

Core Curriculum Study and Report: Survey Responses



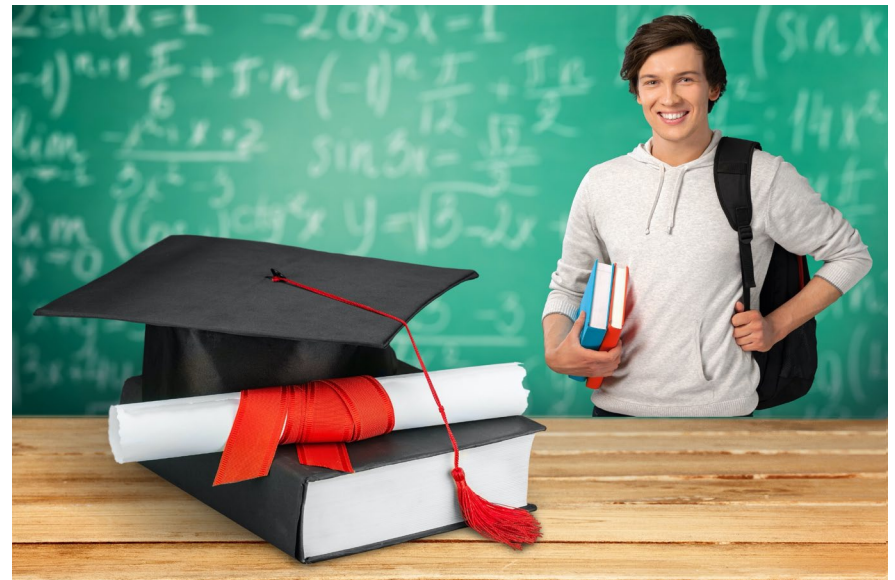
Texas Higher Education
Coordinating Board

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Overview of Presentation

1. Senate Bill 25, 86th Texas Legislature
2. Survey Methodology
3. Survey Results
4. Conclusion
5. Q&A



Senate Bill 25, 86th Texas Legislature

Amends various sections of the Texas Education Code

Contains provisions to help facilitate the transfer, academic progress, and timely graduation of students in higher education, including requiring a study on core curriculum and meta majors



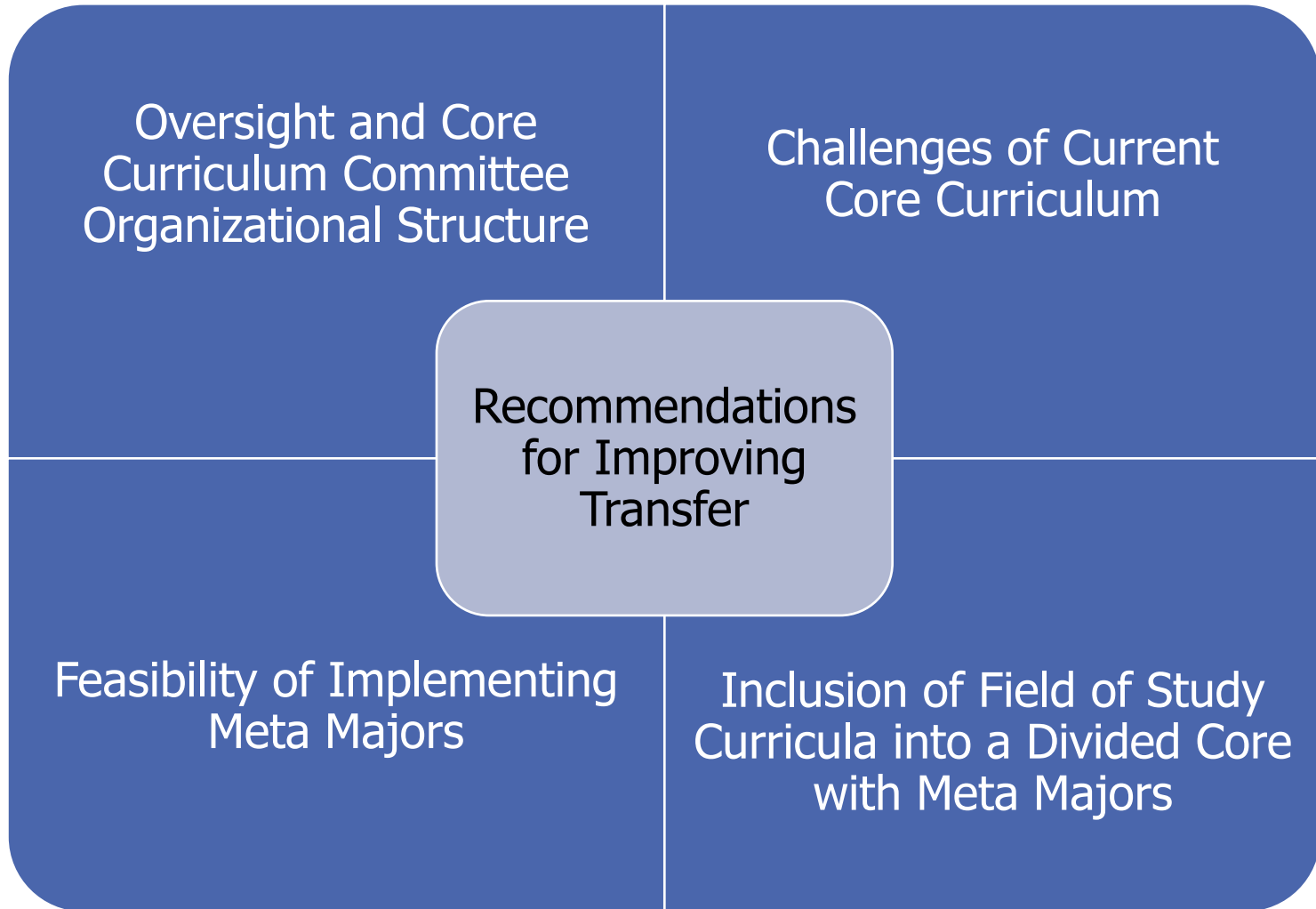
Survey Methodology

1. Open-ended survey was sent to each member of the Core Curriculum Study and Report Advisory Committee.

2. Survey was administered through Qualtrics and was completed by 19 of the 22 advisory committee members, with representation from 9 community colleges and 10 universities.

3. Data analysis involved multiple rounds of open coding to categorize responses into smaller codes, axial coding to group codes into larger categories, and selective coding to group codes into core categories and themes.

Responses Grouped into Five Broad Themes



Oversight and Core Curriculum Committee Organizational Structure

- Community colleges reported having one to two committees, with new courses more commonly initiated by committees or councils made up of faculty and administrators.
- Universities reported having several committees with oversight at various levels, with most reporting they began this process with faculty proposing new courses.

Challenges of Current Core Curriculum

Institutional Development Challenges

- Component area option (CAO)
 - Used as a place for courses that don't fit in an FCA
 - Institutions could be too prescriptive
 - Departments tended to propose major-specific courses
- Foundational component areas (FCA)
 - Creative Arts*
 - Language, Philosophy, and Culture*

*Difficult to come to a consensus about which courses fit core area definitions and which courses would meet requirements

Challenges of Current Core Curriculum

Course Transfer Challenges

- Course requirements to fulfill a given component area vary across universities
- Course requirements are often major-specific
- Inconsistencies with the FCA classification of courses across institutions
- Students taking courses to fulfill certain component areas before choosing degree path
- Frequent use of the CAO by universities to fulfill additional degree requirements for students

Feasibility of Implementing Meta Majors into Core Curriculum

Potential Benefits

- Having consistent courses and degree requirements across institutions
- Providing students with the flexibility for academic exploration
- Having the ability to provide transfer assurances

Potential Challenges

- Curricula-related issues
- Institutional non-compliance
- Narrow focus of courses

Including Field of Study Curricula into a Divided Core with Meta Majors

Potential Benefits

- Improving transferability by creating pathways and providing better advising
- Students would be able to take more discipline-specific courses
- Students might be more prepared for upper-division coursework

Potential Challenges

- Would require full-scale implementation across all institutions
- Impact on students who transfer or change majors
- Course-related issues
 - Limits to offerings
 - Dilution of the broad core
 - Potential additions of upper-division courses

Potential Recommendations for Improving Transfer

- More consistent use of existing resources
- Provision of proper advising and guided/academic pathways
- Creation of better community college/university partnerships
- Additional guidance, communication, and support from the THECB

Conclusion

Should policymakers choose to pursue mandating statewide meta majors, successful policy should account for:

- (1) ensuring compliance with accreditation requirements;
- (2) developing meta majors through a transparent process that involves all institutions and effectively addresses the curricular challenges; and
- (3) providing oversight to ensure adherence by all institutions to statewide meta major requirements.

Questions?

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