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# OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Office of Research  
and Drafting

Legislative Budget  
Office

**H.B. 9**  
**133rd General Assembly**

## Bill Analysis

**Version:** As Introduced

**Primary Sponsor(s):** Reps. Jones and Sweeney

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### SUMMARY

- Requires the Chancellor of Higher Education, in consultation with state universities, to establish a standard for general education courses.
- Requires each state university to comply with the Chancellor's standard and accept and grant credit for general education courses completed at another university if the courses are standard-compliant.
- Requires each state university to review its student records every two years to determine if certain disenrolled students who did not complete a bachelor's degree are eligible for an associate degree or program certificate.
- Specifies that a state university must inform any eligible students of their eligibility for an associate degree or program certificate and that each university must report the findings of each review to the Chancellor.
- Requires a state institution of higher education, under certain circumstances, to waive an eligible student's tuition and general fees for a course that is necessary to complete a bachelor's degree.

### DETAILED ANALYSIS

#### Standard for general education courses at state universities

The bill requires the Chancellor of Higher Education to develop a system that establishes a standard for general education courses at state universities. In developing the system, the Chancellor must consult with the presidents of the 13 state universities. The Chancellor must develop the system within one year after the bill's effective date.

Additionally, the bill requires each state university to comply with the Chancellor's standard within one year after its development. Each state university also must accept or grant credit for any general education courses completed by a student who transfers to the university

from another state university, as long as the completed course is compliant with the Chancellor's standard.<sup>1</sup>

## **Review of student records for degree or certificate eligibility**

The bill requires that, beginning two years after the bill's effective date, each state university must review its student records every two years to identify students who have been disenrolled for four or more semesters and who have not completed a bachelor's degree. Each state university then must determine whether an identified student is eligible for an associate degree or a program certificate from either that university or another institution of higher education and, if so, notify the student of that fact. Additionally, each state university must report to the Chancellor the findings of each review.

The Chancellor must adopt rules as necessary to implement this provision.<sup>2</sup>

## **Waiver of tuition and general fees for final course**

The bill requires a state institution of higher education to waive an undergraduate student's tuition and general fees for a final course that is necessary to complete a bachelor's degree if the student meets certain eligibility criteria. State institutions of higher education include state universities, university branch campuses, the Northeast Ohio Medical University, community colleges, state community colleges, and technical colleges.

A student's eligibility for a waiver of tuition and general fees for a final course is connected to the student's actions in the student's "final year" at the state institution and the academic year immediately thereafter. Under the bill, a "final year" is the last academic year of full-time study that a bachelor's degree program is typically designed to require, as determined by the Chancellor. A student must receive a waiver of tuition and general fees if all of the following apply to the student:

1. The student was enrolled full-time, as defined by the Chancellor, in the student's final year;
2. The student was unable to enroll in the final course in the student's final year due to a lack of course availability or other circumstances beyond the student's control, as determined by the Chancellor;
3. The student paid all tuition and general fees for the courses in which the student enrolled in the student's final year at the beginning of that year;
4. The student registers for the final course in the academic year immediately following the student's final year.

However, the bill specifies that the final course cannot be a general elective, and the student may not receive guaranteed or priority registration for the final course.

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<sup>1</sup> R.C. 3333.16(B)(3).

<sup>2</sup> R.C. 3345.351.

Additionally, the bill requires the Chancellor to adopt rules to implement this program.<sup>3</sup>

### **Approved bachelor's degree programs**

Under continuing law, the Chancellor must approve or disapprove all new degrees and degree programs at state institutions of higher education, and state institutions are expressly prohibited from offering new degrees or programs without the Chancellor's approval.<sup>4</sup>

Generally, university branches, community colleges, state community colleges, and technical colleges offer two-year degrees or shorter programs. But, recently, the Chancellor was authorized to establish a program under which community colleges, technical colleges, and state community colleges may offer "applied bachelor's degree" programs.<sup>5</sup>

An "applied bachelor's degree" under continuing law is a bachelor's degree that is (1) based on a curriculum that incorporates theoretical and applied knowledge and skills in a specific technical field and (2) designed for an individual with an applied science associate degree to maximize the application of technical course credits toward the bachelor's degree.<sup>6</sup> As an "applied bachelor's degree" is a type of bachelor's degree, presumably the requirement to waive tuition and general fees for a final course also applies to "applied bachelor's degree" programs in the same manner as other bachelor's degree programs.

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## **HISTORY**

Action	Date
Introduced	05-21-19

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<sup>3</sup> R.C. 3345.481.

<sup>4</sup> R.C. 3333.04(N) and 3333.07(C), neither in the bill.

<sup>5</sup> R.C. 3333.051(A), not in the bill.

<sup>6</sup> R.C. 3333.051(C)(1), not in the bill.