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SPONSOR STATEMENT

SENATE BILL 31

University of Alaska Credit Transferability

Senate Bill 31 would set in statute the ability of students enrolled at University of Alaska (UA) to more seamlessly transfer lower division course credits across its campuses. The idea behind the bill is to eliminate the need for a UA student to repeat lower-level courses when transferring between campuses, given such courses are largely the same content for largely the same degree program.

The bill directs the UA Board of Regents to establish a foundational curriculum in a major area of study for the first year of lower division courses and provides a list of criteria to be used in this process, including consultation with directors of each UA campus; evaluation of current lower division courses on UA's campuses; identification of major areas of study based on workforce demand and academic need; and the establishment of the foundational curriculum for each major area.

SB 31 also directs the university to provide an annual report to the legislature on the status and use of credit transferability in the UA system.

College students occasionally opt to transfer schools in response to changing interests, financial incentive, career choices, or any number of reasons. Throughout the country, numerous college students have encountered obstacles when attempting to transfer credits between in-state colleges, with many having to pay additional, often expensive, fees to repeat courses, in addition to the extra time required and delay in advancement. By enacting SB 31, Alaska will join other states that are taking an extra step to help encourage student achievement with the least delay or barriers.

I encourage your support of this important legislation.