

# HOUSE . . . . . No. 1175

By Mr. Donelan of Orange, petition of Christopher J. Donelan relative to the transfer of course credits at public institutions of higher education. Higher Education.

## The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Seven.

### AN ACT RELATIVE TO TRANSFER OF COURSE CREDITS AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 15A of the General Laws is hereby  
2 amended by adding the following section:

3 Section 42. As used in this section the following words shall,  
4 unless the context clearly requires otherwise, have the following  
5 meanings:—

6 “Career, technical or applied courses”, courses usually offered  
7 as part of an associate degree curriculum designed to prepare stu-  
8 dents for entry level professions not for transfer to baccalaureate  
9 programs for advanced studies.

10 “Degree objective courses”, courses required for completion of  
11 a major in a subject area.

12 “Developmental or remedial courses”, courses typically con-  
13 sisting of reading, writing and math designed to prepare students  
14 for college-level courses and that are not transferable.

15 “Equivalent courses”, courses determined to have generally  
16 equivalent content and level as determined by the administration  
17 or faculty of an institution of higher education consistent with the  
18 policy at each institution.

19 “Foundation courses”, courses required to be completed by stu-  
20 dents that provide an academic foundation for the degree, general  
21 education or advanced study in a major.

22 “Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee”, the com-  
23 mittee established under this section.

- 24 (a) Each public institution of higher education shall:
- 25 (1) Participate in the development and implementation of
- 26 equivalency standards and equivalent courses under this section.
- 27 (2) Establish and maintain records and data detailing the credits
- 28 transferred to and received from other public institutions of higher
- 29 education as the board, in the case of the state and community col-
- 30 leges, or the board of trustees of the university of Massachusetts,
- 31 in the case of the university of Massachusetts, may prescribe.
- 32 (3) Make any reasonable changes and modifications to its foun-
- 33 dation courses, including the strengthening of the courses, to
- 34 ensure equivalency of those credits among the public institutions
- 35 of higher education, as recommended by the Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee.
- 36
- 37 (4) Agree to accept for transfer foundation courses determined
- 38 to meet equivalency standards under this section.
- 39 (b) A public institution of higher education shall submit to the
- 40 board a series of interim reports outlining the actions that the
- 41 public institution of higher education has undertaken or intends to
- 42 undertake to comply with this section.
- 43 (c) Each public institution of higher education shall provide the
- 44 Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee with copies of all
- 45 articulation agreements for inclusion in the electronic database or
- 46 software program and portal provided for under this section.
- 47 (d) The following shall apply to reporting requirements:
- 48 (1) Each public institution of higher education shall submit to
- 49 the board a series of interim reports that describe the status of the
- 50 institution's articulation agreements, which shall include all of the
- 51 following:
- 52 (i) The number of students who have transferred to the public
- 53 institution of higher education within the last academic year or
- 54 since submittal of the institution's last interim report required
- 55 under this section.
- 56 (ii) The total number of credits completed by transfer students
- 57 at the institution of origin.
- 58 (iii) The total number of credits from each institution of origin
- 59 that transferred to the public institution of higher education for
- 60 each academic year.

61 (iv) An explanation of the credit transfer process at the institu-  
62 tion.

63 (v) Any other information related to the credit transfer process  
64 as requested by the board including the usability of transfer  
65 credits.

66 (e) There shall be a Transfer and Articulation Oversight Com-  
67 mittee for the purpose of developing and implementing equiva-  
68 lency standards and determining equivalent courses as provided  
69 for in this section. The committee shall consist of the following  
70 members: the chancellor of the system of public higher education,  
71 the president of the university of Massachusetts, or their respec-  
72 tive designees, who shall serve as co-chairs of the committee; the  
73 presidents of each state college, or their designees; the presidents  
74 of each community college, or their designees; a faculty member  
75 from each campus of the university of Massachusetts appointed by  
76 and serving at the pleasure of the Massachusetts Teachers Associ-  
77 ation, in conjunction with the Massachusetts Federation of  
78 Teachers; a faculty member from each state college appointed by  
79 and serving at the pleasure of the Massachusetts Teachers Associ-  
80 ation; and a faculty member from each community college  
81 appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the Massachusetts  
82 Teachers Association.

83 The co-chairs of the Transfer and Articulation Oversight Com-  
84 mittee shall appoint a dispute resolution subcommittee to develop  
85 dispute resolution policies and procedures to be utilized when dis-  
86 putes arise relating to the transfer and application of credits under  
87 this section.

88 The Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee shall:

89 (1) Develop, and may from time to time revise, equivalency  
90 standards for foundation courses, in consultation with faculty and  
91 personnel. Any such standards shall be submitted to the board, the  
92 board of trustees of the university of Massachusetts, the boards of  
93 trustees of the state and community colleges, and the joint com-  
94 mittee on higher education.

95 (2) Determine, and may from time to time revise, equivalent  
96 courses for at least 30 hours of foundation courses, not including  
97 developmental or remedial courses or career, technical or applied  
98 courses, in consultation with faculty and personnel.

99 (3) Develop and implement an assessment/evaluation plan and  
100 identify appropriate information and collect appropriate data to  
101 ensure the effectiveness of this section and make necessary revi-  
102 sions thereto over time.

103 (4) Review interim reports submitted to the board and, within  
104 90 days of receipt of each report, recommend to the board, the  
105 boards of trustees of the state and community colleges, or the  
106 board of trustees of the university of Massachusetts actions to be  
107 taken by the respective boards to enable the transfer of credits  
108 among public institutions of higher education.

109 (5) Submit an annual report to the General Court through the  
110 joint committee on higher education that details the progress made  
111 by the public institutions of higher education in furtherance of  
112 enabling the transfer of credits between such institutions and  
113 which recommends any further action to be taken.

114 (6) The committee may request information and data from the  
115 public institutions of higher education so as to identify foundation  
116 courses offered at the institutions and any articulation agreements  
117 currently established between the institutions that include founda-  
118 tion courses.

119 (f) The board shall provide for an electronic database or soft-  
120 ware program and portal for the purpose of providing access to  
121 the following information on an Internet website:

122 (i) User friendly listings of courses for which credits are trans-  
123 ferable.

124 (ii) Articulation agreements entered into by public institutions  
125 of higher education.

126 (iii) Such reports required by this section and other information  
127 as the Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee deems  
128 relevant.

1 SECTION 2. Actions required under subsection (a) of section 1  
2 of this act shall be completed by June 30, 2009. Interim reports  
3 required under subsection (b) of section 1 of this act shall be filed  
4 on December 31, 2007, June 30, 2008, and December 31, 2008,  
5 respectively. Articulation agreements required under subsection  
6 (c) of section 1 of this act shall be filed within 180 days of the  
7 effective date of this act. Initial interim reports required under

8 subsection (d) of section 1 of this act shall be filed with 180 days  
9 of the effective date of this act. Equivalency standards required  
10 under subsection (e) (1) of section 1 of this act shall be filed  
11 within 1 year of the effective date of this act. Equivalent courses  
12 required under subsection (e) (2) of section 1 of this act shall be  
13 established within 18 months of the effective date of this act.