



SENATE BILL 315: Make Various Changes Regarding Higher Education.

2017-2018 General Assembly

Committee:		Date:	August 4, 2017
Introduced by:		Prepared by:	Kara McCraw Staff Attorney
Analysis of:	S.L. 2017-68		

OVERVIEW: *S.L. 2017-68 does the following:*

- *Directs the President of The University of North Carolina (President) to implement The University of North Carolina Undergraduate Degree Completion Improvement Plan that was submitted to the General Assembly in December 2016.*
- *Requires development of an articulation agreement between The University of North Carolina (UNC) and the North Carolina Community College System in early childhood education programs. By April 15, 2018, the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina (BOG) and the State Board of Community Colleges must report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the development of the articulation agreement and the plan for implementation at all community college campuses and constituent institutions with early childhood education programs. The systemwide articulation agreement must apply beginning with the 2018-2019 academic year.*
- *Directs the President, or the President's designee, and the BOG to consider and evaluate the feasibility of applying for and implementing the UTEACH program, a model program originally developed by the University of Texas at Austin, as part of the curricula offered by The UNC system. The President and the BOG must report their findings and recommendations regarding the feasibility of applying for and implementing the UTEACH program to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by April 1, 2018.*
- *Allows the BOG to set the expenditure benchmark for certain purchasing contracts for the President to be the same as the maximum allowed for the constituent institutions.*
- *Changes a reporting date for data on graduates of cooperative innovative high schools from March to September.*

This act became effective June 28, 2017.

PART I: UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE COMPLETION

ANALYSIS: S.L. 2017-68 directs the President of The University of North Carolina (President) to implement The University of North Carolina Undergraduate Degree Completion Improvement Plan that was submitted to the General Assembly in December, 2016. The Plan would be implemented beginning with the 2017-2018 academic year.

A copy of the report can be found at:

<http://www.ncleg.net/documentsites/committees/JLEOC/Reports%20Received/2017%20Reports%20Received/Modify%20NCGAP-Improve%20Student%20Degree%20Completion%20Rates.pdf>

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BACKGROUND: In 2015, the General Assembly directed the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina (BOG) and the State Board of Community Colleges (SBCC) to study and evaluate how a deferred admissions program, the North Carolina Guaranteed Admission Program (NC GAP), could improve graduation rates at the constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina and provide students with a college education at significantly lower costs for the students and the State. NC GAP would require students who satisfy the admissions criteria of a constituent institution but whose academic credentials are not as competitive as other admitted students, to first enroll in a community college and earn an associate's degree before enrolling in the constituent institution. Each constituent institution was to design a deferred admission program as a part of NC GAP for implementation at that institution beginning with the admissions process for the 2017-2018 academic year.

In 2016, the General Assembly made some revisions to its 2015 provision and directed the President, in consultation with the BOG, to adopt a plan to improve student completion of baccalaureate degrees that include specific targets for each constituent institution's completion rates. The plan could allow for a variety of strategies designed to best meet the needs of the individual constituent institutions including redesigned courses, early alert systems, and tutoring. This resulted in The University of North Carolina Undergraduate Degree Completion Improvement Plan which is to be implemented by this bill. Any constituent institution that does not implement the requirements of the Plan would have to implement NC GAP and a deferred admissions program.

PART II: EARLY EDUCATION ARTICULATION AGREEMENT

ANALYSIS: By March 1, 2018, the BOG and the SBCC are required to develop an articulation agreement for transfer of credits earned for an early childhood education program associate degree toward an early childhood education program baccalaureate degree. The articulation agreement will apply to all community college campuses and constituent institutions with early childhood education programs, and can include requirements for minimum grade point averages and minimum Praxis I scores for transferring students.

By April 15, 2018, the BOG and SBCC will be required to report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the development of the systemwide articulation agreement and plan for implementation. The systemwide articulation agreement will apply beginning with the 2018-2019 academic year.

PART III: UNC/UTEACH PROGRAM

ANALYSIS: The President, or the President's designee, and the BOG are directed to consider and evaluate the feasibility of applying for and implementing the UTEACH program as part of the curricula offered by The University of North Carolina system. UTEACH is a model program originally developed by the University of Texas at Austin that allows students to obtain the necessary requirements for a secondary teaching license at the same time as earning a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degree.

The President and BOG must consider a detailed list of factors in their evaluation, such as potential cost and which institutions would participate. A report of their findings and recommendations must be submitted to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by April 1, 2018.

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PART IV: UNC EXPENDITURE BENCHMARKS

PRIOR LAW: The BOG has the authority to set the expenditure benchmark for special responsibility constituent institutions at an amount no greater than \$500,000 for certain purchasing contracts so they do not have to be purchased through the State Purchasing Office. The BOG also has the authority to set the benchmark at different amounts for the different constituent institutions. In setting the benchmarks, the BOG must consider the institution's overall capacity including staff resources, purchasing compliance reviews, and audit reports. For those constituent institutions with expenditure benchmarks of greater than \$250,000, they must submit to the Division of Purchase and Contract for approval a copy of all offers received and the institution's recommendation of action. Notice of the Division's decision is sent back to the constituent institution with the institution proceeding with the action recommended by the Division.

ANALYSIS: The BOG will be allowed to also set the expenditure benchmark for the President at an amount no greater than \$500,000. The BOG will be able to change the benchmark from time to time and must consider the capacity of the President, including staff resources, purchasing compliance reviews, and audit reports. If the President is given an expenditure benchmark of greater than \$250,000, then the President must follow the same requirements as those followed by the constituent institutions currently with that authority including submitting offers to the Division of Purchase and Contract.

PART V: REPORTING DATE CHANGE

PRIOR LAW: The 2015 Appropriations Act directed the BOG to report annually beginning March 1, 2017 to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the numbers of students who graduated from a cooperative innovative high school program with an associate degree and whether the students applied as freshmen or transfer students.

ANALYSIS: The annual reporting date of this report is changed to September 30 beginning with September 30, 2017.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This act became effective June 28, 2017.

**Drupti Chauhan and Brian Gwyn, Committee Counsel, significantly contributed to this summary.*