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# OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

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S.B. 1\*  
136<sup>th</sup> General Assembly

## Bill Analysis

[Click here for S.B. 1's Fiscal Note](#)

**Version:** As Reported by Senate Higher Education

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### SUMMARY

#### STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

#### Diversity, equity, and inclusion, intellectual diversity, and other concepts

##### Policy

- Requires state institutions of higher education to adopt and enforce a policy requiring the institution to:
  - Prohibit all of the following:
    - ❖ Any orientation or training course regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI);
    - ❖ The continuation of existing or establishment of new DEI offices or departments;
    - ❖ Using DEI in job descriptions;
    - ❖ Contracting with consultants or third parties whose role is to promote admissions, hiring, or promotion on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression;
    - ❖ The establishment of any new institutional scholarships that use DEI and, if DEI requirements cannot be eliminated from an existing institutional scholarship, prohibits accepting additional funds to operate those scholarships.
  - Affirm and declare a primary function to the pursuit of knowledge;

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\* This analysis was prepared before the report of the Senate Higher Education Committee appeared in the Senate Journal. Note that the legislative history may be incomplete.

- Affirm and declare that the institution will ensure full intellectual diversity;
- Demonstrate intellectual diversity for course approval, approval of general education courses, student course evaluations, common reading programs, annual reviews, strategic goals for each department, and student learning outcomes;
- Seek out invited speakers who have diverse ideological and political views;
- Post a complete list of all speaker fees, honoraria, and other emoluments in excess of \$500 that are sponsored by the state institution prominently on its website.
- Requires each state institution's policy to affirm and declare that it will not:
  - Endorse or oppose any controversial beliefs or policies, except on matters that directly impact the institution's funding or mission of discovery, improvement, or dissemination of knowledge;
  - Influence or require students, faculty, or administrators to endorse or express a given ideology, political stance, or view of a social policy;
  - Require a student to endorse or express a given ideology, political stance, or view to obtain an undergraduate or post-graduate degree;
  - Use political and ideological litmus tests in any hiring, promotion, and admissions decisions, including diversity statements and other requirements that applicants describe commitment to any ideology, principle, concept, or formulation that requires commitment to a controversial belief or policy;
  - Influence or require students, faculty, or administrators to endorse or express a given ideology or political stance in any hiring, promotion, or admissions process or decision;
  - Use a diversity statement or any other assessment of an applicant's political or ideological views in any hiring, promotions, or admissions process or decision;
  - Influence or require students, faculty, or administrators to endorse or express a given ideology or political stance in any process or decision regulating conditions of work or study.
- Prohibits a state institution from replacing an orientation, training, office, or position designated for DEI with one under a different designation that serves the same or similar purposes, or that uses the same or similar means.
- Requires a state institution to endeavor, to the extent possible, to comply with the bill's DEI prohibitions while retaining eligibility for a research grant and to seek an exception from the Chancellor if compliance while retaining grant eligibility is not possible.

### **Student and faculty policy complaints**

- Requires each state institution to respond to complaints from any student, student group, or faculty member about an alleged violation of the requirements and prohibitions given

in the policy on DEI, intellectual diversity, and other concepts using the same process as for free speech policy complaints under continuing law.

### **Withholding or reducing funds for noncompliance**

- Permits the General Assembly to withhold or reduce any state operating subsidy payments, state capital improvement funds, or other state appropriation to a state institution if the General Assembly determines the institution has failed to comply with the bill's requirements related to the policy on DEI, intellectual diversity, and other concepts.

### **Intellectual diversity protections and disciplinary sanctions**

- Requires each state institution to do all of the following:
  - Respond to complaints regarding any administrator, faculty member, staff, or student who interferes with the intellectual diversity rights of another using the same process as for free speech policy complaints under continuing law;
  - Inform all students and employees of their intellectual diversity protections and any applicable policies adopted by the state institution to put the protections into practice;
  - Comply with reporting guidelines established by the Chancellor regarding violations of the intellectual diversity rights by any individual under the institution's jurisdiction and any consequent disciplinary sanctions issued.

### **Statements of commitment**

- Requires each state institution to incorporate statements into a statement of commitment declaring commitment to free and open intellectual inquiry, independence of thought, tolerance of differing viewpoints, and equality of opportunity.

### **Affirmations and policies on equal opportunity**

- Requires state institutions to do both of the following with regard to every position, policy, program, and activity:
  - Treat all faculty, staff, and students as individuals, hold all individuals to equal standards, and provide every individual with equality of opportunity, with regard to those individuals' race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression;
  - Provide no advantage or disadvantage to faculty, staff, or students on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression in admissions, hiring, promotion, tenuring, or workplace conditions.

### **Prohibition on support and training for certain concepts**

- Prohibits state institutions from providing or requiring training for any administrator, teacher, or staff member that advocates or promotes certain prescribed concepts regarding race and sex.

- Requires state institutions to implement a range of disciplinary sanctions for any administrator, teacher, staff member, or employee who authorizes or engages in a training that violates the above prohibitions.
- Requires state institutions to issue a report regarding violations of the above disciplinary sanctions and statistics on the academic qualifications of accepted and matriculating students, disaggregated by race and sex.

### **Segregation prohibition**

- Requires state institutions to prohibit all policies designed explicitly to segregate faculty, staff, or students based on those individuals' race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression in credit-earning classroom settings, formal orientation ceremonies, and formal graduation ceremonies.

### **Complaint process**

- Requires state institutions to establish a process for a student, student group, or faculty member to submit a complaint about a violation by an institution employee of the prohibitions and requirements immediately above using the same process as for free speech policy complaints under continuing law.

## **Faculty evaluations**

### **Student and peer evaluations**

- Requires the Chancellor to develop a minimum set of standard questions to be used in student evaluations, including a question about whether a faculty member creates a classroom atmosphere free of bias.
- Requires each state institution to establish a written system of faculty evaluations completed by students that uses the minimum set of standard questions developed by the Chancellor.
- Requires state institutions to establish a written system of peer evaluations for faculty members with a focus on professional development regarding the faculty member's teaching responsibilities.

### **Faculty annual performance evaluations**

- Requires state institutions to adopt and, every five years, submit to the Chancellor of Higher Education a faculty annual performance evaluation policy containing an appeals process for faculty to appeal the final evaluation.
- Requires state institutions to conduct an annual evaluation for each full-time faculty member directly compensated by the state institution.

## **Post-tenure review policies**

- Requires state institutions with tenured faculty to adopt and, every five years, submit to the Chancellor a post-tenure review policy containing an appeals process for faculty to appeal the final evaluation.

- Requires state institutions with tenured faculty to adopt and, every five years, submit to the Chancellor policies on tenure and retrenchment.

## **Collective bargaining**

- Expands the current law prohibition against collectively bargaining faculty workload policies, and the requirement that the policies prevail over conflicting collective bargaining agreements, to include all state institutions of higher education and not just state universities.
- Prohibits state institution of higher education employees from collectively bargaining with the institution regarding faculty evaluation policies and systems, post-tenure review policies, and policies on tenure, and specifies the policies and systems prevail over conflicting collective bargaining agreements.
- Allows a state institution with a collective bargaining agreement in effect on the bill's effective date containing a provision on retrenchment to continue bargaining retrenchment policies, but only with respect to faculty with 30 to 35 years of service in a public retirement system at the time of a retrenchment determination.
- Prohibits full-time faculty members of a state institution from striking and instead requires them to submit unresolved collective bargaining disputes to a final offer settlement procedure.

## **Other changes**

### **Five-year institutional cost summaries**

- Requires state institutions to submit, in accordance with guidelines established by the Chancellor, a rolling five-year summary of institutional costs to be considered by the General Assembly when evaluating operating and capital project funding for each biennial main operating appropriations bill and capital appropriations bill.
- Requires the Chancellor to submit a report to the General Assembly including all state institutions' five-year institutional cost summaries.
- Requires the president of each state university and the Chancellor, upon the request of the chairperson of the Senate or House committee that considers higher education legislation, to present in the appropriate hearings conducted by the committee regarding the universities' five-year summaries.
- Requires the Chancellor, prior to the enactment of each main operating appropriations and capital appropriations bill, to create and present a report to the General Assembly including the total institutional costs for state universities and community colleges separately.

### **Faculty workload policy**

- Requires each state institution to take formal action to adopt a faculty workload policy consistent with standards adopted by the Chancellor, review and update its policy on

faculty tenure, include multiple pathways to tenure to receive certain state funds, and update its faculty workload policy every five years.

- Requires each state institution to include in its faculty workload policy a teaching workload expectation based on credit hours, a definition of all faculty workload elements in terms of credit hours including a full-time minimum standard established by the board of trustees, justifiable credit hour equivalents, and any administrative action that the state institution may take if a faculty member fails to comply with the policy's requirements.

### **Elimination of specified undergraduate degree programs**

- Requires a state institution to eliminate any undergraduate degree program it offers if the institution confers an average of fewer than five degrees in the program annually over any three-year period, excluding years prior to the year in which the program confers its first undergraduate degree.
- Permits the Chancellor to grant a waiver to a state institution to continue an affected degree program pursuant to conditions set by the Chancellor.

### **American civic literacy course requirement**

- Requires each state institution to develop a three credit hour course in the subject of American civic literacy.
- Requires the course to include a study of the American economic system and capitalism and mandatory reading assignments.
- Requires each board of trustees to adopt a resolution approving a plan to offer the course described above, which must be submitted to, reviewed by, and approved by the Chancellor.
- Permits the Chancellor to require an institution to revise the plan and the course before approval.
- Requires state institutions to require all students seeking a bachelor's degree to take the course, beginning with students who graduate in the spring of the 2029-2030 academic year.
- Permits state institutions to offer the course under the College Credit Plus Program.
- Permits state institutions to require the course as part of the institution's general education courses of study.
- Permits the president of a state institution to exempt a student from the required course if the student completes either:
  - A Chancellor-approved College Credit Plus course that satisfies the bill's course content requirements; or
  - A Chancellor-approved AP course and exam that satisfy the bill's course content requirements, and the student receives a score of three or higher on the exam.

## **Syllabus requirements**

- Requires each state institution to create a syllabus, using specific requirements established in the bill, for each course offered for undergraduate credit and to provide for the syllabus posting on its publicly accessible website in accordance with the bill's website posting requirements.
- Requires each state institution and the Chancellor to prepare reports regarding state institution compliance with syllabus posting requirements.

## **Interactions with the People's Republic of China**

- Prohibits, with certain exceptions, state institutions from accepting gifts, donations, or contributions from the People's Republic of China or any organization that the institution reasonably suspects is acting on behalf of the People's Republic of China.
- Requires state institutions to submit to the Chancellor a copy of the foreign gifts report it sends to the United States Department of Education.
- Requires state institutions to notify the Chancellor of any new or renewed academic partnership with an academic or research institution located in China.
- Prohibits state institutions from entering into new or renewed academic partnerships with an academic or research institution located in China unless the institution maintains sufficient structural safeguards to protect the state institution's intellectual property, the security of Ohio, and national security interests.
- Requires the Auditor of State to audit state institutions' structural safeguards during the course of a normal audit.

## **Board of trustees training**

- Requires the Chancellor to develop and provide annual training to the board of trustees of each state institution.
- Eliminates a requirement that the Chancellor, working with specified stakeholders, develop voluntary, model training for state institution board of trustee members.

## **Board of trustees terms of office**

- Reduces the term of office from nine to six years for all nonstudent trustees at state universities who are appointed by the Governor on or after July 1, 2025.
- Eliminates a prohibition on state university trustees who served at least six years of a term being reappointed as a trustee before four years have elapsed since the end of the trustee's previous term.

## **Ohio State University student trustees**

- Eliminates the provisions of law that permit student members of the Ohio State University Board of Trustees to have voting power and related privileges.

## **Northeast Ohio Medical University principal goals**

- Removes language that establishes the principal goals of the Northeast Ohio Medical University to work in collaboration with area state universities.

## **Policy and report guidelines**

- Requires the Chancellor to establish guidelines addressing the form and manner by which state institutions must submit various policies or reports to the Chancellor under the bill.
- Requires the Chancellor to post each policy or report that is received on the Chancellor’s publicly accessible website.

## **Website posting**

- Generally provides that when the bill requires something to be posted on a website, that posting must be (1) accessible from the main page of the state institution’s website by using no more than three links, (2) searchable by keywords and phrases, and (3) accessible to the public without requiring any user registration.

## **OTHER HIGHER EDUCATION PROVISIONS**

### **Three-year bachelor’s degree study**

- Requires the Department of Higher Education to conduct a study on the feasibility of implementing three-year bachelor’s degree programs in Ohio.

### **Act title**

- Entitles the bill “The Advance Ohio Higher Education Act.”

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## DETAILED ANALYSIS

### STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The bill makes several changes to higher education. It creates, among other things, new requirements for state institutions of higher education regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies and training, intellectual diversity, and faculty evaluations.

Throughout the bill, “state institution of higher education” or “state institution” means any state university or college, community college, state community college, university branch, or technical college. Generally, when the bill requires that something be posted on a website, that posting must be: (1) accessible from the main page of the state institution’s website by using no more than three links, (2) searchable by keywords and phrases, and (3) accessible to the public without requiring any user registration.

### **Diversity, equity, and inclusion, intellectual diversity, and other concepts**

#### **Policy**

The bill requires the board of trustees of each state institution of higher education to adopt and each state institution to enforce a policy requiring the institution to do all of the following:

1. Prohibit all of the following:

- a. Any orientation or training course regarding DEI;
  - b. The continuation of existing DEI offices or departments;
  - c. Establishing new DEI offices or departments;
  - d. Using DEI in job descriptions;
  - e. Contracting with consultants or third parties whose role is or would be to promote admissions, hiring, or promotion on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression; and
  - f. The establishment of any new institutional scholarships that use DEI in any manner. For any existing institutional scholarships, a state institution must, to the extent possible, eliminate DEI requirements. If a state institution is unable to do so because of donor requirements, the state institution may continue to offer the scholarship. However, a state institution cannot accept any additional funds for the operation of institutional scholarships that have DEI requirements.
2. Affirm and declare that its primary function is to practice, or support the practice of, discovery, improvement, transmission, and dissemination of knowledge and citizenship education by means of research, teaching, discussion, and debate;
  3. Affirm and declare that the institution will ensure the fullest degree of intellectual diversity. Under the bill, “intellectual diversity” means multiple, divergent, and opposing perspectives on an extensive range of public policy issues.<sup>1</sup>
  4. Affirm and declare that faculty and staff will allow and encourage students to reach their own conclusions about all controversial beliefs or policies and will not seek to indoctrinate any social, political, or religious point of view;
  5. Demonstrate intellectual diversity for course approval, approval of courses to satisfy general education requirements, student course evaluations, common reading programs, annual reviews, strategic goals for each department, and student learning outcomes;
  6. Declare that it will not endorse or oppose, as an institution, any controversial belief or policy, except on matters that directly impact the institution’s funding or mission of discovery, improvement, and dissemination of knowledge. Though it may endorse the United States Congress when it establishes a state of armed hostility against a foreign power. This does not include the recognition of national and state holidays, support for the Constitution and laws of the United States or Ohio, or the display of the American or Ohio flag.

Under the bill, a “controversial belief or policy” means any belief or policy that is the subject of political controversy, including issues such as climate policies, electoral politics,

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<sup>1</sup> R.C. 3345.0217(A)(2).

foreign policy, diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, immigration policy, marriage, or abortion.<sup>2</sup>

7. Affirm and declare that the institution will not encourage, discourage, require, or forbid students, faculty, or administrators to endorse, assent to, or publicly express a given ideology, political stance, or view of a social policy, nor will the institution require students to do any of those things to obtain an undergraduate or post-graduate degree;
8. Prohibit political and ideological litmus tests in all hiring, promotion, and admissions decisions, including diversity statements and any other requirement that applicants describe their commitment to any ideology, principle, concept, or formulation that requires commitment to any controversial belief or policy;
9. Affirm and declare that no hiring, promotion, or admissions process or decision shall encourage, discourage, require, or forbid students, faculty, or administrators to endorse, assent to, or publicly express a given ideology or political stance;
10. Affirm and declare that the institution will not use a diversity statement or any other assessment of an applicant's political or ideological views in any hiring, promotions, or admissions process or decision;
11. Affirm and declare that no process or decision regulating conditions of work or study, such as committee assignments, course scheduling, or workload adjustment policies, shall encourage, discourage, require, or forbid students, faculty, or administrators to endorse, assent to, or publicly express a given ideology or political stance;
12. Affirm and declare that the institution will seek out invited speakers who have diverse ideological or political views;
13. Post prominently on its website a complete list of all speaker fees, honoraria, and other emoluments in excess of \$500 for events that are sponsored by the state institution.<sup>3</sup>

The bill prohibits a state institution from replacing any orientation, training, office, or position designated for the purpose of DEI that is prohibited under the bill with one under a different designation that serves the same or similar purposes, or that uses the same or similar means.

If the requirements to obtain a research grant conflict with the prohibitions on DEI in the first requirement on the list above, the bill requires a state institution to endeavor, to the extent possible, to comply with the bill's DEI prohibitions while retaining eligibility for the research grant, including by consulting with legal counsel. A state institution that is unable to comply with the DEI prohibitions with respect to a research grant must submit a written request for an exception to the Chancellor of Higher Education that includes an explanation of the circumstances and the effort made by the state institution to comply with the bill's DEI prohibitions while retaining eligibility for the research grant. The bill's DEI prohibitions and

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<sup>2</sup> R.C. 3345.0217(A)(1).

<sup>3</sup> R.C. 3345.0217(B)(1) to (13).

related requirements regarding research grants do not apply to agreements or contracts regarding any research grants entered into prior to the bill's effective date. However, they do apply to any renewal of such agreements or contracts occurring on or after that date.

The second through fifth requirements in this list do not apply to the exercise of professional judgment about how to accomplish intellectual diversity within an academic discipline, unless that exercise is misused to constrict intellectual diversity.

The sixth and seventh requirements listed above do not apply to the exercise of professional judgment about whether to endorse the consensus or foundational beliefs of an academic discipline, unless that exercise is misused to take an action prohibited by the sixth requirement.

Each institution must adopt this policy not later than 90 days after the bill's effective date.<sup>4</sup>

The bill states that none of the above requirements prohibit faculty or students from classroom instruction, discussion, or debate, so long as faculty members allow students to express intellectual diversity.<sup>5</sup>

The bill permits the General Assembly to withhold or reduce any state operating subsidy payments, state capital improvement funds, or other state appropriations to a state institution of higher education if the General Assembly determines that the institution has failed to comply with the bill's requirements related to DEI, intellectual diversity, and other concepts.<sup>6</sup>

### **Student and faculty policy complaints**

The bill requires each state institution to respond to complaints from any student, student group, or faculty member about an alleged violation of the prohibitions and requirements given in the policy adopted above (see "**Policy**" above) using the same complaint process as is used for complaints regarding a state institution's free speech policy under current law, unchanged by the bill.<sup>7</sup>

### **Intellectual diversity protections and sanctions**

The bill requires each state institution of higher education to respond to complaints regarding any administrator, faculty member, staff, or student who interferes with the intellectual diversity rights of another individual using the same complaint process as used for complaints regarding a state institution's free speech policy under current law, unchanged by the bill.

The bill also requires each state institution to inform its students and employees of the protections given to them under the bill and any policies adopted to put the protections into

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<sup>4</sup> R.C. 3345.0217(B).

<sup>5</sup> R.C. 3345.0217(D).

<sup>6</sup> R.C. 3345.0217(E).

<sup>7</sup> R.C. 3345.0217(C); R.C. 3345.0215, not in the bill.

practice, including by providing the information to new employees and to students during any new student orientation.

Each state institution is also required to comply with the reporting guidelines established by the Chancellor (see “**Policy and report guidelines**” below) regarding any violations of the intellectual diversity rights prescribed by the bill by any individual under the institution’s jurisdiction and any consequent disciplinary sanctions issued for that violation.<sup>8</sup>

### **Statements of commitment**

The bill requires each state institution to incorporate certain principles into a statement of commitment. In the statement, the institution must declare all of the following:

1. It will educate students by means of free, open, and rigorous intellectual inquiry to seek the truth;
2. Its duty is to equip students with an opportunity to develop the intellectual skills they need to reach their own, informed conclusions;
3. It is committed to not requiring, favoring, disfavoring, or prohibiting speech or lawful assembly;
4. It is committed to creating a community dedicated to an ethic of civil and free inquiry, which respects the autonomy of each member, supports individual capacities for growth, and tolerates the differences in opinion that naturally occur in a public higher education community;
5. Its duty is to treat all faculty, staff, and students as individuals, to hold them to equal standards, and to provide them equality of opportunity, with regard to those individuals’ race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Each institution must prominently post its statement of commitment on the institution’s publicly accessible website and alongside the institution’s mission statement in any place in which the mission statement appears, including when it is published or posted. Each institution must also include the statement of commitment in any solicitations and offers of admission to students and any offers of employment to faculty.<sup>9</sup>

### **Affirmations and policies on equal opportunity**

The bill requires each state institution to do both of the following with respect to every position, policy, program, and activity:

1. Treat all faculty, staff, and students as individuals, hold every individual to equal standards, and provide every individual with equality of opportunity, with regard to those individuals’ race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression;

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<sup>8</sup> R.C. 3345.0218; R.C. 3345.0215, not in the bill.

<sup>9</sup> R.C. 3345.0216.

2. Provide no advantage or disadvantage to faculty, staff, or students on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression in admissions, hiring, promotion, tenuring, or workplace conditions.

The bill defines “position, policy, program, and activity” to include all of the following:

1. All forms of employment, including staff positions, internships, and work studies;
2. All policies, including mission statements, hiring policies, promotion policies, and tenure policies;
3. All programs and positions, including deanships, provostships, offices, programs presented by residence halls, and committees;
4. All activities, including those conducted by the administrative units of orientation, first-year experience, student life, and residential life.<sup>10</sup>

### **Prohibition on support and training for certain concepts**

The bill prohibits state institutions from providing or requiring training for any administrator, teacher, staff member, or employee that advocates or promotes any of the following concepts:

1. One race or sex is inherently superior to another race or sex;
2. An individual, by virtue of the individual’s race or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously;
3. An individual should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment solely or partly due to the individual’s race;
4. Members of one race cannot or should not attempt to treat others without respect to race;
5. An individual’s moral standing or worth is necessarily determined by the individual’s race or sex;
6. An individual, by virtue of the individual’s race or sex, bears responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race or sex;
7. An individual should feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress on account of the individual’s race or sex;
8. Meritocracy or traits such as hard work ethic are racist or sexist, or were created by members of a particular race to oppress members of another race;
9. Fault, blame, or bias should be assigned to a race or sex, or to members of a race or sex because of their race or sex.

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<sup>10</sup> R.C. 3345.88(A) and (B).

The training prohibition described immediately above is not to be construed to preclude an institution from providing or facilitating continuing education to public safety officers that is compliant with the prohibition.

The bill requires each state institution to implement a range of disciplinary sanctions for any administrator, teachers, staff member, or employee who authorizes or engages in a training prohibited above.

Each state institution is required to issue a report regarding: (1) all violations of the disciplinary sanctions implemented for violation of the above-described training prohibition and (2) statistics on the academic qualifications of accepted and matriculating students, disaggregated by race and sex. The statistics must include information correlating students' academic qualifications and retention rates, disaggregated by race and sex. The report must be issued in accordance with guidelines established by the Chancellor (see "**Policy and report guidelines**" below).<sup>11</sup>

### **Segregation prohibition**

The bill requires state institutions to prohibit all policies explicitly designed to segregate faculty, staff, or students based on those individuals' race, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression in credit-earning classroom settings, formal orientation ceremonies, and formal graduation ceremonies.<sup>12</sup>

### **Complaint process**

Under the bill, each state institution must respond to complaints from a student, student group, or faculty member to submit an alleged violation by an institution employee of the requirements and prohibitions discussed in "**Affirmations and policies on equal opportunity**," "**Prohibition on support and training for certain concepts**," and "**Segregation prohibition**" above using the same complaint process as is used for complaints regarding a state institution's free speech policy under current law, unchanged by the bill.<sup>13</sup>

## **Faculty evaluations**

### **Student and peer evaluations**

The bill requires each state institution of higher education to establish a written system of faculty evaluations completed by students and focusing on teaching effectiveness and student learning. For this purpose, the Chancellor of Higher Education must develop a minimum set of standard questions that state institutions must include in student evaluations of faculty members. The set of questions must include the question, "Does the faculty member create a classroom atmosphere free of political, racial, gender, and religious bias?"

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<sup>11</sup> R.C. 3345.88(C) to (E).

<sup>12</sup> R.C. 3345.88(F).

<sup>13</sup> R.C. 3345.88(G); R.C. 3345.0215, not in the bill.

In addition to student evaluation of faculty members, the bill requires each state institution to establish a written system of peer evaluations for faculty members. The evaluations must place an emphasis on the faculty member's professional development regarding the faculty member's teaching responsibilities.<sup>14</sup>

### **Faculty annual performance evaluations**

The bill requires the board of trustees of each state institution to adopt and submit to the Chancellor a faculty annual performance evaluation policy. The policy must contain an appeals process for faculty to appeal a final evaluation. The board of trustees must review and update the policy every five years.

Each state institution must conduct an annual evaluation for each full-time faculty member it directly compensates. Each evaluation conducted by a state institution under its policy must meet all of the following:

1. The evaluation is comprehensive and includes standardized, objective, and measurable performance metrics;
2. The evaluation includes an assessment for each of the following areas that the faculty member has spent at least 5% of their annual work time on over the preceding year:
  - a. Teaching;
  - b. Research;
  - c. Service;
  - d. Clinical care;
  - e. Administration;
  - f. Other categories, as determined by the state institution.
3. The evaluation includes a summary assessment of the above performance areas that includes the parameters "exceeds performance expectations," "meets performance expectations," or "does not meet performance expectations";
4. Student evaluations conducted under the bill account for at least 25% of the teaching area component of the evaluation; and
5. The evaluation establishes a projected work effort distribution for the faculty member which will be used for the next year's evaluation. This distribution must be compliant with the state institution's established workload policies and must be approved by the dean of faculty or the equivalent.

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<sup>14</sup> R.C. 3345.451.



Evaluations must be conducted by the department chairperson or equivalent administrator, reviewed and approved or disapproved by the dean, and submitted to the provost for review. If the chairperson and dean disagree, the provost must have final decision authority.<sup>15</sup>

## **Post-tenure review policies**

The bill requires each state institution that has tenured faculty members to adopt a post-tenure review policy and submit the policy to the Chancellor. The policy must contain an appeals process for faculty to appeal a final evaluation. Each state institution's board of trustees must update the policy every five years.

Under the bill, a state institution must conduct a post-tenure review if a tenured faculty member receives a "does not meet performance expectations" evaluation within the same evaluative category for at least two of the past three consecutive years on the faculty member's annual performance evaluation.

If a faculty member maintains tenure after a post-tenure review and then receives an additional "does not meet performance expectations" assessment on any area of the faculty member's annual performance evaluation in the subsequent two years, then the state institution must subject the faculty member to an additional post-tenure review.

If a faculty member has a documented and sustained record of significant underperformance outside of the faculty member's annual performance evaluation, the department chairperson, dean of faculty, or provost of the state institution may require an immediate and for cause post-tenure review. For this purpose, for cause cannot be based on a faculty member's allowable expression of academic freedom as defined by the state institution or Ohio law.

A state institution's post-tenure review due process period cannot exceed six months, except that the state institution president may grant a one-time two-month extension.

At the conclusion of a post-tenure review, the state institution's provost must submit a recommended outcome of the post-tenure review process to the institution's entity that is responsible for the final decision of post-tenure review pursuant to the institution's policy. The institution may take administrative action under the post-tenure review process, including censure, remedial training, or for-cause termination, regardless of tenure status, and any other action permitted by the institution's post-tenure review policy.<sup>16</sup>

Additionally, the bill requires state institutions of higher education that have tenured faculty members to develop policies on tenure and retrenchment and submit those policies to the Chancellor. Each state institution must update those policies every five years.

"Retrenchment" is defined in the bill as a process by which a state institution reduces programs or services, thus resulting in a temporary suspension or permanent separation of one or more institution faculty, to account for a reduction in student population or overall funding, a

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<sup>15</sup> R.C. 3345.452.

<sup>16</sup> R.C. 3345.453.

change to institutional missions or programs, or other fiscal pressures or emergencies facing the institution.<sup>17</sup>

## **Collective bargaining**

### **Faculty evaluations, tenure, post-tenure review, and retrenchment**

With respect to collective bargaining agreements entered into under the Public Employees Collective Bargaining Law<sup>18</sup> (PECBL) on or after the bill's effective date, employees of a state institution of higher education may not collectively bargain with the institution regarding faculty evaluation systems and policies, tenure and retrenchment policies, and post-tenure review policies developed under the bill. Additionally, the systems and policies prevail over any conflicting provision of a collective bargaining agreement entered into on or after that date. The bill's prohibition against collective bargaining on faculty evaluations is identical to a continuing law prohibition against collectively bargaining faculty workload policies described below.<sup>19</sup>

A state institution of higher education that has a collective bargaining agreement in effect on the bill's effective date containing a provision on retrenchment may collectively bargain over retrenchment policies in new or renewed agreements. However, retrenchment provisions in a new or renewed agreement only apply to institution faculty who have between 30 and 35 years of service in a public retirement system at the time of a retrenchment determination.<sup>20</sup>

The PECBL governs collective bargaining between public employees and public employers who are subject to that law. Unless otherwise specified in law, all matters related to wages, hours, or terms and other conditions of public employment are subject to collective bargaining between a public employer and the "employee organization" (essentially, a union) that represents the employer's public employees. Additionally, unless otherwise specified in law, a provision in a collective bargaining agreement governing wages, hours, or other terms and conditions of employment prevails over a conflicting state law or local ordinance.<sup>21</sup>

### **Higher education faculty strikes**

The bill prohibits full-time faculty members at a state institution of higher education from striking. Instead, the bill requires full-time faculty to submit unresolved collective bargaining disputes to a final offer settlement procedure in accordance with continuing law. If full-time faculty engage in a prohibited strike, an employing institution may seek an injunction against the strike in the court of common pleas of the county where the strike occurs.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> R.C. 3345.454.

<sup>18</sup> R.C. Chapter 4117.

<sup>19</sup> R.C. 3345.455.

<sup>20</sup> R.C. 3345.456.

<sup>21</sup> R.C. 4117.08 and 4117.10, not in the bill.

<sup>22</sup> R.C. 4117.14 and 4117.15.

The PECBL establishes timelines and requirements for negotiating collective bargaining agreements. It also specifies procedures the parties must follow if they reach an impasse during negotiations, including submitting unresolved issues to a fact-finding panel. If the parties are unable to reach agreement within seven days after the publication of findings and recommendations from a fact-finding panel or if any existing collective bargaining agreement has expired, the public employees who are permitted to strike may do so in accordance with statutory procedures. Public employees who are not permitted to strike must follow a final offer settlement procedure to settle unresolved collective bargaining disputes with their employers. In general, the PECBL currently prohibits peace officers, firefighters, corrections officers, public service dispatchers, employees of Ohio deaf and blind education services, and a limited number of public-sector healthcare workers from striking.<sup>23</sup>

Under continuing law, if public employees governed by the PECBL engage in a strike that is not authorized under the PECBL, the employees may be subject to discipline in accordance with the procedures specified in the PECBL.<sup>24</sup>

## Other changes

### Five-year institutional cost summaries

The bill requires each state institution of higher education, for each biennial main operating appropriations bill and capital appropriations bill, to prepare and submit to the Chancellor, in accordance with guidelines established by the Chancellor (see **“Policy and report guidelines”** below), a rolling five-year summary of its institutional costs to be considered by the General Assembly when evaluating operating and capital project funding. The Chancellor is required to submit a report to the General Assembly including each state institution’s five-year institutional cost summary.

Each state institution’s institutional cost summary must consist of the following categories:

1. All costs related to student instruction, including instructor salaries, benefits, and related operating costs;
2. All general staff costs related to maintenance, grounds, utilities, food service, and other areas, as determined by the state institution;
3. All other costs for staff, including academic administrators, counseling, financial aid assistance, healthcare services, and housing management.

For each of the above categories, a state institution’s five-year institutional cost summary must include all of the following:

1. A detailed breakdown of annual costs and employee headcounts;

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<sup>23</sup> R.C. 4117.14.

<sup>24</sup> R.C. 4117.23, not in the bill.

2. A complete accounting of all spending on diversity, equity, and inclusion, or related subjects;
3. An annual count of all faculty, administration, and employees.

The bill requires the Chancellor to consult with state institutions of higher education to develop a standardized reporting format for the five-year institutional cost summaries and a uniform approach to completing the required categories.

The bill also requires that during the General Assembly's consideration of the main operating appropriations and capital appropriations bills, if requested by the chairperson of the Senate or House committee that considers higher education legislation, the president of each state university and the Chancellor must present in the appropriate hearings conducted by that committee to provide commentary on trends, potential justifications, or other explanations regarding the state university's five-year institutional cost summary.

The Chancellor is required to create and present to the General Assembly, prior to the enactment of the main operating appropriations and capital appropriations bills, an aggregation report summarizing the total institutional costs for state universities and community colleges separately.<sup>25</sup>

### **Faculty workload policies**

The bill requires each state institution of higher education, instead of only state universities as under current law, to do all of the following:

1. Jointly develop standards with the Chancellor of Higher Education for instructional workloads for full-time and part-time faculty that keep with the institutions' missions, place a special emphasis on the undergraduate learning experience, and contain clear guidelines for acceptable undergraduate teaching;
2. Take formal action to adopt a faculty workload policy consistent with the standards developed by the Chancellor;
3. Review the state institution's policy on faculty tenure and update that policy;
4. Include multiple pathways for tenure to receive certain state funds.<sup>26</sup>

The bill also requires each state institution of higher education to, every five years, update its existing faculty workload policy and submit the revised policy to the Chancellor. The state institution's board of trustees must approve the policy each time the state institution submits an updated policy to the Chancellor.

Each policy must include all of the following:

1. An objective and numerically defined teaching workload expectation based on credit hours as defined under federal law;

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<sup>25</sup> R.C. 3345.80.

<sup>26</sup> R.C. 3345.45(A) to (C).

2. A definition of all faculty workload elements in terms of credit hours as defined under federal law, with a full-time workload minimum standard established by the state institution's board of trustees and made publicly accessible on the state institution's website;
3. A definition of justifiable credit hour equivalents for activities other than teaching, including research, clinical care, administration, service, and other activities as determined by the state institution;
4. Administrative action that a state institution may take if a faculty member fails to comply with the policy's requirements, including censure, remedial training, for-cause termination, or other disciplinary action, regardless of tenure status. Termination under these circumstances must require the recommendation of the dean, provost, or equivalent official, concurrence of the state institution's president, and approval of the state institution's board of trustees.<sup>27</sup>

Under existing law, state universities have been required to have a formally adopted faculty workload policy since June 30, 1994. These existing policies were required to be based on standards developed by the Chancellor with state university input.<sup>28</sup>

Under continuing law, faculty workload policies are not subject to collective bargaining between a state university and its employees. And a university's policy prevails over a conflicting term in a collective bargaining agreement. The bill applies the collective bargaining prohibition to a state institution of higher education's policy. Thus, an institution's policy will prevail over a conflicting term in any collective bargaining agreement entered into on or after the section's effective date.<sup>29</sup>

### **Elimination of specified undergraduate degree programs**

The bill requires a state institution of higher education to eliminate any undergraduate degree program it offers if the institution confers an average of fewer than five degrees in that program annually over any three-year period. Any academic years occurring prior to the first academic year in which an undergraduate degree is conferred under a program do not count toward determining whether that program must be eliminated.

The Chancellor of Higher Education may grant a waiver to a state institution to continue a program to which this requirement applies. State institutions must appeal for a waiver in a form and manner determined by the Chancellor. If the Chancellor grants a waiver to a state institution for a program, the Chancellor must establish terms under which the program may conditionally continue, including whether the program is eligible to be supported by state share of instruction (SSI) funds.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> R.C. 3345.45(D).

<sup>28</sup> R.C. 3345.45(A) and (B).

<sup>29</sup> R.C. 3345.455.

<sup>30</sup> R.C. 3345.454(C).

## American civic literacy requirement

Beginning with students who graduate in the spring of the 2029-2030 academic year, the bill prohibits each state institution from granting a bachelor's degree to any student who has not completed a course with at least three credit hours in the subject area of American civic literacy.

The bill requires each state institution of higher education to develop the course in compliance with the criteria, policies, and procedures established under existing law. The course may be offered under the College Credit Plus program. A state institution may require the course as part of the institution's general education courses of study. The course must include all of the following:

1. A study of the American economic system and capitalism;
2. A requirement that students read all of the following:
  - a. The entire United States Constitution;
  - b. The entire Declaration of Independence;
  - c. At least five essays in their entirety from the Federalist Papers, with essays being selected by the department chair;
  - d. The entire Emancipation Proclamation;
  - e. The entire Gettysburg Address;
  - f. The entire Letter from Birmingham Jail written by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr;
  - g. The writings of Adam Smith, including a study of the principles written in "The Wealth of Nations."
3. A requirement that students pass a cumulative final examination at the end of the course that assesses student proficiency on the required readings.

Each board of trustees must adopt a resolution approving a plan to offer the course described immediately above. The institution must submit that plan to the Chancellor, who must review and approve each plan. However, the Chancellor may require an institution to revise the plan and the course prior to approving the plan.

The bill permits the president of a state institution, or the president's designee, to exempt a student from the required course if the president or designee determines that the student has completed either:

1. A Chancellor-approved College Credit Plus course that satisfies the content requirements for the American civic literacy course under the bill; or
2. A Chancellor-approved Advanced Placement course and exam that satisfy the American civic literacy course content requirements, and the student received a score of three or higher on the exam.

The bill specifies that the requirements above do not apply to associate's degree programs.<sup>31</sup>

### **Syllabus requirements**

The bill requires each state institution of higher education, beginning in the 2026-2027 academic year, to make a syllabus for each undergraduate course it offers for college credit available to the public.

Under the bill, a "course syllabus" is a document produced for students by a course instructor that includes all of the following:

1. The name of the course instructor;
2. A calendar for the course outlining what materials and topics will be covered and when they will be covered;
3. A list of any required or recommended readings for the course;
4. The course instructor's professional qualifications.

A "general syllabus" is defined in the bill as a document produced for students by a community college regarding a course that includes both of the following:

1. A calendar for the course outlining what materials and topics will be covered and when they will be covered during the course;
2. A list of any required or recommended readings for the course.

State institutions must make a syllabus for each undergraduate course offered for college credit publicly available no later than on the first day of classes for the semester or academic term in which the course is offered, by doing either of the following:

1. Ensuring that each course instructor posts a course syllabus on a publicly accessible website that includes information on the course instructor's professional qualifications, contact information, course schedule, and a link or download for the course syllabus for each course the instructor is currently teaching;
2. Posting each course's course syllabus on the institution's publicly accessible website. However, if the institution is a community college, then the general syllabus for a course must be posted on the institution's publicly accessible website.

Each course or general syllabus posted to the institution's website must remain on the state institution's website for at least two years after being posted for the first time. If a course syllabus posted by a course instructor is no longer used, upon request, the course instructor must make that course syllabus available for at least two years after posting it. To the extent practicable, each state institution must ensure that the most recently updated syllabus for each undergraduate course offered for college credit is posted according to these requirements.

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<sup>31</sup> R.C. 3345.382; R.C. 3333.16, not in the bill.

State institutions are not required to adhere to the syllabus posting requirements for courses offered through the College Credit Plus program that are delivered in a secondary school and taught by a high school teacher.

Each state institution is required to designate an administrator to implement these requirements. The administrator is permitted to delegate the responsibilities to one or more administrative employees.

The bill also requires each state institution to prepare a written report for the Chancellor regarding the institution's compliance with the syllabus requirements discussed above. The report must be in accordance with guidelines established by the Chancellor (see "**Policy and report guidelines**" below). The Chancellor must prepare a report that includes each of the reports received from a state institution.

The bill clarifies that none of the syllabus requirements discussed above require a publicly available syllabus to include the location or time of day at which a course is being held.<sup>32</sup>

### **Interactions with the People's Republic of China**

The bill prohibits state institutions of higher education from accepting gifts, donations, or contributions from the People's Republic of China or any organizations that the institution reasonably suspects are acting on behalf of the People's Republic of China. The bill explicitly states that this does not prohibit state institutions from accepting payments from Chinese citizens related to instructional fees, general fees, special fees, cost of instruction, or educational expenses or donations from the institution's alumni. The bill also states that this provision does not prohibit a state institution from receiving philanthropic or unrestricted grants if it maintains the structural safeguards listed below. The bill defines the "People's Republic of China" as the government of China, the Chinese Communist Party, the People's Liberation Army, or any other extension of, or entity affiliated with, the government of China.

The bill also requires each state institution to submit to the Chancellor a copy of the foreign gifts report it submits to the United States Department of Education pursuant to federal law regarding the disclosure of foreign gifts.

The bill also requires the Chancellor to make any of the information reported by state institutions available to any member of the General Assembly who requests it.

Under the bill, state institutions are prohibited from entering into a new or renewed academic partnership with an academic or research institution located in China unless the state institution maintains sufficient structural safeguards to protect the state institution's intellectual property, the security of the state of Ohio, and the national security interests of the United States. The institution must also notify the Chancellor of any new or renewed academic partnership with an academic or research institution located in China. The safeguards must include, at a minimum, the following requirements:

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<sup>32</sup> R.C. 3345.029.



1. Compliance with all federal requirements, including the requirements of federal research sponsors and federal export control agencies, including regulations regarding international traffic in arms and export administration regulations, and economic and trade sanctions administered by the Federal Office of Foreign Assets Control;
2. Annual formal institution-level programs for faculty on conflicts of interest and conflicts of commitment;
3. A formalized foreign visitor process and uniform visiting scholar agreement.

The bill requires the Auditor of State to audit the safeguards implemented by state institutions of higher education during the course of a normal audit.<sup>33</sup>

### **Board of trustees training**

The bill requires the Chancellor to develop and annually provide educational programs for the board of trustees of each state institution. The Chancellor must consult with state institutions and members of their boards of trustees as part of this process. The programs may be held online and be offered periodically. New members of a board of trustees must participate in the programs at least one time within their first two years in office. Current trustees are required to participate in continuing trustee training as determined by the Chancellor.

The educational programs developed by the Chancellor must be designed to address the role, duties, and responsibilities of a trustee and may include in-service programs on current issues in higher education. The Chancellor may consider similar programs offered in other states or through a recognized trustee group. The educational programs must include presentations and content related to all of the following:

1. Each board member's duty to the state of Ohio;
2. The committee structure and function of a board of trustees;
3. The duties of the executive committee of a board of trustees;
4. Professional accounting and reporting standards;
5. Methods for meeting the statutory, regulatory, and fiduciary obligations of a board of trustees;
6. Public records law requirements;
7. Institutional ethics and conflicts of interest;
8. Creating and implementing institution-wide rules and regulations;
9. Business operations, administration, budgeting, financing, financial reporting, and financial reserves, including a segment on endowment management;
10. Fixing student general and instructional fees, and other necessary changes, including a review of student debt trends;

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<sup>33</sup> R.C. 3345.591; 20 United States Code 1011(f), not in the bill.

11. Overseeing planning, construction, maintenance, expansion, and renovation projects that impact the state institution's consolidated infrastructure, physical facilities, and natural environment, including its lands, improvements, and capital equipment;
12. Workforce planning, strategy, and investment;
13. Institutional advancement, including philanthropic giving, fundraising initiatives, alumni programming, communications and media, government and public relations, and community affairs;
14. Student welfare issues, including academic studies, curriculum, residence life, student governance and activities, and the general physical and psychological well-being of undergraduate and graduate students;
15. Current national and state issues in higher education;
16. Future national and state issues in higher education;
17. State and federal anti-discrimination laws and a state institution's obligations created under the bill.

The bill also eliminates an existing law requirement that the Chancellor develop voluntary, model training for state institution board of trustee members.<sup>34</sup>

### **State institution of higher education trustees terms of office**

The bill reduces from nine to six years the length of the terms of office for each nonstudent state university board of trustees member appointed on and after July 1, 2025. The bill also eliminates the prohibition against reappointing a person who has served at least six years of a term as a state university board of trustee member unless four years have elapsed since the last day of the person's previous term.<sup>35</sup>

### **Ohio State University student trustees**

The bill eliminates the law that requires the Ohio State University Board of Trustees to adopt a resolution to determine whether student members of the board of trustees should be granted voting power and authorizes the board to change student member voting power by subsequent resolution. The bill also eliminates related provisions regarding student eligibility for the board if student members are granted voting power. According to the [Ohio State University Trustee website](#) available at [trustees.osu.edu](http://trustees.osu.edu), the student trustees currently have voting powers.

Under the bill, student members of the Ohio State University Board of Trustees are prohibited from having voting power on the board, being considered members of the board in determining whether a quorum is present, and being entitled to attend executive sessions.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> R.C. 3333.045, repealed and replaced.

<sup>35</sup> R.C. 3335.02, 3337.01, 3339.01, 3341.02, 3343.02, 3344.01, 3350.10, 3352.01, 3356.01, 3359.01, 3361.01, 3362.01, and 3364.01.

<sup>36</sup> R.C. 3335.02 and 3335.09.

## **Northeast Ohio Medical University principal goals**

The bill removes the language that establishes the principal goals of the Northeast Ohio Medical University to work in collaboration with area state universities.<sup>37</sup>

## **Policy and report guidelines**

The bill requires the Chancellor to establish guidelines to address the form and manner by which each state institution must submit the various policies or reports required by the bill. Each policy or report that the Chancellor receives must be posted on the Chancellor's publicly accessible website.<sup>38</sup>

## **OTHER HIGHER EDUCATION PROVISIONS**

### **Three-year bachelor's degree study**

The bill requires the Department of Higher Education to complete a feasibility study regarding the implementation of bachelor's degree programs in the state that require three years to complete. The study must investigate a variety of fields of study and determine the feasibility of reducing specific course requirements, quantity of electives, and total credit hours required for graduation. The study cannot include the use of College Credit Plus or any other current programs used to accelerate degree programs. The study must also present and evaluate potential issues related to accreditation. The bill requires the Department to submit a report to the General Assembly regarding the study's findings within one year of the bill's effective date.<sup>39</sup>

Under continuing law, the Chancellor, as a condition of reauthorization for certification of each baccalaureate program the state institution offers, must require all state institutions that offer baccalaureate degrees to submit a statement describing how each major may be completed within three academic years. Under this requirement, state institutions are permitted to include, for example, advanced placement credits, international baccalaureate program credits, and College Credit Plus credits.<sup>40</sup>

## **Act title**

The bill is entitled as "The Advance Ohio Higher Education Act."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> R.C. 3350.10(A).

<sup>38</sup> R.C. 3345.0219; citing R.C. 3345.029, 3345.0217, 3345.0218, 3345.452 to 3345.454, 3345.591, 3345.80, and 3345.88.

<sup>39</sup> Section 4.

<sup>40</sup> R.C. 3333.43, not in the bill.

<sup>41</sup> Section 5.

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## HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	01-22-25
Reported, S. Higher Education	--

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