

SENATE BILL NO. 285

BY SENATOR NEVERS AND REPRESENTATIVE HUTTER AND SENATORS ALARIO, AMEDEE, APPEL, BROOME, CHAISSON, CHEEK, CLAITOR, CROWE, DONAHUE, DORSEY, DUPLESSIS, ERDEY, B. GAUTREAU, GRAY EVANS, GUILLORY, HEBERT, JACKSON, KOSTELKA, LAFLEUR, LONG, MARIONNEAUX, MARTINY, MCPHERSON, MICHOT, MORRELL, MORRISH, MOUNT, MURRAY, QUINN, RISER, SHAW, SMITH, THOMPSON AND WALSWORTH AND REPRESENTATIVES ABRAMSON, ARMES, ARNOLD, AUBERT, BOBBY BADON, BALDONE, BARROW, BILLIOT, BROSSETT, HENRY BURNS, TIM BURNS, BURRELL, CARMODY, CARTER, CHANDLER, CHANEY, CONNICK, CROMER, DOERGE, EDWARDS, ELLINGTON, GISCLAIR, HARRISON, HAZEL, HILL, HINES, HOFFMANN, HOWARD, MICHAEL JACKSON, JOHNSON, ROSALIND JONES, KATZ, LAFONTA, LEGER, MILLS, MONTOUCET, PETERSON, POPE, PUGH, RICHARD, RICHARDSON, ROY, SCHRODER, SIMON, GARY SMITH, JANE SMITH, PATRICIA SMITH, THIBAUT, TUCKER, WADDELL AND WILLMOTT

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

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AN ACT

To enact Chapter 25-A of Title 17 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, to be comprised of R.S. 17:3161 through 3169, relative to educational institutions and programs; to provide for a comprehensive system of articulation and transfer of credit between and among public secondary and postsecondary educational institutions; to provide for the creation of a statewide articulation and transfer council and its membership, powers, and duties; to provide for a statewide articulation agreement; to provide for a common core curriculum; to provide relative to the length of degree programs; to provide for the transfer of specified courses and associate degrees; to provide relative to admission of transfer students to four-year colleges and universities; to provide for a statewide course numbering system; to provide relative to course levels and designations; to provide relative to accreditation of educational institutions; to provide for voluntary participation of certain independent colleges and universities; to provide relative to a comprehensive student information system; to provide for implementation timelines; to provide for reporting requirements; to provide for program rules; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. Chapter 25-A of Title 17 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950,

1 comprised of R.S. 17:3161 through 3169, is hereby enacted to read as follows:

2 **CHAPTER 25-A. ARTICULATION AND TRANSFER**

3 **§3161. Articulation and transfer of credit; secondary and postsecondary**
 4 **institutions**

5 **The postsecondary education management boards, the State Board of**
 6 **Elementary and Secondary Education, and city, parish, and other local school**
 7 **boards shall jointly develop and implement articulation and transfer programs**
 8 **and agreements that facilitate and maximize the seamless transfer of credits**
 9 **between and among public secondary and postsecondary educational**
 10 **institutions and that make the most efficient use of faculty, equipment, and**
 11 **facilities. Regionally accredited independent colleges and universities that are**
 12 **members of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities**
 13 **are encouraged to participate with public educational institutions in developing**
 14 **programs and agreements to expedite the transfer of students and credits**
 15 **between secondary and postsecondary educational institutions.**

16 **§3162. Statewide Articulation and Transfer Council; creation; purpose;**
 17 **membership; duties and responsibilities**

18 **A. The commissioner of higher education, in consultation with the**
 19 **postsecondary education management boards and the State Board of**
 20 **Elementary and Secondary Education, shall establish a Statewide Articulation**
 21 **and Transfer Council, hereinafter referred to as the "council," that shall report**
 22 **to the commissioner of higher education. All council recommendations and**
 23 **decisions shall be submitted to the commissioner of higher education for**
 24 **presentation to the Board of Regents for approval.**

25 **B. The council shall consist of members representing each four-year**
 26 **college and university system, the community and technical college system,**
 27 **public elementary and secondary education, and nonpublic education, provided**
 28 **any eligible nonpublic postsecondary educational institution elects to**
 29 **participate. Council membership shall provide for equitable representation of**
 30 **all educational institutions and levels. The commissioner of higher education**

1 shall appoint a chair from among the membership.

2 C. The council shall, with appropriate faculty consultation:

3 (1) Coordinate, oversee, and monitor the seamless articulation and
4 transfer of credit between and among secondary schools, technical colleges,
5 community colleges, and four-year colleges and universities.

6 (2) Monitor the development of interinstitutional agreements between
7 and among public schools, technical colleges, community colleges, and four-year
8 colleges and universities to facilitate interaction, articulation, acceleration, and
9 the efficient use of faculty, equipment, and facilities.

10 (3) Develop a statewide articulation and transfer agreement to govern
11 the transfer of credits between and among educational institutions at all levels.

12 (4) Oversee the development of a statewide core curriculum for lower-
13 division course work that will be fully accepted in its entirety and creditable to
14 the baccalaureate degree by all four-year colleges and universities. Such
15 curriculum shall be comprised of specified general education courses and
16 common degree program prerequisites.

17 (5) Oversee the development, implementation, and maintenance of a
18 statewide course numbering system.

19 (6) Establish committees or advisory groups composed of secondary and
20 postsecondary faculty members to determine course comparability, to facilitate
21 articulation in subject areas, and as otherwise deemed necessary to carry out
22 the council's duties and responsibilities.

23 (7) Approve common degree program prerequisites across program
24 areas and course and credit-by-exam equivalencies, and establish passing scores
25 and course and credit equivalencies for exams administered pursuant to
26 accelerated programs including, but not limited to, the Advanced Placement,
27 International Baccalaureate, and College-Level Examination Program.

28 (8) Develop policies to align articulation and transfer policies established
29 by educational institutions including, but not limited to, admissions criteria,
30 student guidance and counseling, and grade forgiveness.

1 **(9) Provide for end-of-course testing, if necessary and appropriate, for**
2 **any course the council has approved as eligible for transfer to a postsecondary**
3 **educational institution.**

4 **(10) Establish monitoring, compliance, and reporting systems based**
5 **upon uniform data collection and reporting methods to facilitate and ensure**
6 **statewide and institutional compliance with statewide articulation and transfer**
7 **policies. Data collected shall include:**

8 **(a) The number of students enrolled in associate degree transfer**
9 **programs.**

10 **(b) Each student's rate of progress through transfer programs.**

11 **(c) The number and percentage of students who complete associate**
12 **degree transfer programs.**

13 **(d) The number of students earning associate degrees that transfer to**
14 **four-year colleges and universities.**

15 **(e) The number of credits earned, degrees awarded, and time to**
16 **completion of degree for students who have previously transferred associate**
17 **degrees.**

18 **(11) Establish an appeals process to resolve disagreements between**
19 **transferring students and receiving educational institutions regarding the**
20 **transfer and acceptance of credits earned at another institution.**

21 **(12) Ensure that all articulation and transfer policies and practices**
22 **approved by the council are compliant with the rules and regulations**
23 **established by all appropriate institutional accrediting agencies as recognized**
24 **by the United States Department of Education.**

25 **(13) Periodically, but at least annually, review articulation and transfer**
26 **policies and make recommendations to the commissioner of higher education**
27 **who shall then make recommendations to the legislature for needed revisions.**

28 **(14) Perform such other duties as may be provided by law or the**
29 **commissioner of higher education.**

30 **§3163. Statewide Articulation and Transfer Agreement**

1 A. The Board of Regents and the State Board of Elementary and
2 Secondary Education shall enter into a statewide articulation agreement that
3 shall govern the articulation and transfer of credit between and among the
4 state's public secondary and postsecondary educational institutions.

5 B. The statewide articulation agreement shall, at a minimum:

6 (1) Guarantee the transfer of general education courses and common
7 degree program prerequisites.

8 (2) Guarantee that every graduate of a community college awarded an
9 associate of arts or an associate of science degree approved by the council for
10 transfer to a four-year postsecondary educational institution shall be deemed
11 to have met all general education and other core curriculum requirements and
12 must be granted admission to the upper division of any state public four-year
13 college or university, in accordance with each institution's general transfer
14 admission requirements, except to a limited access program or a program that
15 has audition or other specialized admission requirements, as approved by the
16 Board of Regents.

17 (3) Provide that graduates awarded an associate of arts or an associate
18 of science degree approved by the council for transfer and who transfer to a
19 four-year college or university shall not be required to take any additional
20 general education courses to fulfill baccalaureate degree requirements.

21 (4) Provide that graduates awarded an associate of arts or an associate
22 of science degree approved by the council for transfer shall receive priority for
23 admission to a state four-year college or university over out-of-state students.

24 (5) Guarantee the statewide articulation of appropriate career and
25 technical education programs and workforce development programs and
26 transfer of course credits between secondary schools and technical and
27 community colleges.

28 (6) Provide for acceptance by postsecondary educational institutions of
29 credits earned in accelerated programs such as dual enrollment and the
30 Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and College-Level

1 Examination programs.

2 (7) Guarantee the transfer of equivalent courses under the statewide
3 course numbering system.

4 (8) Establish a common college transcript.

5 §3164. Common Course Numbering System

6 A.(1) In accordance with council policy, the Board of Regents shall
7 develop, coordinate, and maintain a statewide course numbering system for
8 postsecondary and dual enrollment education in all public secondary and
9 postsecondary educational institutions as a means to facilitate program
10 planning and the transfer of students and course credits between and among
11 secondary and postsecondary educational institutions.

12 (2)(a) The development and ongoing maintenance of the statewide
13 course numbering system, including determining course equivalencies, shall be
14 accomplished with the assistance of appropriate committees that shall include
15 faculty members representing public and participating nonpublic educational
16 institutions.

17 (b) The development and implementation of the statewide course
18 numbering system shall be prioritized as follows:

19 (i) All courses required for completion of associate of arts and associate
20 of science degree programs approved by the council for transfer to four-year
21 educational institutions. Common course numbers shall first be developed and
22 assigned to the required general education courses, and then for the specified
23 common course prerequisites.

24 (ii) All lower division courses.

25 (iii) All undergraduate courses.

26 B. (1)(a) The commissioner of higher education, in collaboration with
27 the higher education management boards, shall appoint faculty committees
28 representing all participating institutions to recommend the appropriate level
29 for each course, including postsecondary career and technical education
30 courses, included in the statewide course numbering system.

1 **(b) A course designated as an upper-division level course shall be**
2 **characterized by a need for advanced academic preparation and skills that a**
3 **student is unlikely to achieve without significant prior coursework.**

4 **(c) A course that is designated as a lower-division level course may be**
5 **offered by any duly accredited community college.**

6 **(2) The Board of Regents shall approve the course level designations for**
7 **all courses included in the statewide numbering system.**

8 **(3) The statewide course numbering system shall include the courses at**
9 **the approved levels.**

10 **C.(1) Courses that have the same academic content and are taught by**
11 **faculty with comparable credentials shall be considered equivalent courses and**
12 **shall be given the same course designation.**

13 **(2) Equivalent courses shall be guaranteed to transfer to any educational**
14 **institution participating in the statewide course numbering system.**

15 **D.(1) The Board of Regents shall provide that credits to be accepted by**
16 **a receiving institution are appropriately evaluated to ensure that the faculty**
17 **possess credentials that are comparable to those required by the accrediting**
18 **body of the receiving institution.**

19 **(2) The award of credit by receiving institutions may be limited to**
20 **courses that are entered in the statewide course numbering system.**

21 **E. The course catalog and registration process for each postsecondary**
22 **education institution shall include the courses at their designated levels and**
23 **statewide course number.**

24 **F.(1) Every public and nonpublic educational institution that participates**
25 **in the statewide course numbering system shall be fully accredited by the**
26 **appropriate education accrediting body.**

27 **(2) Each educational institution that awards associate of arts or associate**
28 **of science degrees approved by the council for transfer to a four-year**
29 **postsecondary educational institution and each four-year postsecondary**
30 **educational institution that admits graduates of such associate degree programs**

1 shall be appropriately accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and
2 Schools - Commission on Colleges.

3 G. Regionally accredited independent colleges and universities that are
4 members of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
5 are encouraged to participate in the statewide course numbering system.

6 §3165. Common core curriculum; general education courses; common
7 prerequisites; other degree requirements

8 A. The Board of Regents, in collaboration with the postsecondary
9 education management boards and institutions, shall:

10 (1) Identify the degree programs offered by public colleges and
11 universities and the postsecondary career and technical education programs
12 offered by community colleges, technical colleges, and city, parish, and other
13 local school boards.

14 (2) Identify those courses that meet general education requirements
15 within each major area of study, which shall be identified by their statewide
16 course number. All public postsecondary educational institutions shall accept
17 such general education courses.

18 (3) Identify all courses offered by colleges and universities and accepted
19 for credit toward a degree and appropriately identify them in the statewide
20 numbering system as either general education or required as a prerequisite for
21 a degree.

22 (4)(a) Identify common degree program prerequisite courses and course
23 substitutions for degree programs across all postsecondary education
24 institutions. Common degree program prerequisites shall be offered and
25 accepted by all postsecondary institutions, except in cases approved by the
26 Board of Regents.

27 (b) Develop a centralized database containing the list of courses and
28 course substitutions that meet the prerequisite requirements for each
29 postsecondary certificate, industry-based certification, and associate and
30 baccalaureate degree program.

1 **B. The postsecondary education management boards shall identify their**
2 **core curricula. The public technical colleges, community colleges, and four-year**
3 **colleges and universities shall work with the State Board of Elementary and**
4 **Secondary Education and public schools and school districts to assure that high**
5 **school curricula coordinate with the core curricula and to prepare students for**
6 **postsecondary study.**

7 **C. The core curricula for associate in arts and associate in science**
8 **degree programs approved by the council for transfer to four-year**
9 **postsecondary educational institutions shall be approved and adopted by the**
10 **Board of Regents.**

11 **D.(1) The Board of Regents shall monitor and regulate the number of**
12 **credits required to complete each baccalaureate degree program and shall**
13 **establish a standard number of credits required to complete associate degree**
14 **programs approved by the council for transfer to a four-year postsecondary**
15 **educational institution.**

16 **(2) A baccalaureate degree program shall not require more than the**
17 **number of credits established by the board for degree completion without**
18 **approval from the board.**

19 **(3) An associate in arts and an associate in science degree shall require**
20 **no more than sixty semester hours of college credit, including thirty-nine hours**
21 **of general education coursework and twenty-one hours of coursework that**
22 **constitute prerequisites for a baccalaureate degree.**

23 **E. The commissioner of higher education shall appoint faculty**
24 **committees representing community and technical colleges and public high**
25 **school faculties to recommend criteria, including a standard program length,**
26 **for each postsecondary career certificate program, diploma, and degree offered**
27 **by a technical college or a community college.**

28 **§3166. Student guidance and counseling**

29 **A. The Board of Regents shall develop and maintain a comprehensive,**
30 **web-based system to provide information to students, advisers, and faculty**

1 regarding statewide articulation and transfer policies and requirements. This
 2 system shall include information relative to:

3 (1) The Statewide Articulation and Transfer Council.

4 (2) The statewide articulation agreement.

5 (3) The statewide course numbering system.

6 (4) Articulation policies and rules.

7 (5) General education courses and common degree program
 8 prerequisites.

9 (6) Course and degree requirements for all fields of study.

10 (7) Planning and advising resources.

11 B. Each educational institution shall designate an existing staff or
 12 faculty member to serve as a transfer counselor to advise students and
 13 administer articulation and transfer functions and operations.

14 §3167. Implementation and funding

15 A. The Board of Regents shall appoint the members of the Statewide
 16 Articulation and Transfer Council not later than August 1, 2009.

17 B. The Statewide Articulation and Transfer Council shall hold an
 18 organizational meeting not later than September 1, 2009.

19 C. The statewide articulation agreement shall be developed and adopted
 20 not later than March 1, 2010.

21 D. All public postsecondary educational institutions shall be prepared
 22 to and shall implement the full articulation and transfer of associate of arts and
 23 associate of science degrees approved by the council for transfer to a four-year
 24 postsecondary educational institution by the beginning of the 2010-2011
 25 academic year.

26 E.(1) The highest priority implementation category for the statewide
 27 course numbering system, relative to the transfer of approved associate degrees,
 28 shall be completed not later than the beginning of the 2010-2011 academic year.

29 (2) All remaining lower division and undergraduate courses shall then
 30 be evaluated and incorporated into the system as provided in this Chapter and

1 the statewide course numbering system shall be completed and fully
2 implemented not later than the end of the 2011-2012 academic year.

3 F. The Board of Regents shall ensure that sufficient funding is made
4 available to implement the provisions of this Chapter and may utilize state
5 appropriations, federal funds, funds made available through other sources, or
6 funds realized through realignment of other programs administered by the
7 board.

8 **§3168. Reporting**

9 Beginning in 2010, the Board of Regents shall submit a written report to
10 the Senate and House Committees on Education, not later than January thirty-
11 first and July thirty-first of each year, on the status of statewide articulation
12 and transfer of credit across all educational institutions in Louisiana as
13 provided in this Chapter.

14 **§3169. Rules**

15 The Board of Regents shall adopt such rules and regulations as are
16 deemed necessary to implement the provisions of this Chapter in accordance
17 with the Administrative Procedure Act.

18 Section 2. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not
19 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature
20 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If
21 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become
22 effective on the day following such approval.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: _____