

1 **SENATE FLOOR VERSION**

2 February 9, 2021

3 SENATE BILL NO. 237

By: Pemberton of the Senate

4 and

5 McBride of the House

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7
8 An Act relating to tuition aid grants; amending 70
9 O.S. 2011, Section 626.4, which relates to
10 availability of tuition aid grants; removing language
11 directing tuition aid grants to be awarded to all
12 eligible applicants; amending 70 O.S. 2011, Section
13 626.7, which relates to awarding of tuition aid
14 grants; allowing rather than requiring grants to be
15 awarded annually; removing language prohibiting
16 certain increase in maximum grant award; removing
17 language basing award amount on certain federal
18 financial aid regulations; removing language
19 regarding determination of financial need based on
20 certain standards; amending 70 O.S. 2011, Section
21 626.8, which relates to prioritizing participation
22 for tuition aid grants; providing additional factors
23 to be considered; providing an effective date; and
24 declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2011, Section 626.4, is
amended to read as follows:

Section 626.4. State tuition aid grants shall be awarded ~~to all~~
~~eligible applicants~~ without any limitation on the number to be
awarded in any year other than the amount of appropriations

1 available therefor. The institution involved may appropriately
2 schedule work to permit recipients to earn the amount of said
3 tuition grants.

4 Definitions of full-time and part-time undergraduate and
5 graduate students shall be established by the Oklahoma State Regents
6 for Higher Education.

7 SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2011, Section 626.7, is
8 amended to read as follows:

9 Section 626.7. A college tuition aid grant ~~shall~~ may be awarded
10 annually to each eligible, qualified full-time or part-time
11 undergraduate or graduate student enrolled in a curriculum leading
12 to a degree or certificate in an institution of collegiate grade or
13 postsecondary institution providing a program of training to prepare
14 students for employment in a recognized occupation in Oklahoma
15 approved or accredited by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher
16 Education or appropriate postsecondary agency in accordance with the
17 following:

18 1. Eligibility. Each full-time or part-time resident student
19 will be eligible to receive a grant in an amount as provided in
20 paragraph 2 of this section. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher
21 Education shall determine by rules and regulations the maximum
22 number of semesters a student may be eligible for grants. No
23 student shall be eligible for grants unless the student maintains
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1 such minimum standards of academic performance as are required by
2 the institution in which the student is enrolled.

3 In the event a student for any reason ceases to continue to be
4 enrolled during the course of an academic year, the student shall
5 cease to be eligible for tuition aid.

6 2. Amount of grant. The amount of tuition aid grant to any
7 student under ~~this act~~ the Oklahoma Higher Education Tuition Act for
8 any semester shall represent a percentage not greater than seventy-
9 five percent (75%) of the tuition and enrollment fees normally
10 charged to residents of the State of Oklahoma by the institution of
11 attendance. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall
12 determine by rules the annual maximum award amount based on an
13 annual assessment of funds availability. ~~The State Regents shall~~
14 ~~not increase the annual maximum award amount unless funding is~~
15 ~~sufficient to serve at least the same number of students as the~~
16 ~~previous academic year.~~

17 ~~For the 2000-2001 academic year and each academic year~~
18 ~~thereafter, the percentage of aid shall be based on a need analysis~~
19 ~~system that is consistent with federal student financial aid~~
20 ~~regulations. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall~~
21 ~~set an annual award payment schedule based upon a maximum grant of~~
22 ~~seventy-five percent (75%) of tuition and fees with grants based on~~
23 ~~lower percentages of tuition and fees being awarded to students who~~
24 ~~demonstrate lower financial need.~~

1 ~~Any student who receives an award for the 1999-2000 academic~~
2 ~~year shall not be denied additional awards because of inability to~~
3 ~~meet the financial standards established in this act as long as~~
4 ~~other eligibility criteria continue to be met and as long as the~~
5 ~~award status of the student is renewed on an annual basis. The~~
6 ~~Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education are authorized to~~
7 ~~establish procedures to determine the financial need of the student~~
8 ~~under the standards used during the 1999-2000 academic year until~~
9 ~~the initial degree requirements are met by the student.~~

10 Financial assistance received under ~~this act will~~ the Oklahoma
11 Higher Education Tuition Act shall be considered as part of a
12 student's financial aid package.

13 SECTION 3. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2011, Section 626.8, is
14 amended to read as follows:

15 Section 626.8. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education
16 may adopt rules and regulations, prescribe and provide appropriate
17 forms for application and employ such persons, contract for such
18 services and make such additional expenditures as may be necessary
19 or appropriate for effectuating the provisions of ~~this act~~ Section
20 626.1 et seq. of this title.

21 The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education are hereby
22 authorized to determine priorities for participation in this tuition
23 aid program ~~by~~ based upon factors including but not limited to full-
24 time, or part-time enrollment status, undergraduate ~~and~~ or graduate

1 ~~students~~ enrollment status, unmet financial need, continuous
2 enrollment, nearness to completion of a degree or certificate, state
3 employment needs, eligibility for other state and institutional
4 student financial aid and based on available state funding.

5 SECTION 4. This act shall become effective July 1, 2021.

6 SECTION 5. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
7 of the public peace, health or safety, an emergency is hereby
8 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
9 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

10 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
11 February 9, 2021 - DO PASS
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