

ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 1315

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 22, 2026

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 1315.

As reported, this bill modifies the collective Statewide transfer agreement and reverse transfer agreement and establishes the New Jersey Transfer Ombudsperson within the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education.

Current law requires each public institution of higher education to enter into a collective Statewide transfer agreement, in consultation with the Secretary of Higher Education and the New Jersey Presidents' Council. This bill requires each public institution of higher education to enter into a collective Statewide transfer agreement developed by the New Jersey Presidents' Council, in consultation with the New Jersey Transfer Ombudsperson established pursuant to the bill's provisions, and approved by the Secretary of Higher Education. The agreement is required to provide for the transfer of academic credits between all public institutions of higher education in the State, including academic credits earned through a dual enrollment or concurrent enrollment agreement.

Under the bill, the agreement would include:

(1) a listing of the general education courses compiled by the secretary in consultation with the Presidents' Council;

(2) policies and procedures for the:

(a) transfer and application of academic credits for general education courses between public institutions of higher education;

(b) transfer and application of academic credits to a baccalaureate degree program from a completed associate degree program;

(c) transfer and application of academic credits for courses completed under a dual enrollment agreement or a concurrent agreement between a public school in the State and a public institution of higher education in the State; and

(d) transfer and application of academic credits for courses completed under certain dual enrollment agreements or concurrent enrollment agreements approved by the Secretary of Higher Education;

(3) policies and procedures for the implementation of an appeals process at each participating institution of higher education for

students and institutions to resolve disputes regarding the transfer of academic credits;

(4) policies and procedures for the collection of data by the secretary to be utilized by the New Jersey Transfer Ombudsperson to ensure compliance with the law; and

(5) policies and procedures for the transfer and application of academic credits earned through participation in dual enrollment or concurrent enrollment.

The bill removes a provision in current law that requires the annual review and update of the collective Statewide transfer agreement.

Current law requires each institution of higher education, in consultation with the Secretary of Higher Education and the New Jersey Presidents' Council, to establish and enter into a collective Statewide reverse transfer agreement. This bill requires each institution of higher education to enter into a collective Statewide reverse transfer agreement developed by the New Jersey Presidents' Council, in consultation with the New Jersey Transfer Ombudsperson and approved by the Secretary of Higher Education. The bill removes a provision in current law that requires the annual review and update of the agreement.

The bill establishes the position of the New Jersey Transfer Ombudsperson within the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education. The primary purpose of the ombudsperson is to serve as a resource for students and participating institutions of higher education regarding compliance with the credit transfer agreement in order to foster the transfer process and the academic success of transfer students. The ombudsperson may, upon the request of a student or participating institution of higher education, serve as an impartial third-party mediator of disputes between one or more students and a participating institution or between two or more participating institutions.

The bill directs the ombudsperson to regularly convene, but not more than biannually, stakeholders from participating institutions to determine best practices in credit transfer and share findings related to the institutions' implementation of the credit transfer agreement.

Under the bill, the ombudsperson is responsible for the: (1) periodic review, occurring not less than once every five years, of the agreement; and (2) preparation of the annual credit transfer report.

The bill stipulates that the provisions of the bill are not to be construed to confer upon the ombudsperson the authority to compel an institution of higher education to accept academic credits.

The bill directs the Secretary of Higher Education to approve or disapprove any dual enrollment or concurrent enrollment agreement in which the partnering institution of higher education is located out-of-State.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates that this bill would primarily result in an annual State expenditure increase of approximately \$300,000 for the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education. The increase in costs is associated with the employment of a New Jersey Transfer Ombudsperson.

The OLS notes that participating institutions of higher education may incur indeterminate, likely marginal, cost increases associated with the collection of data, to the extent that the required data is not already collected and existing staff and resources are not sufficient to collect the required data.