

SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 791

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 30, 2020

The Senate Higher Education Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 791 with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill requires undergraduate students enrolled in four-year institutions of higher education to file a degree plan with the institution. An undergraduate student enrolled in a four-year institution would be required to file a degree plan as soon as practicable, but not later than by the completion of 45 credit hours of course work. An undergraduate student who transfers to a four-year institution with at least 45 credit hours of course work would be required to file a degree plan during the student's first semester at the institution.

The bill requires degree-seeking undergraduate students enrolled in county colleges or proprietary institutions to file a degree plan as soon as practicable, but not later than by the completion of 30 credit hours of course work.

The bill defines "degree plan" as a statement of the course of study requirements that an undergraduate student enrolled in an institution of higher education or a proprietary institution must complete in order to graduate. A student's degree plan must be developed in consultation with an appropriate academic official in the student's degree program, or if such official is not available, with an appropriate academic official at the institution. The degree plan must follow a pathway to a degree.

The bill defines a "proprietary institution" as a proprietary institution licensed to offer academic degrees.

In addition, the bill requires institutions of higher education and proprietary institutions to develop pathway systems that establish graduation progress benchmarks for each academic major and for the general education program for students who have not declared a major. The pathway for each first-time degree-seeking student must include credit-bearing mathematics and English courses that are applicable towards degree requirements in the first 24 credit hours of course work. The pathway for each degree-seeking student enrolled in a remedial course in mathematics, reading, or English must include the credit-bearing course in that subject concurrent

with or in the semester immediately following completion of the remedial course.

Under the bill, the graduation progress benchmarks established by an institution of higher education or proprietary institution must specify the credit and course criteria that indicate satisfactory progress toward a degree. Academic departments at the institution must establish schedules for periodic reviews of student progress, and students who are in danger of falling behind the graduation progress benchmarks will be required to consult with an appropriate academic official prior to course registration.

The committee amended the definition of “proprietary institution” to include all proprietary institutions licensed to offer academic degree programs. The bill as introduced defined “proprietary institution” to mean a proprietary institution whose students are eligible to participate in any student financial aid program administered by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority. The committee also made a technical amendment to the effective date of the bill.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2020-2021 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.