

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA  
ONE HUNDRED FOURTH LEGISLATURE  
FIRST SESSION

**LEGISLATIVE BILL 54**

Introduced by Scheer, 19.

Read first time January 08, 2015

Committee: Education

1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to universities and colleges; to amend section  
2 85-1413, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska; to change provisions  
3 relating to statewide transfer-of-credit policies; and to repeal the  
4 original sections.

5 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. Section 85-1413, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is  
2 amended to read:

3 85-1413 (1) Pursuant to the authority granted in Article VII,  
4 section 14, of the Constitution of Nebraska and the Coordinating  
5 Commission for Postsecondary Education Act, the commission shall  
6 establish and revise as needed a comprehensive statewide plan for  
7 postsecondary education which shall include (a) definitions of the role  
8 and mission of each public postsecondary educational institution within  
9 any general assignments of role and mission as prescribed in sections  
10 85-917 to 85-966 and (b) a plan for facilities which utilize tax funds  
11 designated by the Legislature.

12 (2) The planning process of the commission (a) shall be policy-based  
13 and ongoing in order to achieve, within the coordination function of the  
14 commission pursuant to section 85-1403, the best possible use of  
15 available state resources for high quality and accessible postsecondary  
16 educational services and (b) shall take into consideration (i) the needs  
17 of the state as described in subsection (3) of this section, (ii) general  
18 assignments of role and mission for each public institution in sections  
19 85-917 to 85-966, and (iii) plans for facilities which utilize tax funds  
20 designated by the Legislature.

21 (3) In establishing the plan, the commission shall assess the  
22 postsecondary educational needs of the state in the following areas:

- 23 (a) The basic and continuing needs of various age groups;
- 24 (b) Business and industrial needs for a skilled work force;
- 25 (c) Demographic, social, and economic trends;
- 26 (d) The needs of the ethnic populations;
- 27 (e) College attendance, retention, and dropout rates;
- 28 (f) The needs of recent high school graduates and place-bound  
29 adults;
- 30 (g) The needs of residents of all geographic regions; and
- 31 (h) Any other areas the commission may designate.

1 (4) The plan shall provide a structure or process which encourages  
2 and facilitates harmonious and cooperative relationships between public  
3 and private postsecondary educational institutions and shall recognize  
4 the role and relationship of elementary and secondary education and  
5 private postsecondary educational institutions in the state to  
6 postsecondary education.

7 (5) The commission shall incorporate into the plan provisions and  
8 policies to guide decisionmaking by the commission pursuant to this  
9 section and section 85-1414. The provisions and policies shall address  
10 issues which include, but are not limited to:

11 (a) The facilitation of statewide transfer-of-credit policies. The  
12 commission shall convene an advisory committee consisting of at least one  
13 representative of each public postsecondary educational institution in  
14 Nebraska and representatives from other interested postsecondary  
15 educational institutions. The commission, in cooperation with the  
16 advisory committee, shall develop transfer-of-credit policies that (i)  
17 ensure that students who have been awarded an associate of arts degree  
18 from a public community college in Nebraska have met all general  
19 education requirements at all public colleges and universities and (ii)  
20 ensure that any course included in the Nebraska Transfer Initiative list  
21 of transferable courses as such list existed on January 1, 2015, shall be  
22 accepted as partially fulfilling the general education requirements at  
23 all public colleges and universities, limited to the credit hours  
24 identified in the common core of general education courses in the  
25 Nebraska Transfer Initiative. The commission shall develop and maintain a  
26 web site, with information supplied by the postsecondary educational  
27 institutions, to serve as a guide and resource for students relating to  
28 transfer-of-credit policies guidelines to be considered by institutional  
29 governing boards. The statewide transfer-of-credit guidelines shall be  
30 designed to facilitate the transfer of students among public  
31 institutions. The statewide transfer-of-credit policies guidelines shall

1 not require ~~nor encourage~~ the standardization of course content and shall  
2 not prescribe course content or credit value. For purposes of this  
3 subdivision, the Nebraska Transfer Initiative means a common core  
4 curriculum developed by Nebraska's community colleges for students  
5 seeking to pursue a baccalaureate degree after earning an associate's  
6 degree from a community college assigned by any public institution to the  
7 courses;

8 (b) Recommended guidelines for admissions which recognize selective  
9 and differentiated admission standards at public institutions and which  
10 are consistent with the role and mission of each public institution. It  
11 is the intent of the Legislature that changes in admission standards be  
12 implemented in conjunction with the role and mission statements  
13 established pursuant to this section and sections 85-917 to 85-966 and  
14 the adoption of statewide transfer-of-credit and remedial program  
15 policies to assure that access to postsecondary education is not limited;

16 (c) Recommended enrollment guidelines consistent with the role and  
17 mission of each public institution and specific recommendations designed  
18 to increase diversity through more effective enrollment and retention at  
19 public institutions;

20 (d) Recommended guidelines for rational and equitable statewide  
21 tuition rates and fees for public institutions. The commission shall  
22 identify public policy issues relating to tuition and fees of the public  
23 postsecondary educational institutions in the state. The recommended  
24 guidelines shall take into account the role and mission of each public  
25 institution and the need to maximize access to public postsecondary  
26 education regardless of a student's financial circumstance;

27 (e) In conjunction with and consistent with its recommended  
28 guidelines on admission standards, recommended guidelines which place the  
29 primary emphasis at the community college level for postsecondary  
30 education remedial programs and reduce the role of the University of  
31 Nebraska in offering remedial programs. The commission shall collaborate

1 with the Commissioner of Education to develop recommendations for  
2 secondary schools designed to reduce the need for remedial or  
3 developmental programs at the postsecondary level;

4 (f) In consultation with the governing boards or their designated  
5 representatives, designation of geographic and programmatic service areas  
6 for each public institution consistent with role and mission assignments.  
7 Except as permitted by the commission pursuant to section 85-1414, no  
8 public institution shall provide programs at any site outside its  
9 assigned geographic and programmatic service area unless permitted under  
10 rules and regulations adopted and promulgated by the commission;

11 (g) After consultation with the governing boards and experts from  
12 outside the State of Nebraska, the establishment of a peer group or  
13 groups for each public institution for purposes of budget review. In  
14 fulfilling this charge, the commission may accept a peer group determined  
15 by a governing board in consultation with out-of-state experts;

16 (h) Effective use of information technologies and telecommunications  
17 to aid in the delivery of instruction at the postsecondary level. In  
18 cooperation with the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission,  
19 other state agencies, and, when appropriate, representatives of  
20 elementary and secondary public education, the commission may assist in  
21 the development of instructional delivery systems employing information  
22 technologies and telecommunications. The commission, with the involvement  
23 of faculties, public institutions and private postsecondary educational  
24 institutions, and the information technology and telecommunications  
25 community, shall establish policies to ensure that the objectives of  
26 quality and efficiency are met in the delivery of information technology  
27 and telecommunications-aided instruction;

28 (i) Workforce development. The commission shall explore methods to  
29 improve the competitive quality of the work force and shall encourage  
30 enhanced communications and partnerships between public institutions and  
31 business and industry;

1           (j) Public service activities. The public institutions shall develop  
2 and provide to the commission a comprehensive inventory of public service  
3 programs and activities of public institutions; and

4           (k) Financial aid strategy. The commission shall develop a state  
5 strategy for state-supported student financial aid programs with the goal  
6 of assuring access to and choice in postsecondary education in Nebraska  
7 for Nebraska residents within the limits of available state resources.

8           (6) The commission shall develop a unified statewide facilities plan  
9 in consultation with the governing boards or their designated  
10 representatives and update the plan periodically.

11           (7) Prior to March 15 of the year following a year in which any  
12 revision is made to the comprehensive statewide plan, the Education  
13 Committee of the Legislature shall review the comprehensive statewide  
14 plan and revisions thereto at a public hearing and report its findings  
15 electronically to the Legislature.

16           Sec. 2. Original section 85-1413, Reissue Revised Statutes of  
17 Nebraska, is repealed.