

Higher Education Legislation in the 2009 Minnesota Legislature – Summary

Office of Higher Education:

State Grant Program –The bill reinvests the money made available by the federal Pell Grant increases, changes in the need analysis and changes in family incomes. The bill makes the following changes in the State Grant program:

- **4-year tuition maximum** – The bill increases the tuition maximum used in calculating State Grants for students in four-year programs by \$650, from \$9,838 to \$10,488. Thus, the four-year maximum for 2010 and 2011 will be \$10,488.
- **2-year maximum** - The bill makes no change in the tuition maximum for students in two-year programs – it will be \$5,808 in 2010 and the same amount in 2011.
- **Living and miscellaneous expense allowance** – the allowance for room and board, books and supplies, transportation and other expenses of attending will increase by \$800 from \$6,200 to \$7,000.
- **9th semester of eligibility** - The bill adds a 9th semester of eligibility for State Grant recipients. Currently, State Grant recipients are eligible for awards until they have attended for 8 semesters (4 years) or the equivalent. The bill changes the period of eligibility to 9 semesters.
- **Language to award full grants** – The bill has language saying the legislature intends the Office to make full grant awards in each year of the biennium. This means the Office would ask for a deficiency appropriation if the appropriation were to run short.
- **Summer transition programs** - The bill spends \$4.9 million for the biennium on a new portion of the State Grant program dedicated to summer transition program grants for low-income students needing remedial courses as they go from high school to postsecondary education. The Office must collect data and report on the effectiveness of the program with the advice of a data working group.
- **Semesters of eligibility for students who withdraw for serious illness** - As currently occurs for students who withdraw for active military duty, the bill extends the period of eligibility for State Grant by one additional semester for a student who had to withdraw from college due to a major illness, while under the care of a medical professional, that substantially limits the student's ability to complete the term.

Achieve Scholarships – The bill expands the Achieve Scholarship program. The appropriation is \$4.35 million each year for 2010 and 2011. The scholarships will go to students who receive federal Pell Grants or State Grants. The scholarships will range from a minimum of \$1,200 to approximately \$4,000 and will be for the student's first year of postsecondary attendance. Students must enroll full-time within the academic year following high school graduation. The high school courses students must take to be eligible remain unchanged. The grade point requirement changes from a requirement to have a grade of C or better in each qualifying course to an overall high school grade point average of 2.5 or better. In addition, the language says that the requirement for recipients to have taken a foreign language in high school will be waived for students who are English language learners and who have achieved proficiency in English.

Eligible students who graduated between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2008 can receive a one-time scholarship of \$1,200 available for use within the four years immediately following their high school graduation if they met the eligibility guidelines in place in fiscal year 2009.

Postsecondary Child Care Assistance Grants – The bill has \$6.684 million each year for grants to assist low-income students with child care expenses while attending college and working. The amount is an increase of \$500,000 each year.

State Work Study – The bill has \$14.944 million each year for State Work Study jobs for students on campuses around the state. The amount is an increase of \$2.5 million each year.

American Indian Scholarships – The bill has \$2 million each year, an increase of \$125,000 each year.

Power of You – The Governor line-item vetoed the state funding. The bill had \$1 million each year for the Power of You program at MnSCU, \$500,000 to continue the program at existing sites in Minneapolis and St. Paul and \$500,000 for additional sites in the Twin Cities suburbs and Greater Minnesota. The Power of You provides free tuition for students who receive federal Pell Grants or State Grants who graduate from Minneapolis and St. Paul high schools and attend MnSCU institutions in Minneapolis or St. Paul. Those whose Pell and State Grants add up to less than their tuition and fees receive a Power of You scholarship. In 2009, MnSCU received \$600,000 in one-time general fund dollars for the Power of You.

Technical and Community College Emergency Grants – The Office is to transfer \$150,000 each year to the MnSCU two-year institutions for emergency aid grants to students who are experiencing extraordinary economic circumstances that may result in dropping out of school without completing the term or their program.

Veterinary loan forgiveness – Loan forgiveness for veterinarians who treat large food animals and work in rural areas. The program is similar to loan forgiveness programs for health professionals working in underserved areas, and OHE plans to have an interagency agreement with the Department of Health which will administer the program. It is designed to serve up to 5 borrowers each year.

Intervention for College Attendance Program – The bill has \$746,000 each year for grants to postsecondary institutions and community agencies for pre-college awareness or intervention programs for low-income students. Grant recipients in 2008 and 2009 are to be given priority. The amount is an increase of \$250,000 each year. The language mandates a report by OHE on the most effective features of the programs and how they might be expanded to regional or statewide populations.

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities:

Tuition increase cap language – Final legislative action (SF 2083 and HF 2251 taken together) says tuition increases, after using federal stabilization funds, must not exceed 3 percent in 2010 and 5 percent in 2011, for a net increase of 8 percent for the biennium.

University of Minnesota:

Tuition increase cap language – Final legislative action (SF 2083 and HF 2251 taken together) says the net tuition increase, after using federal stabilization funds, must not exceed \$300 in 2010 (about 3 percent) and \$450 in 2011 about 4.5 percent.

Statutory Language changes:

Notice to Students Regarding Possible Impact of Criminal Records – Public and private institutions shall give notice to each person accepted for admission and at the time students select a major. The notice shall inform students that arrests, charges, or convictions of criminal offenses may limit employment possibilities in specific careers and occupations and may limit their ability to obtain federal state and other financial aid. The notice must not discourage students from applying for financial aid. An institution is not liable for failing to provide the notice.

American made clothing – The bill has language requiring clothing sold in campus bookstores to be made in the USA to the extent possible. Campuses must report on their progress on efforts to comply with the language.

Teacher Education Report – OHE must do a study of best practices in teacher education programs and report by June 15, 2010.

FAFSA Compliance by Institutions and Report by OHE – In order to be eligible for their students to receive State Grants, institutions must implement policies and procedures that ensure that applicants for admission are aware they must complete the FAFSA to be eligible for financial aid. OHE must report on the policies and procedures adopted by institutions to increase student awareness of the need to complete a FAFSA, with a preliminary assessment of the effectiveness of the policies and procedures.

Job Placement Impact on Program Review; Information to Students – MnSCU must assess labor market data when conducting college program reviews. Colleges must provide prospective students with the job placement rate for graduates of technical and occupational programs offered at the colleges.

MnSCU Degree Requirements – Until 1/2/2012 an associate of applied science degree offered by a college in MnSCU is exempt from the 60 semester credit length limit. By 2/2/2012, the MN State College Faculty and MN State College Student Association must present a joint report on a process for reviewing the credit requirements for an AAS degree.

Textbooks - The Office will work with representatives of textbook publishers, the higher education systems, and students on a report on the implementation of textbook pricing disclosure requirements.

Oral Health Practitioners and Dental Therapists - The bill has language creating a new category of dental therapists, similar to a nurse practitioner for dental care. Dental therapists will be trained at MnSCU institutions and the University of Minnesota.