

# An Act

SENATE BILL 24-164

BY SENATOR(S) Buckner and Lundeen, Bridges, Coleman, Cutter, Exum, Fields, Gardner, Ginal, Gonzales, Jaquez Lewis, Kolker, Liston, Marchman, Michaelson Jenet, Mullica, Pelton B., Pelton R., Priola, Rich, Roberts, Rodriguez, Simpson, Smallwood, Van Winkle, Will, Fenberg; also REPRESENTATIVE(S) McCluskie and Pugliese, Bacon, Bird, Boesenecker, Brown, Duran, Hamrick, Hernandez, Herod, Jodeh, Joseph, Kipp, Lieder, Lindsay, Lindstedt, Lukens, Mauro, McLachlan, Sirota, Soper, Valdez, Young.

CONCERNING TRANSPARENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

*Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

**SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-1-125, **amend** (1) introductory portion; and **add** (1)(h), (1)(i), (1)(j), (1)(k), (1.5), and (6) as follows:

**23-1-125. Commission directive - student bill of rights - degree requirements - implementation of core courses - competency test - prior learning - prior work-related experience - policies - definitions - repeal.** (1) **Student bill of rights.** The general assembly hereby finds that students

*Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material added to existing law; dashes through words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law and such material is not part of the act.*

enrolled in public institutions of higher education ~~shall~~ AND STUDENTS WHO ARE ACCEPTED TO AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION have the following rights:

(h) STUDENTS HAVE A RIGHT TO TRANSPARENCY OF THE COST OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS, INCLUDING INFORMATION ON FEES, ASSOCIATED EXPENSES, AND FINANCIAL AID IN THE FORM OF SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS, AND LOANS;

(i) STUDENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO SEAMLESS TRANSFER OF COURSES IN THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX, TRANSPARENCY IN THE PROCESS FOR TRANSFERRING CREDITS, A TIMELY RESPONSE ON APPLICATIONS FOR TRANSFERRING CREDITS, AND TRANSPARENCY IN HOW AND WHY A CREDIT IS ACCEPTED OR REJECTED BY AN INSTITUTION AND HOW AND WHY A CREDIT IS OR IS NOT APPLIED TOWARD DEGREE REQUIREMENTS;

(j) STUDENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO APPEAL AN INSTITUTION'S FAILURE TO ACCEPT THE STUDENT'S REQUEST FOR TRANSFER CREDIT; AND

(k) STUDENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW WHAT WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCES OR PRIOR LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES ARE AWARDED POSTSECONDARY ACADEMIC CREDIT AT THE INSTITUTION IN WHICH THE STUDENT IS ENROLLED, PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-5-145.5.

(1.5) **Policies.** ON OR BEFORE APRIL 1, 2025, THE COMMISSION SHALL ADOPT POLICIES FOR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION ON HOW TO BEST IMPLEMENT THE RIGHT DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (1)(i) OF THIS SECTION.

(6) **Definitions.** AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

(a) "GENERAL EDUCATION COURSE" MEANS A LOWER-DIVISION COURSE OFFERED BY AN INSTITUTION THAT ANY DEGREE-SEEKING STUDENT ENROLLED AT THE INSTITUTION MUST SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE IN ORDER TO OBTAIN AN ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE OR A BACHELOR'S DEGREE FROM THE INSTITUTION.

(b) "GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX" MEANS A GROUP OF GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES OR LOWER-DIVISION COURSES REQUIRED

FOR A SPECIFIC PROGRAM AT THE INSTITUTION THAT EVERY STUDENT ENROLLED IN THE SPECIFIC PROGRAM AT THE INSTITUTION MUST SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE IN ORDER TO TRANSFER TO OR FROM AN INSTITUTION AND HAS EQUIVALENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AS THE SAME LEVEL OF COURSES OFFERED BY ANOTHER INSTITUTION.

(c) "LOWER-DIVISION COURSE" MEANS A COURSE NUMBERED FROM ONE HUNDRED TO TWO HUNDRED NINETY-NINE OR ONE THOUSAND TO TWO THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED NINETY-NINE.

(d) "PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION" OR "INSTITUTION" HAS THE SAME MEANING SET FORTH IN SECTION 23-4.5-102.

**SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-1-108.5, **amend** (1), (2)(c), (3)(a), (3)(b), (3)(c), (4), and (5); **repeal** (2)(b) and (2)(d); and **add** (2)(e), (2)(f), (2)(g), (3)(d.5), (3)(d.7), (6.5), and (8) as follows:

**23-1-108.5. Duties and powers of the commission with regard to common course numbering system - council of higher education representatives - rules - legislative declaration - definitions - repeal.**

(1) The general assembly ~~hereby~~ finds that, for many students, the ability to transfer among all ~~state-supported institutions of~~ higher education INSTITUTIONS is critical to their success in achieving a degree. The general assembly further finds that it is necessary for the state to have sound transfer policies that provide the broadest and simplest mechanisms feasible while protecting the academic quality of the institutions of higher education and their undergraduate degree programs. The general assembly finds, therefore, that it is in the best interests of the state for the commission to oversee the adoption of ~~a statewide articulation matrix system of course numbering for general education courses~~ THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX, ~~that~~ WHICH includes all ~~state-supported institutions of~~ higher education INSTITUTIONS and ~~that~~ will ensure that the quality of ~~and requirements that pertain to general education courses~~ THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX COURSES are comparable and transferable systemwide.

(2) As used in this section, unless the context otherwise requires:

(b) ~~"Course numbering system" means the statewide articulation matrix system of common course numbering for general education courses~~

~~adopted by the commission pursuant to paragraph (c) of subsection (3) of this section.~~

~~(c) "General education courses COURSE" means the group of courses offered by an institution of higher education that every student enrolled in the institution must successfully complete to attain an associate's or bachelor's degree~~ A LOWER-DIVISION COURSE OFFERED BY AN INSTITUTION THAT ANY DEGREE-SEEKING STUDENT ENROLLED AT THE INSTITUTION MUST SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE IN ORDER TO OBTAIN AN ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE OR A BACHELOR'S DEGREE FROM THE INSTITUTION.

~~(d) "Higher education institution" means a state-supported institution of higher education.~~

(e) "GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX" MEANS A GROUP OF GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES OR LOWER-DIVISION COURSES REQUIRED FOR A SPECIFIC PROGRAM AT THE INSTITUTION THAT EVERY STUDENT ENROLLED IN THE SPECIFIC PROGRAM AT THE INSTITUTION MUST SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE IN ORDER TO TRANSFER TO OR FROM AN INSTITUTION AND THAT HAS EQUIVALENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AS THE SAME LEVEL OF COURSES OFFERED BY ANOTHER INSTITUTION.

(f) "HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION" OR "INSTITUTION" MEANS A PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AS DEFINED IN SECTION 23-4.5-102.

(g) "LOWER-DIVISION COURSE" MEANS A COURSE NUMBERED FROM ONE HUNDRED TO TWO HUNDRED NINETY-NINE OR ONE THOUSAND TO TWO THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED NINETY-NINE.

(3) (a) On or before July 1, 2001, the commission shall convene a council consisting of representatives from each of the higher education governing boards and each of the four-year higher education institutions, a representative sample of the two-year higher education institutions, and a representative of the commission. The commission shall consult with the governing boards when convening representatives from the higher education institutions. By July 1, 2011, the council shall create a process through which it shall seek input from and consult with various higher education student organizations for each articulation agreement and for the review of ~~general education courses and the course numbering system as~~

~~required in paragraph (c) of this subsection (3)~~ COURSES IN THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX AS REQUIRED IN SUBSECTION (3)(c) OF THIS SECTION.

(b) The council shall recommend to the commission a ~~statewide articulation matrix system of common course numbering~~ GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX to which the general education courses for each ~~higher education~~ institution may be mapped.

(c) (I) On or before October 1, 2002, the council shall recommend to the commission a list of ~~general education~~ courses to be included in the ~~course numbering system~~ GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX. In identifying ~~said general education~~ THE courses, the council shall review the course descriptions and may request summaries of course syllabi for review, focusing ~~first~~ on lower-division general education courses. The commission shall review the council's recommendations and adopt a ~~statewide articulation matrix system of common course numbering~~ GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX for general education courses, including criteria for ~~such~~ THE courses, on or before January 1, 2003.

(II) The council shall annually review the list of ~~general education~~ courses and the ~~course numbering system~~ GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX, including the criteria, adopted by the commission and recommend ~~such~~ changes as ~~may be~~ necessary to maintain the accuracy and integrity of the ~~course numbering system~~ GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX. The council's annual review ~~shall~~ MUST include consideration of the course descriptions, and the council may request summaries of course syllabi for further review.

(d.5) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2024, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADD ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIVES AS NECESSARY TO THE COUNCIL TO ENSURE EQUAL REPRESENTATION OF INSTITUTIONS ON THE COUNCIL.

(d.7) ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 1, 2025, AND EVERY OCTOBER 1 THEREAFTER, THE COUNCIL SHALL REVIEW THE LIST OF COURSES IN THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMMISSION AS NECESSARY TO MAKE CHANGES AND MAINTAIN ACCURACY. AS PART OF THE REVIEW, THE COUNCIL SHALL IDENTIFY:

(I) THE HIGHEST ENROLLMENT AND TRANSFER ACTIVITY FOR

COURSES IN THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX;

(II) COURSES THAT STUDENTS ARE LESS LIKELY TO RECEIVE FULL CREDIT FOR THAT APPLY TOWARD THE STUDENT'S CHOSEN ACADEMIC PROGRAM UPON TRANSFER; AND

(III) HOW THE NUMBER OF CREDIT HOURS DIFFERS AMONG INSTITUTIONS AND WHERE MISALIGNMENT OCCURS BETWEEN COURSES IN THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX.

~~(4) (a) Following adoption of the course numbering system, each higher education institution shall review its course offerings and identify those general education courses offered by the institution that correspond with the courses included in the course numbering system. The EACH higher education institution shall submit its list of identified courses IN THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX, including course descriptions and, upon request of the commission, summaries of course syllabi, for review and approval by the commission on or before March 1, 2003, AND ON MARCH 1 OF EACH ODD-NUMBERED YEAR THEREAFTER.~~

(b) Beginning with the fall semester of 2003, each higher education institution shall publish, and update as necessary, a list of course offerings that identifies ~~those general education~~ courses offered by the institution that correspond with the courses included in the ~~course numbering system~~ GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX.

(5) (a) All credits earned by a student in ~~any general education course identified as corresponding with a course included in the course numbering system shall be~~ THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX ARE automatically transferable ~~among~~ AND APPLICABLE TO THE STUDENT'S DECLARED MAJOR OR PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS. IF THE CREDITS EARNED BY A STUDENT CANNOT BE APPLIED TO THE STUDENT'S DECLARED MAJOR OR PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS, THE CREDITS MUST BE USED TO FULFILL ANY REMAINING GENERAL ELECTIVE COURSE REQUIREMENTS NEEDED FOR THE STUDENT'S MAJOR OR PROGRAM. IF A STUDENT CHANGES THE STUDENT'S MAJOR OR DECLARED PROGRAM OF STUDY, THE APPLICATION OF TRANSFER CREDITS TO THE STUDENT'S NEW MAJOR OR PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS MUST BE RE-EVALUATED. THIS REQUIREMENT APPLIES TO all higher education institutions upon transfer and ~~enrollment~~ ACCEPTANCE of the student. All higher education institutions ~~in Colorado~~ shall participate in the ~~course~~

~~numbering system~~ GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX. The commission shall adopt such policies and guidelines as ~~may be~~ necessary for the implementation of this section. Each INSTITUTION'S governing board shall modify its existing policies as ~~may be~~ necessary to accept the transfer of these credits.

(b) ALL COURSES IN THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX SYSTEM MUST QUALIFY AS THE SAME COURSE AT THE RECEIVING INSTITUTION, IRRESPECTIVE OF THE TOTAL CREDITS ASSIGNED TO THE COURSE.

(c) A RECEIVING INSTITUTION SHALL NOT REQUIRE A TRANSFER STUDENT TO TAKE THE SAME OR SIMILAR COURSES WHO HAS COMPLETED THE REQUIRED COURSE IN THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE STUDENT EARNED AN ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE PRIOR TO TRANSFER.

(6.5) (a) NOTWITHSTANDING SECTION 24-1-136 (11)(a)(I), BEGINNING JANUARY 2026, AND EVERY JANUARY THEREAFTER, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL INCLUDE AS PART OF ITS "SMART ACT" HEARING, REQUIRED BY SECTION 2-7-203, A COMPILED REPORT OF INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM EACH HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION REGARDING COURSES IN THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX THAT INCLUDES:

(I) THE NUMBER OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS TRANSFERRING TO THE INSTITUTION AND EACH INSTITUTION THAT A STUDENT IS TRANSFERRING FROM;

(II) THE AVERAGE TIME NEEDED TO COMPLETE A BACHELOR'S DEGREE FOR A TRANSFER STUDENT COMPARED TO A NON-TRANSFER STUDENT;

(III) THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CREDITS ACCEPTED AND APPLIED RELATED TO GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY COURSES, GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES, AND OTHER COURSE EQUIVALENTS; AND

(IV) THE NUMBER OF CREDITS THAT WERE ACCEPTED AND NOT ACCEPTED, AND THE NUMBER OF CREDITS THAT WERE APPLIED AND WERE NOT APPLIED TO EACH STUDENT'S DEGREE PROGRAM COURSE REQUIREMENTS, AT THE TIME THE STUDENT INITIALLY TRANSFERRED TO AND

ENROLLED IN THE INSTITUTION, DISAGGREGATED BY DEGREE PROGRAM.

(b) USING EXISTING STATEWIDE DATA, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ALSO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION FOR EACH INSTITUTION REGARDING THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF TRANSFER CREDITS EARNED AND THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF CREDITS APPLIED TOWARD DEGREE REQUIREMENTS IN THE REPORT REQUIRED IN SUBSECTION (6.5)(a) OF THIS SECTION:

(I) THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF CREDITS ATTEMPTED AND THE NUMBER OF CREDITS EARNED TO OBTAIN A BACHELOR'S DEGREE FOR A TRANSFER STUDENT COMPARED TO A STUDENT WHO DID NOT TRANSFER TO ANOTHER INSTITUTION BEFORE EARNING THE BACHELOR'S DEGREE; AND

(II) THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF ACADEMIC TERMS NEEDED TO COMPLETE A BACHELOR'S DEGREE FOR A TRANSFER STUDENT COMPARED TO A STUDENT WHO DID NOT TRANSFER TO ANOTHER INSTITUTION BEFORE EARNING THE BACHELOR'S DEGREE.

(8) (a) THE DEPARTMENT HAS EXCLUSIVE AUTHORITY TO BRING AN ENFORCEMENT ACTION ON BEHALF OF THE STATE AGAINST AN INSTITUTION FOR A VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION.

(b) PRIOR TO AN ENFORCEMENT ACTION PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (8)(a) OF THIS SECTION, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ISSUE A NOTICE OF VIOLATION TO THE INSTITUTION AND EXPLAIN HOW THE INSTITUTION MAY REMEDY THE VIOLATION, IF POSSIBLE. IF THE INSTITUTION FAILS TO REMEDY THE VIOLATION WITHIN THREE MONTHS AFTER RECEIPT OF THE NOTICE OF VIOLATION, THE DEPARTMENT MAY BRING AN ENFORCEMENT ACTION AGAINST THE INSTITUTION.

(c) THE DEPARTMENT HAS THE AUTHORITY TO OVERTURN A COURSE TRANSFER DECISION MADE BY AN INSTITUTION REGARDING A COURSE IN THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX THAT IS IN VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION.

(d) A STUDENT ENROLLED AT AN INSTITUTION MAY APPEAL AN INSTITUTION'S DECISION REGARDING THE DENIAL OF CREDIT FOR COURSES IN THE GUARANTEED TRANSFER PATHWAY MATRIX THAT THE STUDENT SEEKS TO TRANSFER THROUGH AN APPEALS PROCESS ESTABLISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT.



(e) THE DEPARTMENT MAY PROMULGATE RULES, PURSUANT TO SECTION 24-4-103, AS NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THIS SUBSECTION (8).

**SECTION 3.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 23-5-150 as follows:

**23-5-150. Transfer credit review process and nontransferable credit - notice - definition.** (1) AN INSTITUTION SHALL PROVIDE A STUDENT WITH A DETERMINATION REGARDING THE ACCEPTANCE OR DENIAL OF THE STUDENT'S REQUEST AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION FOR TRANSFER CREDIT WITHIN THIRTY DAYS AFTER THE STUDENT IS ADMITTED TO THE INSTITUTION.

(2) AN INSTITUTION SHALL PUBLISH THE INSTITUTION'S PROCESS AND TIMELINE FOR REVIEWING AND MAKING A DECISION REGARDING TRANSFER CREDIT REQUESTS ON THE INSTITUTION'S WEBSITE. THE INSTITUTION SHALL UPDATE ITS WEBSITE WITHIN THIRTY DAYS AFTER MAKING A CHANGE TO ITS PROCESS AND TIMELINE FOR REVIEWING AND ISSUING DECISIONS REGARDING TRANSFER CREDIT REQUESTS.

(3) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES, "INSTITUTION" MEANS A "PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION" AS DEFINED IN SECTION 23-4.5-102.

**SECTION 4.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-70-103, **amend** (3) as follows:

**23-70-103. Responsibility of governing boards of constituent institutions.** (3) The respective governing boards of the constituent institutions shall ~~provide~~ ENSURE that credits earned at each of the constituent institutions ~~shall be~~ ARE transferable between institutions ~~insofar as they meet the degree and grade requirements of the student's chosen program of studies at one of the constituent institutions as determined by the degree-granting institution~~ AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 23-1-108.5.

**SECTION 5. Safety clause.** The general assembly finds, determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety or for appropriations for

the support and maintenance of the departments of the state and state institutions.

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Steve Fenberg  
PRESIDENT OF  
THE SENATE

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Julie McCluskie  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES

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SECRETARY OF  
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Robin Jones  
CHIEF CLERK OF THE HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date and Time)

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Jared S. Polis  
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF COLORADO