

Each community college and public four-year institution must adopt a core curriculum of no less than 42 credit hours. Such curriculum must include specific courses and be based on the core curriculum recommended by the Coordinating Board of Higher Education.

The Coordinating Board must also approve a common course numbering system for lower-division courses at all institutions of higher learning in the state. Community colleges and four-year institutions must include in its course listings the corresponding numbers from the common course numbering system.

Students will be able to transfer credits earned under the core curriculum, as described within the bill. The Coordinating Board must also develop criteria to evaluate the transfer practices each public institution of higher learning in the state and subsequently evaluate each institution. Institutions of higher education must publish in its course catalogs and on its website the evaluation policies of the Coordinating Board.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say this would create an easier, transparent, and more predictable system by which students would be able to transfer general education credits.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Fitzwater; Missouri Community College Association; and Brenda Selman, University Of Missouri.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say there have been several states that have tried such a system and the results have been mixed. Creating a common numbering system will be an arduous process that will not happen overnight. The Department of Higher Education doesn't have any hard evidence that students are losing credits or that credits are being wasted through the transfer process. We have made a lot of progress in this state regarding credit transferability. We need to be careful that we don't accidentally codify something with untended consequences. We've solved, or are working on solving, the problems we have identified but we don't want to create new unintended problems. This could be rather expensive and we should make sure anything done is really necessary to solve a problem. The deadline within the bill may not be a realistic date.

Testifying on the bill were Becky Dunn, State Technical College Of Missouri and Rusty Monhollon, Department Of Higher Education.