

House File 401 - Introduced

HOUSE FILE 401
BY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

(SUCCESSOR TO HSB 63)

A BILL FOR

- 1 An Act providing for general education requirements for
- 2 undergraduate students at regents institutions and including
- 3 applicability provisions.
- 4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

unofficial

1 Section 1. SHORT TITLE. This Act shall be known and may be
2 cited as the "Core Curriculum Act".

3 Sec. 2. NEW SECTION. **262C.1 Definitions.**

4 As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise
5 requires:

6 1. "Board" means the state board of regents.

7 2. "Institution" means an institution of higher learning
8 governed by the board.

9 Sec. 3. NEW SECTION. **262C.2 General education**
10 **requirements.**

11 The board shall develop and adopt a policy establishing
12 general education requirements for undergraduate students. The
13 policy must include all of the following:

14 1. Each institution shall establish all of the following
15 general education requirements that must be completed for a
16 student to receive an undergraduate degree:

17 a. Six semester credit hours of English.

18 b. Three semester credit hours of mathematics and statistics.

19 c. Four semester credit hours of natural sciences.

20 d. Six semester credit hours of social sciences.

21 e. Six semester credit hours of the humanities.

22 f. Three semester credit hours of western heritage.

23 Coursework satisfying this requirement shall consist of
24 introductory survey courses concerning western heritage such as
25 western civilization, British literature, or Greek philosophy.
26 Coursework for western heritage shall also satisfy the required
27 semester hours for English, social studies, or the humanities, as
28 designated by the institution.

29 g. Three semester credit hours of American heritage.

30 Coursework satisfying this requirement shall consist of
31 introductory survey courses concerning American heritage, such as
32 American history, Iowa history, American government, or American
33 literature. If the institution offers or requires a course on
34 American history and civil government, semester hours for that
35 course shall satisfy this requirement. Coursework for American

1 heritage shall also satisfy the required semester hours for
2 English, social studies, or the humanities, as designated by the
3 institution.

4 2. An institution shall not establish more than thirty-seven
5 semester credit hours of general education requirements. An
6 institution may increase the number of semester hours for any of
7 the requirements of subsection 1, provided that the total number
8 of required semester hours of general education shall not exceed
9 thirty-seven.

10 3. Except as provided in subsection 1, an institution shall
11 not designate any course as satisfying more than one of the
12 general education requirements provided in subsection 1.

13 4. An institution shall provide equivalent credit toward the
14 requirements of subsection 1 to a student transferring to the
15 institution for previous coursework completed by the student that
16 is substantially similar to a requirement of subsection 1.

17 5. If the board or an institution has established a school of
18 intellectual freedom or a center for civic education, the school
19 or center shall annually review and approve the courses that will
20 satisfy the requirements of subsection 1, paragraphs "f" and "g".

21 Sec. 4. NEW SECTION. 262C.3 Standards for course content.

22 The board shall adopt a policy to ensure that courses that
23 satisfy the general education requirements established pursuant
24 to section 262C.2 do not distort significant historical events
25 or include any curriculum or other material that teaches identity
26 politics or is based on theories that systemic racism, sexism,
27 oppression, or privilege are inherent in the institutions of the
28 United States of America or the state of Iowa. The policy shall
29 not limit the academic freedom of any course instructor to direct
30 the instruction within the instructor's course or limit the free
31 discussion of ideas in a classroom setting.

32 Sec. 5. NEW SECTION. 262C.4 Exceptions — waiver.

33 1. The general education requirements established pursuant to
34 section 262C.2 shall not apply to a student completing a degree
35 program that is designated by an institution as a degree program

1 of three years or less in duration.

2 2. The board may waive one or more requirements of section
3 262.2 for a degree program if the board determines the program is
4 in a complex field or requires an increased amount of focus on
5 the courses related to a student's major.

6 Sec. 6. NEW SECTION. **262C.5 Enforcement.**

7 Any person may notify the attorney general of an institution's
8 potential violation of this chapter. The attorney general may
9 bring an action against an institution for a writ of mandamus to
10 compel the institution to comply with this chapter.

11 Sec. 7. APPLICABILITY. This Act applies to students
12 beginning enrollment at institutions of higher learning governed
13 by the state board of regents in academic years beginning on or
14 after July 1, 2027.

15 EXPLANATION

16 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with
17 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

18 This bill requires the state board of regents (board)
19 to develop and adopt a policy establishing general education
20 requirements for undergraduate students. The bill provides
21 required content of the policy.

22 The general education requirements shall include required
23 coursework in English, mathematics and statistics, natural
24 sciences, social sciences, the humanities, western heritage, and
25 American heritage. The bill provides minimum semester hours for
26 each subject and specifies additional requirements for certain
27 subjects. The general education requirements shall not exceed
28 37 total semester hours. The bill provides additional standards
29 for the general education requirements, including standards for
30 transfer students.

31 The bill requires the board to adopt a policy to ensure that
32 courses that satisfy the general education requirements do not
33 distort significant historical events or include any curriculum
34 or other material that teaches identity politics or is based on
35 theories that systemic racism, sexism, oppression, or privilege

1 are inherent in the institutions of the United States of America
2 or the state of Iowa. The policy shall not limit the academic
3 freedom of any course instructor to direct the instruction within
4 the instructor's course or limit the free discussion of ideas in
5 a classroom setting.

6 The bill provides that the general education requirements
7 shall not apply to a student completing a degree program that
8 is designated by a regents institution as a degree program of
9 three years or less in duration. The bill authorizes the board
10 to waive one or more general education requirements for a degree
11 program if the board determines the program is in a complex field
12 or requires an increased amount of focus on the courses related
13 to a student's major.

14 The bill authorizes any person to notify the attorney
15 general of a regents institution's potential violation of the
16 requirements of the bill. The attorney general may bring an
17 action against an institution for a writ of mandamus to compel
18 the institution to comply.

19 The bill applies to students beginning enrollment at regents
20 institutions in academic years beginning on or after July 1,
21 2027.