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AN ACT

RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION ARTICULATION; REQUIRING A COMMON COURSE NAME AND NUMBERING SYSTEM FOR LOWER-DIVISION COURSES IN PUBLIC POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS; REQUIRING ACCEPTANCE OF TRANSFER MODULES; REQUIRING INSTITUTIONS TO REIMBURSE STUDENTS FOR COSTS OF COURSES NOT ACCEPTED FOR TRANSFER; REQUIRING REPORTS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

Section 1. Section 21-1B-1 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1995, Chapter 224, Section 1) is amended to read:

"21-1B-1. SHORT TITLE.--Chapter 21, Article 1B NMSA 1978 may be cited as the "Post-Secondary Education Articulation Act"."

Section 2. Section 21-1B-2 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1995, Chapter 224, Section 2) is amended to read:

"21-1B-2. DEFINITIONS.--As used in the Post-Secondary Education Articulation Act:

A. "articulation" means the transfer of course credit from one institution to another;

B. "commission" means the commission on higher education;

C. "discipline module" means lower-division courses, including the general education core, that meet the lower-division college-level requirements for a specific

1 degree;

2 D. "general education core" means the grouping of  
3 lower division general education courses of at least  
4 thirty-five hours that are established by the commission for  
5 transfer and that are accepted by all institutions for  
6 transfer purposes;

7 E. "institution" means an accredited, public  
8 post-secondary educational institution operating in the  
9 state; and

10 F. "module" or "transfer module" means a  
11 standardized list of courses established by the commission  
12 for which credit is accepted for transfer from one  
13 institution to another."

14 Section 3. Section 21-1B-3 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1995,  
15 Chapter 224, Section 3) is amended to read:

16 "21-1B-3. ARTICULATION PLAN--DEVELOPMENT--  
17 IMPLEMENTATION--ESTABLISHMENT OF TRANSFER MODULE.--

18 A. The commission shall establish and maintain a  
19 comprehensive statewide plan to provide for the articulation  
20 of educational programs and facilitate the transfer of  
21 students between institutions.

22 B. In establishing a statewide articulation plan,  
23 the commission shall:

24 (1) establish a common course naming and  
25 numbering system for courses identified as substantially

1 equivalent lower-division courses; provided that the  
2 commission shall establish an interim mechanism of a  
3 statewide equivalency table that uses a universal taxonomy to  
4 identify substantially equivalent courses until the common  
5 system is in place;

6 (2) establish a process to identify courses  
7 as substantially equivalent. The process shall:

8 (a) include a procedure for each course  
9 whereby faculty members from each segment teaching the  
10 academic discipline will reach mutual agreement on the  
11 material to be taught and the competencies to be gained;

12 (b) ensure that the content of each  
13 course is comparable across institutions offering that  
14 course;

15 (c) ensure that substantially all the  
16 content agreed to among the institutions as the content to be  
17 covered by a course is in fact covered in that course and  
18 that students successfully completing the course will achieve  
19 like competencies with respect to the content covered; and

20 (d) ensure that the content  
21 requirements for each course will be sufficient to prepare  
22 students for upper division course work in that field; and

23 (3) define, publish and maintain modules of  
24 lower-division courses accepted for transfer at all  
25 institutions and meeting requirements for lower-division

1 requirements established for associate and baccalaureate  
2 degree-granting programs.

3 C. The commission shall ensure that institutions  
4 develop transfer modules that include approximately  
5 sixty-four hours of lower-division college-level credit.

6 D. Transfer modules shall include a common general  
7 education core component of not less than thirty-five  
8 semester hours. This general education core shall include a  
9 comprehensive array of lower-division college-level courses  
10 designed to demonstrate skills in communication, mathematics,  
11 science, social and behavioral science, humanities, fine arts  
12 or comparable areas of study coordinated for the purpose of  
13 providing a foundation for a liberal education for all  
14 programs normally leading to a baccalaureate degree. The  
15 general education core shall transfer as a block and count as  
16 required lower-division coursework toward a degree, and any  
17 course in the core shall be transferable and shall count as  
18 credit hours toward fulfilling an institution's general  
19 education core requirements.

20 E. Any course in the general education core may be  
21 offered for dual credit to secondary school students and,  
22 upon successful completion, the course shall be transferable  
23 to any institution and shall count as fulfilling a required  
24 lower-division course.

25 F. A discipline module shall consist of an

1 agreed-upon number of hours and courses, including the  
2 general education core, of approximately sixty-four hours  
3 applicable to the discipline and any course within the  
4 discipline module is transferable and shall count toward  
5 fulfilling degree requirements at a four-year institution."

6 Section 4. Section 21-1B-4 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1995,  
7 Chapter 224, Section 4) is amended to read:

8 "21-1B-4. USE OF TRANSFER MODULE--TRANSFER OF  
9 CREDITS.--

10 A. Each institution shall accept for transfer  
11 course credits earned by a student at any other institution  
12 that are included in a transfer module. Transfer credits  
13 shall be accepted to meet lower-division graduation  
14 requirements of an institution's degree-granting programs.  
15 This provision also applies to any course that is part of a  
16 transfer module.

17 B. An institution shall not increase requirements  
18 for degree-granting programs as a result of the use of a  
19 transfer module or acceptance of a course that is part of a  
20 transfer module. An institution may specify additional  
21 lower-division or upper-division requirements not included in  
22 a discipline module for one or more programs of study,  
23 provided that those requirements apply equally to transfer  
24 students and students originating their study at the  
25 institution.

1           C. Each institution shall accept completed  
2 transfer modules in total as a block and shall count the  
3 modules, whether they are the general education core or a  
4 specific discipline module, as fulfilling required  
5 lower-division coursework. Upon transfer of a completed  
6 discipline module, a student shall be granted admission to  
7 the upper-division program, except in limited access  
8 programs."

9           Section 5. Section 21-1B-5 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1995,  
10 Chapter 224, Section 5) is amended to read:

11           "21-1B-5. OVERSIGHT OF ARTICULATION PROGRAMS--COMPLAINT  
12 PROCEDURES.--

13           A. The commission shall establish and maintain a  
14 process to monitor and improve articulation through frequent  
15 and systematic consultation with institutions. Institutions  
16 shall monitor the progress of each transfer student and  
17 provide appropriate information to the student's originating  
18 institution.

19           B. The commission shall establish a complaint  
20 procedure for transfer students who fail to receive credit  
21 for courses contained in a transfer module taken at another  
22 institution. The commission may set standards for  
23 determining bona fide complaints, including a requirement  
24 that students follow institutions' internal procedures for  
25 resolving complaints prior to submitting them to the

1 commission. The commission shall investigate all  
2 articulation complaints and render decisions as to the  
3 appropriateness of the actions of the participants.

4 C. Prior to December 31 of each year, the  
5 commission shall summarize all articulation complaints filed  
6 with the commission and the decisions of the commission with  
7 regard to those complaints. For those complaints for which  
8 the commission finds merit, the commission shall calculate  
9 the number of credits refused at the receiving institution  
10 and recommend a corresponding reduction of legislative  
11 funding to the next session of the legislature.

12 D. When a module becomes effective as provided in  
13 Subsection F of Section 21-1B-6 NMSA 1978, if a student's  
14 articulation complaint regarding courses contained in a  
15 module is upheld, the receiving institution shall reimburse  
16 the student the complete cost, including tuition, books and  
17 fees, of each course the student was required to repeat at  
18 the receiving institution."

19 Section 6. A new section of the Post-Secondary  
20 Education Articulation Act is enacted to read:

21 "ARTICULATION COMPLAINT PROCESS--NOTIFICATION.--The  
22 receiving institution shall publish in the student handbook  
23 or otherwise notify transfer students of the complaint  
24 process to be followed in the event that a transfer module  
25 course is not accepted for credit. The notification shall

1 include the remedy available to the student if the complaint  
2 is upheld."

3 Section 7. Section 21-1B-6 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1995,  
4 Chapter 224, Section 6) is amended to read:

5 "21-1B-6. REPORTING.--

6 A. Prior to December 31 of each year, the  
7 commission shall report to the legislative finance committee,  
8 the legislative education study committee and the governor  
9 regarding the status of articulation programs and the  
10 transfer of students between institutions.

11 B. The report developed by the commission shall  
12 include an analysis of the number of students transferring  
13 between campuses, the number of credits being requested and  
14 accepted for transfer, institutions denying transfer of  
15 credits and reasons for denial, the progress of transfer  
16 students at receiving institutions, the average number of  
17 credit hours earned by graduating transfer students compared  
18 to the average number of credit hours earned by graduates who  
19 originated at the institution and a summary of student  
20 complaints regarding articulation. The report shall include  
21 data and other information obtained on both a statewide and  
22 individual institution basis.

23 C. The report shall look at outcomes with regard  
24 to such factors as transfer rates, persistence rates after  
25 transfer and graduation rates.

