

WAUKESHA COUNTY BUSINESS ALLIANCE

Advocate Develop Network Promote

May 7, 2019

Senator Dale Kooyenga
Room 310 South
State Capitol
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

The Waukesha County Business Alliance supports the proposed substitute amendment to SB 165. Recognizing that education is critical to developing a strong future workforce, the Alliance is focused on fostering effective education pathways that prepare students for job opportunities in the marketplace today and in the future. An important aspect of making those pathways effective is reducing the time and cost to obtain a post-secondary degree, which can be accomplished through transferable credits among higher education institutions.

Workforce development is the number one issue facing Waukesha County, the region and our state. An Alliance survey found that more than 85% of Waukesha County employers plan to expand their workforce in the next three years, yet 82% are unable to find enough qualified workers.

While we've made excellent progress over the years on articulation and transfer, there continue to be challenges with transferability of credits. Currently, 45% of students who transfer credits from the Wisconsin Technical College System enroll in the University of Wisconsin system. Around 20% enroll in Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU), and the remainder transfer to out-of-state institutions. We feel it's an economic imperative to keep as many of those students as possible in our state, and give them the opportunity to enjoy in-state tuition and all the other advantages of a UW education. Of the students who do transfer into UW, the average GPA after their first year is 3.0, and their second-year retention rates are very similar to transfers from other sectors.

However, many students are at a disadvantage when it comes to completion if many of their credits are not accepted, are counted as electives rather than program courses, or they are forced to pay twice for classes they've already passed. On the other hand, some UW institutions have excellent agreements with certain technical colleges. We think it makes sense to provide equal opportunity across the state, regardless of where you live.

Locally here in Southeastern Wisconsin, Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE) currently has articulation agreements with six technical colleges to accept technical college graduates as juniors. MSOE recently requested assistance to further expand that agreement to encompass all technical colleges. It only makes sense to strengthen the pipeline to UW campuses as well.

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The Alliance has a broad and diverse membership representing everything from sole proprietorships to some of the largest employers in the region from a variety of industries. Our 1,200 member organizations represent more than 75,000 employees. Anything we can do to align education with business and prepare students for success is a win-win. Improving and increasing the transfer of credits among our state's higher education institutions is an important part of the equation.

Best,



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