House Bill 2504 Summary

Course Evaluation Requirement is Highlighted

House Bill 2504
House Author: Kolkhorst et al.
Effective: 6-19-09
Senate Sponsor: Shapiro

House Bill 2504 amends the Education Code to require each institution of higher education, other than a medical and dental unit, to post on the institution's website the following information for each undergraduate classroom course offered for credit by the institution: a syllabus, a curriculum vitae of each regular instructor, and, if available, a departmental budget report from the most recent semester or other academic term during which the institution offered the course. The bill requires the information to be accessible from the institution's website home page by use of not more than three links, searchable by keywords and phrases, and accessible to the public without requiring registration or use of a user name, password, or other user identification. The bill also establishes the semester or term deadline for making the information available, requires the institution to update the information as soon as practicable after the information changes, and requires the institution to designate an administrator to be responsible for ensuring implementation of these provisions. Each institution of higher education must submit a written report, not later than January 1 of each odd-numbered year, regarding the institution's compliance with these provisions to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the House of Representatives, and the presiding officer of each legislative standing committee with primary jurisdiction over higher education. Institutions of higher education included in these provisions also must conduct end-of-course student evaluations of faculty and develop a plan to make evaluations available on the institution's website. The bill makes these provisions applicable beginning with the 2010 fall semester.

The bill requires each institution of higher education to establish and maintain an online list of work-study employment opportunities available to students on the institution's campus and to ensure that the list is easily accessible to the public through a clearly identifiable link that appears in a prominent place on the financial aid page of the institution's Internet website.

The bill requires the coordinating board to prescribe uniform standards intended to ensure that information regarding the total cost of attendance at institutions of higher education is available to the public in a manner that is consumer-friendly and readily understandable to prospective students and their families. Each institution of higher education that offers an undergraduate degree or certificate program must prominently display on its website in accordance with the uniform standards information regarding the cost of attendance at the institution by a full-time entering first-year student, must conform to the uniform standards in any electronic or printed materials intended to provide to prospective undergraduate students information regarding the cost of attendance, and must consider those standards when providing information to the public or to prospective students regarding the attendance cost for nonresident students, graduate students, or students in professional programs. The bill requires the coordinating board to prescribe requirements for an institution to provide on the institution's website consumer-friendly and readily understandable information regarding student financial aid opportunities, which must be provided in connection with the required display of information regarding the cost of attendance by a full-time entering first-year student and must include a link to the primary federal student financial aid website intended to assist applicants for student financial aid.

The bill requires the coordinating board to provide on the board's website a program or tool that will compute the estimated net cost of attendance for a full-time entering first-year student attending an institution of higher education. The bill requires the coordinating board to require each institution to provide the information necessary to administer this provision. The bill requires the coordinating board to prescribe the initial standards and requirements under the bill's provisions not later than January 1, 2010, and to require institutions of higher education to comply with the standards and requirements not later than April 1, 2010.
The bill requires the coordinating board to encourage private or independent institutions of higher education approved to participate in the tuition equalization grant program, to the greatest extent practicable, to implement the practices required of public institutions regarding the display of the information described in the uniform standards on their websites and in electronic and printed materials and the inclusion of a link on their websites to the federal student financial aid website described above. The bill requires the coordinating board to make the net cost computation program or tool described