

SB 233 -1, -2 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

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Meeting Dates: 3/1, 4/5

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires Higher Education Coordinating Commission to establish by rule a common course numbering system for introductory and other lower division courses by July 1, 2024 . Requires each public university and community college to adopt common course numbering system and accept transfer of academic credit for courses taken at other public universities and community colleges by September 1, 2024. Requires Higher Education Coordinating Commission to consult with administrators, faculty, and students of public universities and community colleges on development of common course numbering system and to submit annual report to Legislative Assembly. Sunsets on January 2, 2026.

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Inconsistency of course numbering for similar courses
- Requirement for transferring students to repeat similar courses
- Previous legislative action
- Purpose of common course numbering system
- Emphasis on common learning outcomes rather than content
- Cost to Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) of staffing Transfer Council
- Need for further amendments
- Preservation of academic freedom
- Relationship with Oregon Transfer and Articulation Committee (OTAC)
- Authority of HECC to resolve disagreements

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Replaces the measure. Requires each public institution of higher education to adopt a common course numbering system for introductory and other lower division courses. Requires institutions to accept transfer of academic credit for each course in system. Establishes Transfer Council to serve as primary venue for developing common course numbering system and resolving issues related to transfer of academic credit. Specifies membership and responsibilities of Transfer Council. Establishes deadlines for Transfer Council to make recommendations to Higher Education Coordinating Commission. Establishes deadlines for Higher Education Coordinating Commission to implement common course numbering system by rule. Establishes deadlines for public institutions of higher education to be in compliance. Modifies requirements for unified statewide transfer agreements. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued

-2 Replaces the measure. Requires each public institution of higher education to adopt a common course numbering system for introductory and other lower division courses by the 2025-2026 academic year. Requires institutions to accept transfer of academic credit for each course in system. Establishes Transfer Council to develop recommendations on common course numbering system and advise Higher Education Coordinating

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Commission (HECC) on implementation, compliance, and best practices. Requires Transfer Council to make final recommendations on common course numbering system by July 1, 2024. Directs HECC to establish by rule common course numbering system by September 1, 2024. Sunsets January 2, 2027. Specifies membership and responsibilities of Transfer Council. Allows Transfer Council to create subcommittees to advise council. Provides that recommendations of council or its subcommittees regarding common course numbering system require three-fifths majority for adoption. Allows two or more members of council or its subcommittees to submit minority report for alternative recommendations to HECC. Requires HECC to use recommendations of Transfer Council to develop rules, annually report to legislative committees, and provide staff and logistical support for Transfer Council. Requires council to annually report to HECC by September 1 on development of common course numbering system. Requires HECC to annually report by December 15 to interim legislative committees on common course numbering system and issues related to academic credit transfer. Directs HEC to report to interim legislative committees by December 15, 2021 on necessary action for electronic information system for foundational curricula and unified statewide transfer agreements. Sunsets December 31, 2022. Moves oversight of unified statewide transfer agreements and foundational curricula to Transfer Council and modifies requirements. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued

BACKGROUND:

Students who wish to transfer from one public college or university to another may be required to repeat certain courses, causing a buildup of excess academic credits, increasing student debt, and delaying graduation. In response, the Legislative Assembly passed House Bill 3521 (2011) which created the Transfer Student Bill of Rights and then House Bill 2525 (2015), which directed the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to convene a workgroup to study further policy options. In response to the HECC's findings and recommendations, House Bill 2998 (2017) required the public universities to meet regularly and work to standardize credit transfer requirements such as the foundational curricula (now called Core Transfer Maps) and unified statewide transfer agreements (now called Major Transfer Maps).

According to the HECC, 17 states currently require common course numbering among institutions of higher learning. This is intended to streamline the transfer of credits earned in lower-division, general education courses between institutions by minimizing or eliminating the need to repeat similar courses.

SB 233 requires the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to establish a common course numbering system in consultation with administrators, faculty and students, and mandates all public post-secondary educational institutions in Oregon to adopt it by September 1, 2024.