A BILL

To amend sections 3333.16 and 3345.81 and to enact sections 3345.351 and 3345.481 of the Revised Code with regard to student degree completion at state institutions of higher education.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. That sections 3333.16 and 3345.81 be amended and sections 3345.351 and 3345.481 of the Revised Code be enacted to read as follows:

Sec. 3333.16. (A) As used in this section—"state":

(1) "State institution of higher education" means an institution of higher education as defined in section 3345.12 of the Revised Code.

(2) "State university" has the same meaning as in section 3345.011 of the Revised Code.

(A) (B) The chancellor of higher education shall do all of the following:

(1) Establish policies and procedures applicable to all
state institutions of higher education that ensure that students can begin higher education at any state institution of higher education and transfer coursework and degrees to any other state institution of higher education without unnecessary duplication or institutional barriers. The purpose of this requirement is to allow students to attain their highest educational aspirations in the most efficient and effective manner for the students and the state. These policies and procedures shall require state institutions of higher education to make changes or modifications, as needed, to strengthen course content so as to ensure equivalency for that course at any state institution of higher education.

(2) Develop and implement a universal course equivalency classification system for state institutions of higher education so that the transfer of students and the transfer and articulation of equivalent courses or specified learning modules or units completed by students are not inhibited by inconsistent judgment about the application of transfer credits. Coursework completed within such a system at one state institution of higher education and transferred to another institution shall be applied to the student's degree objective in the same manner as equivalent coursework completed at the receiving institution.

(3) Develop an electronic equivalency management tool to assist in the transfer of coursework and degrees between state institutions of higher education without unnecessary duplication or institutional barriers, to help minimize inconsistent judgment about the application of transfer credits, and to assist in allowing transfer credits to be applied to a student's degree objective in the same manner at each state institution of higher education. The electronic equivalency management tool shall include the universal documentation of course and program...
equivalencies statewide. Additionally, the electronic equivalency management tool shall be incorporated into a web site.

(4) Develop a system of transfer policies that ensure that graduates with associate degrees which include completion of approved transfer modules shall be admitted to a state institution of higher education, shall be able to compete for admission to specific programs on the same basis as students native to the institution, and shall have priority over out-of-state associate degree graduates and transfer students. To assist a student in advising and transferring, all state institutions of higher education shall fully implement the information system for advising and transferring selected by, contracted for, or developed by the chancellor.

(4)–(5) Examine the feasibility of developing a transfer marketing agenda that includes materials and interactive technology to inform the citizens of Ohio about the availability of transfer options at state institutions of higher education and to encourage adults to return to colleges and universities for additional education;

(5)–(6) Study, in consultation with the state board of career colleges and schools, and in light of existing criteria and any other criteria developed by the articulation and transfer advisory council, the feasibility of credit recognition and transferability to state institutions of higher education for graduates who have received associate degrees from a career college or school with a certificate of registration from the state board of career colleges and schools under Chapter 3332 of the Revised Code.

(B)–(C) All provisions of the existing articulation and
transfer policy developed by the chancellor shall remain in effect except where amended by this section.

(C) Not later than December 1, 2018, the chancellor shall update and implement the policies and procedures established pursuant to this section to ensure that any associate degree offered at a state institution of higher education may be transferred and applied to a bachelor degree program in an equivalent field at any other state institution of higher education without unnecessary duplication or institutional barriers. The policies and procedures shall ensure that each transferred associate degree applies to the student's degree objective in the same manner as equivalent coursework completed by the student at the receiving institution.

When updating and implementing the policies and procedures pursuant to this division, the chancellor shall seek input from faculty and academic leaders in each academic field or discipline.

(E) If a state university refuses to accept and grant credit for any general education coursework that is both completed at a different state institution of higher education and subject to the policies, procedures, or systems prescribed under division (B) of this section, the state university shall do both of the following:

(1) Report the state university's refusal to accept and grant credit to the chancellor;

(2) Provide the student that did not receive college credit for the completed general education coursework with the contact information of the department of higher education.

(F) The transfer practices advisory committee established
by the chancellor shall conduct a study of current rules regarding the transfer of college credit between state institutions of higher education. Not later than one year after the effective date of this amendment, the transfer practices advisory committee shall issue a report to the general assembly, in accordance with section 101.68 of the Revised Code, that includes the findings of the committee's study, as well as any recommendations regarding changes to the rules.

Sec. 3345.351. (A) As used in this section, "state university" has the same meaning as in section 3345.011 of the Revised Code.

(B) Beginning two years after the effective date of this section, and every two years thereafter, each state university shall review the university's student records to identify any student to whom all of the following apply:

(1) The student disenrolled from the state university within the five years immediately prior to the first review under this section. For each subsequent review under this section, the student disenrolled within two years immediately prior to that review.

(2) The student has been disenrolled for four or more semesters, including summer sessions.

(3) The student did not complete a bachelor's degree.

(4) The student has a grade point average of 2.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale.

(5) The student completed at least forty-five credit hours.

(C) Each state university shall determine if each student
identified in the review is eligible or close to being eligible for an associate degree from that university. If a student identified in the review is determined to be eligible or close to being eligible for an associate degree, the state university shall inform the student of such potential eligibility using the most recent contact information the university has on file.

(D) Each state university shall report the findings of each review conducted under this section to the chancellor of higher education.

(E) The chancellor shall adopt rules as necessary to implement this section.

Sec. 3345.481. (A) As used in this section:

(1) "Eligible student" means an undergraduate student enrolled in a bachelor's degree program at a state institution of higher education.

(2) "Final year" means the last academic year of full-time study that a bachelor's degree program is typically designed to require, as determined by the chancellor of higher education.

(3) "State institution of higher education" has the same meaning as in section 3345.011 of the Revised Code.

(B) The board of trustees of a state institution of higher education shall waive an eligible student's general and instructional fees for a course necessary to complete the student's bachelor's degree program if all of the following apply:

(1) The necessary course is not a general elective.

(2) The eligible student was enrolled full time, as defined by the chancellor, in the student's final year.
(3) The eligible student was unable to register for the necessary course in the student's final year because of either of the following:

(a) The course was not offered by the state institution of higher education in the eligible student's final year.

(b) Circumstances beyond the eligible student's control made registration for the necessary course unfeasible, as determined by the chancellor.

(4) The eligible student successfully paid all general and instructional fees and did not receive a refund for the courses for which the student registered in the student's final year at the start of that year.

(5) The eligible student successfully registers for the necessary course in the next academic year in which the course is offered.

(6) The eligible student did not enroll in the maximum amount of credit hours in the student's final year, as determined by the state institution of higher education.

(C) Qualifying for a waiver of fees under division (B) of this section shall not grant an eligible student guaranteed or priority registration for the necessary course described in that division.

(D) The chancellor shall establish rules to implement this section.

Sec. 3345.81. Not later than June 30, 2014, the (A) As used in this section, "institution of higher education" has the same meaning as in section 3345.12 of the Revised Code.

(B) The board of trustees of each institution of higher
education, as defined by section 3345.12 of the Revised Code, shall adopt an institution-specific strategic completion plan designed to increase the number of degrees and certificates awarded to students. The plan shall be consistent with the mission and strategic priorities of the institution, include measurable student completion goals, and align with the state's workforce development priorities. Upon adoption by the board of trustees, each institution of higher education shall provide a copy of its plan to the chancellor of higher education.

(C) The board of trustees of each institution of higher education shall update its plan at least once every two years and provide a copy of their updated plan to the chancellor upon adoption.

(D) Each updated plan shall contain a report prepared by the institution of higher education regarding the institution's collaboration with other institutions of higher education through an initiative of the chancellor to assist students who have some college experience, but no degree, in earning an associate degree, certificate, or credential. The report shall include information about the institution's efforts to assist students in attaining an associate degree, certificate, or credential while earning a bachelor's degree or using college credit transferred between institutions of higher education.

Section 2. That existing sections 3333.16 and 3345.81 of the Revised Code are hereby repealed.