

Bill Aimed At Equalizing The Value Of Credits Earned At Community Colleges And Universities Unanimously Passes Senate

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SPRINGFIELD - A bill that would equalize the value of major course credits at all Illinois higher education institutions reducing the time and money students spend towards earning a degree has unanimously passed out of the Illinois Senate.

SB2288 strengthens the Illinois Articulation Initiative (IAI) Act (110 ILCS 152) by requiring public colleges and universities to accept all major courses approved for transfer through IAI as equivalent major courses, as long as a specific major is offered at the receiving institution.

Under current law, 4-year institutions can accept IAI major courses as either direct course equivalents or as elective credits. As a result, some students transferring to a public university must repeat courses already completed at a community college level in order to complete a degree at the university level.

“Students that earn major coursework credit at a community college should not have to spend more precious time and money to re-earn the same credit at a four-year university. This legislation will reduce the burden on our students and accelerate the time it takes them to earn a degree and start a meaningful career,” said bill sponsor Sen. Cristina Castro (D-Elgin).

The bill is part of the Illinois Community College Board’s (ICCB) larger initiative to increase access to educational opportunities and strengthen Illinois’ growing workforce.

“The two biggest hurdles for students today are time and money. If we find ways to reduce that burden and equalize the value for the hard work they put in, we are putting them in a better position for long-term success,” said ICCB executive director Brian Durham.

The proposed legislation also creates a new IAI panel for education that will provide an accelerated path toward a degree in education.

“The creation of an education panel, in concert with the mandated transfer of major coursework is a step forward in addressing the statewide teacher shortage. The panel will help create pathways and course sequences developed specifically for students who start their post-secondary education at a community college and seek to transfer and complete an education degree at a public university,” said Terry Wilkerson, current Chairman of the Illinois Council of Community College Presidents and President of Rend Lake Community College.

The bill now moves to the Illinois House of Representatives for approval.

About the Illinois Community College Board

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is the state coordinating organization for the Illinois Community College System - the third largest in the country and the leading public workforce development trainer in the state. The ICCB has statutory responsibility

for administering state and federal grants to community college districts and adult education providers and managing high school equivalency testing for Illinois. Illinois community colleges serve over 600,000 residents each year in credit, noncredit, and continuing education courses. Illinois is home to 48 colleges in 39 community college districts, providing high-quality, accessible, cost-effective educational opportunities to the entire state.