
Higher Education Committee

HB 2443

Brief Description: Requiring a common course catalog among institutions of higher education.

Sponsors: Representatives Chase, Cox, Morrell, Kenney and Anderson.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires a common course catalog for all lower division courses offered by public institutions of higher education, including a common course numbering system.

Hearing Date: 1/20/04

Staff: Barbara McLain (786-7383).

Background:

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). Under current law, the agreement may not require or encourage the standardization of course content.

The agreement outlines general parameters regarding transfer and provides for creation of Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA) associate degrees. However, outside of DTA 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.

One way to communicate course equivalency is through a common course numbering system. At least eight other states have developed common course numbering among their higher education institutions.

Summary of Bill:

Beginning with the 2004-05 academic year, the statewide transfer of credit policy and agreement adopted by the HECB must provide for a common course catalog for all lower division courses

offered by public institutions of higher education. Equivalent courses will be identified using a statewide common numbering system. Courses in the common catalog will transfer and be accepted equally among institutions of higher education with regard to the number of credits earned, how the courses meet general education requirements, and how they meet prerequisites for academic majors or minors.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 14, 2004.

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