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Good Morning Chairman Murphy and committee members, I want to start by thanking you Chairman Murphy for holding a hearing on AB266. This bill is a fix to the Technical Excellence Scholarship that Senator Gudex and I worked on two sessions ago. The original bill became 2013 ACT 60. I'm proud to work on this bill with the late Senator's successor Sen. Feyen. Senator Gudex was a champion of workforce development and his talents are missed. Sen. Feyen is very aptly taking up that mantle.

2013 Wisconsin Act 60 created a Technical Excellence Higher Education Scholarship Program under which HEAB awards scholarships to certain scholars, designated on the basis of level of proficiency in technical education subjects, who enroll, on a full-time basis, in a technical college district school. Under this program, the number and amounts of scholarships awarded, the duration for which a scholarship may be awarded, the conditions for continued receipt of a scholarship, and the institutional match requirement are the same as under the Academic Excellence Higher Education Scholarship Program. The Act also provides that a person may not receive both an Academic Excellence Higher Education Scholarship and a Technical Excellence Higher Education Scholarship.

It's been a pleasure to visit with my local schools and hear about the process they undergo to determine tech excellence students. With that in mind when HEAB approached us about making a couple changes to the original program in order to get more technical students in the pipeline I was happy to work on this once again. AB626 makes changes to the program in order to either help existing tech scholarship recipients or make the program a bit more flexible to reflect the needs of today's tech students however nontraditional they may be. The nature of technical education and really higher Ed as a whole tends to create new normal situations. By that I mean some students earn credits prior to entrance to higher Ed, some students are on waiting lists, not all students can be full time every semester. This bill addresses that by allowing part time students with excellent technical skills to maintain eligibility for these scholarships.

This bill also reflects a need for some students to achieve educational goals while maintaining a full life. Some students do have a need to take a semester or more off during their education. We should not punish them for the gap while they maintain all other eligibility. In fact, we must find a way to help them maintain the motivation as



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time does pass. This bill gives these students the certainty that they are still a part of the program and that their goals are important to us.

All recipients have their progress tracked and under this bill certified by their educational institution to maintain eligibility.

Just as important some students may fall below the GPA requirements of the bill. This bill makes an important change in allowing a student the opportunity to repair their GPA and regain standing in the program over time.

In the end the changes such as allowing a student who takes time off to come back into the program or allowing a student who falls under the academic requirement to repair their situation and requalify will help fill out the slots in the program while proving we have a commitment to seeing technically superior students achieve their goals and help the State of WI realize their full workforce impact.

Under the current formula 875 scholarships can be offered. In the first year 614 awards were made. The funds were allocated in the state budget and putting them to use to get more students into our technical college programs and into the workforce is a great use of those dollars. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.



DAN FEYEN

STATE SENATOR

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To: The Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities
From: Sen. Dan Feyen
Re: Assembly Bill 266

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for holding this hearing today.

The Technical Excellence Scholarship began awarding scholarships in the 2015-2016 academic year. The intent of the program was to mimic the Academic Excellence Scholarship, which is awarded to valedictorians throughout the state, for students who showed a propensity for technical subjects.

The scholarships may only be used at a school within the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS). The value of the scholarship is up to \$2,250 per year, to be applied towards tuition for six semesters.

However, there are a few issues with the original legislation (2013 SB 334) that HEAB has identified while administering the program. This legislation aims to fix those issues and improve the scholarship program in the following ways:

- 1) Defines "full time" as six credits for the purpose of TES: Some students coming into the WTCS system had difficulty enrolling in a full 15 credits in their first semesters as the classes they needed for the degree they are pursuing were already full and they had completed all necessary prerequisites in high school. Therefore, they were losing eligibility for the scholarship through no fault of their own. This legislation redefines 6 credits as full time for the purpose of this scholarship.
- 2) Changes "satisfactory progress" to school-certified progress: The original legislation contained some vague language regarding a student making satisfactory progress towards a degree. HEAB found this difficult to enforce as it is ambiguous. This legislation changes the requirement so that the WTCS school the scholarship recipient is enrolled in must certify the student's progress for HEAB's purposes in administering the scholarship.
- 3) Redefines the 3.0 GPA requirement: The statutes currently state that a student must maintain a 3.0 GPA. However, if a student's GPA drops below a 3.0 GPA, they lose the scholarship, and the student then pulls their GPA back up to a 3.0, HEAB can't reinstate the scholarship. By changing the statute students will now have the ability to correct their mistakes and earn their scholarship back.

Thank you for your time today. I welcome any questions you may have.

Nate Helm-Quest
N4762 State Road 76
Shiocton WI 54170
920-986-4044

My name is Nate Helm-Quest and I am the HEAB Technical College Student Representative. I have been a student at both Madison College (MATC) and Fox Valley Technical College and I would like to endorse Assembly Bill 266, which would amend the Technical Excellence Scholarship (TES) program overseen by HEAB.

Currently TES provides scholarships for up to 875 students each year to attend one of Wisconsin's 16 technical colleges. However, there are two issues with the current TES criteria:

- The requirement for students to be enrolled full-time (12 credits)
- The inability for a student who has lost eligibility to regain their scholarship

It may not always be possible for technical college students to be enrolled full-time under certain circumstances such as: they have work or family commitments, they have obtained technical college credits while still in high school, or they are on a wait list for certain classes in a high demand fields such as nursing or welding and there are not 12 credits available to maintain full-time status while they're on a wait list. Under the current TES criteria, a student in any of these situations would lose their scholarship by no fault of their own.

The ability for a student who has fallen below a 3.0 GPA to regain their scholarship is crucial as many technical college students have limited resources to continue their education without the scholarship. In addition, students who lose their scholarship may become discouraged and withdrawal from college altogether. It is important to note that the amendments to AB 266 do not relax the 3.0 GPA requirements, but rather gives students a chance to earn back their scholarship the following semester, if they increase their GPA.

AB 266 would allow students to retain their TES scholarship with an enrollment of six credits. TES students should be able to enroll with at least 6 credits per semester as we must be fair to students who can only attend college part time. AB 266 would also allow a TES student to regain their scholarship if they fall below a 3.0 GPA. Currently there is not an opportunity for a TES student to ever regain the scholarship, if it is lost because a low GPA. These two simple changes will help many students, who earn a TES scholarship, finish their education even if they have obstacles along the way.

I appreciate your consideration,

Nate Helm-Quest

Nate Helm-Quest
HEAB Technical College Student Representative



State of Wisconsin
Higher Educational Aids Board

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Scott Walker
Governor

John Reinemann
Executive Secretary

TO: Members, Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities

FROM: John Reinemann, HEAB Executive Secretary

RE: Assembly Bill 266, Eligibility for the Technical Excellence Scholarship (TES) Program

DATE: May 11, 2017

Your committee is holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill 266. I appear today to express support 266, which would amend the provisions of the Technical Excellence Scholarship (TES) program administered by HEAB.

TES provides scholarships for up to 875 students each year to attend technical college anywhere within the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS).

Concerns have been expressed about the TES program (now at the end of its second year) by HEAB staff, by the HEAB Board, by financial aid staff at WTCS schools, and by others involved with the program. AB 266 was introduced to address two of these concerns.

The concerns addressed in the bill are as follow:

1. TES currently requires that students receiving a TES scholarship be enrolled full-time at a WTCS school. (Full-time enrollment for financial aid purposes is generally 12 credits per semester.)

As the TES program was publicized, financial aid professionals began to note that for some students, full-time enrollment at a WTCS school would not always be possible.

Sometimes a student arrives on campus at a WTCS school having obtained credits at the technical college as a high school student, and for this reason they have already taken the usual "first semester" courses offered.

Some students want courses of study that may have waiting lists for key classes. Some students simply have to work part-time and can't attend full time.

Some of the most-popular WTCS programs (such as nursing), waitlists for course slots play a role in dictating in which courses a student may enroll.

MORE

May 11, 2017

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In each of these situations, there are may be reasons why a TES scholarship winner could not enroll at technical college immediately at a full-time level. Such students would lose their TE's scholarships through no fault of their own.

AB 266 would amend the law to allow students to retain their TES scholarship with an enrollment of six credits. In HEAB's discussions with WTCS financial aid professionals, it appears that most or all TES students should be able to enroll with at least 6 credits per semester (half-time) in most semesters as they pursue their technical educations.

2. AB 266 would also put into law the ability to a TES student to regain their TES scholarship if they fall below a 3.0 GPA. The bill does NOT alter the requirement that students maintain a 3.0; but it does provide that if a student has a TES scholarship and then loses it because they fall below a 3.0, the student could regain the scholarship if they can attain a 3.0 GPA in a later semester. Currently the law does not provide for such students to be able to ever regain the scholarship, if it is lost for a low GPA.

These two changes to TE's are the purpose of AB 266. I know that the changes in the bill would help students who win a TES scholarship but who may have problems collecting or retaining the scholarship without these changes.

The changes in AB 266 are consistent with many other programs including other programs at HEAB. They seem to me to be common sense proposals and seem to be consistent with the support for technical education and technical students expressed by the legislature when it created the TES program two years ago.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.



MADISON AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE'S DEPARTMENT OF

STUDENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

May 9, 2017

Dear Assembly Hearing Officials,

Today, I write you in support of financial aid security, advocacy and retention opportunities for students in the State of Wisconsin. My name is Keyimani Alford, Manager of Student Financial Support Services at Madison Area Technical College and I am in full support of Assembly Bill 266 which would amend the provisions of the Technical Excellence Higher Education Scholarship (TES) program administered by the Higher Educational Aids Board. As an institution who awarded \$132,750.00 to 104 students (11.8% of WTCS institutions) in TES funding in 2016-17, the ability for students to have the opportunity to obtain or regain eligibility if he or she does not academically satisfy the requirements is essential to supporting the financial challenges within the State of Wisconsin and my institution specifically.

Madison College and other Title IV institutions are mandated to pay courses that are specific to a student's program of study. Based on this requirement, institutions like mines have options that allow students the ability to be placed on waiting lists. However, these waiting lists can cause delays in key courses due course demand. For TES students, and students alike who have waiting list courses, they are not classified as officially enrolled until permission is granted. Therefore, the full-time TES enrollment requirement could have some direct implications for students who fall into this category jeopardizing eligibility.

The Assembly Bill 266 provides additional flexibility to financial aid offices that support retention efforts of colleges and students. Research concerning two year institutions have shown the variations of credit-levels due to a high percentage of our students being classified as working adults – and not necessarily the traditional student who just takes college credits without having other responsibilities. Advocacy to amend the law allowing students to retain their TES scholarship on the basis of enrollment of six (6) credits is in the best interest of the student. Especially, students whose only means to afford a college education is through federal, state or institutional assistance.

In additional support of Assembly Bill 266, are the concerns of high school students entering our institutions with previously obtained college credit and how it can impact their ability to enroll at a full-time level due to courses that have satisfied college requirements. The amendment would help this issue by lessening the full-time stipulations for these students. Having the ability to retain eligibility is integral for students and beneficial for institutions who may be seeking to find ways to meet the needs

of students as college affordability is challenged due to increases in tuition, fees, and living expenses. These are all direct factors that determine if a student can sustain their dream of a college education.

Madison College also asks that you accept Assembly Bill 266 because it assists in supporting the ability for students to regain eligibility for the TES scholarship if they fall below the required 3.0 Grade Point Average (GPA). In other programs that require a GPA for eligibility, there are often protections that afford a student subsequent term reinstatement options if they don't meet a requirement. For 2015-2016 Madison College TES students fell in the following categories (based on 70 students).

- ❖ 10 students fell below a 1.999 GPA

- ❖ 7 students fell between a 2.000 – 2.499 GPA

- ❖ 16 students fell between a 2.500 – 3.000 GPA


- ❖ 37 students had a 3.001 GPA or higher

With 47% of our 2015-2016 TES students not meeting the GPA requirement, their eligibility was impacted. However, the Assembly Bill 266 provides opportunity to students who are like these. We support the academic standards that are outlined in the TES program; however, there should be some flexibility for students who might miss the mark to be given another chance to have funding restored. Unfortunately, the current law does not provide that option for students and it could be a disservice to supporting post-secondary institutions.

The changes and support of Assembly Bill 266 provides consistency with other programs that are administered by the Higher Educational Aids Board and it would further align the commitment to education and financial support as a member of the Wisconsin Technical College System.

Thank you for consideration of this request as our desire is to provide opportunities to students who seek a college education.

Respectfully,



Keyimani Alford
Manager, Student Financial Support Services
Madison Area Technical College



May 10, 2017

Honorable David Murphy
Chair of the Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities
Room 318 North, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53708

**RE: Assembly Bill 266 (AB 266) Technical Excellence Higher Education
Scholarship Program**

Dear Chairman Murphy,

As the Financial Aid Representative of the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) to the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) and also on behalf of Northcentral Technical College, I want to express my strong support for Assembly Bill 266. AB 266 would amend the full-time enrollment requirement for the Technical Excellence Scholarship (TES) and provide scholars who lose eligibility due to their Grade Point Average (GPA) falling below the 3.0 mandate the ability to regain eligibility if they can attain a 3.0 GPA in a later semester.

The TES provides scholarships for up to 875 students each year to attend technical colleges within the WTCS. The recipients are Wisconsin high school seniors who have the highest demonstrated level of proficiency in technical education subjects. With well over 80% of technical college graduates choosing to live and work in Wisconsin in careers directly related to the training that they completed at a WTCS school, it is very gratifying to see the return on investment that the State of Wisconsin and the colleges who provide funding for these scholarships gain from their support of the young men and women chosen as TES scholars.

AB 266 addresses concerns that financial aid professionals within the WTCS, including myself, began to note with the inception of the TES during the 2015-2016 college academic year. We soon realized some students were unable to meet the full-time enrollment requirement through no fault of their own. Reasons for being unable to do so varied from student to student: some students chose high demand programs such as Nursing, where their ability to immediately begin taking a full course load was limited; some students were required to add an intermediary class to improve their academic skills, which limited their ability to take more advanced courses; other students arrived on campus having already obtained post-secondary credits during high school, and



while academically they were ahead of other first-semester students, it reduced the number of credits needed within that first semester of their programs; and still others, coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, needed to work while going to school and could not manage a full-time course load, which for financial aid purposes is typically 12 credits. While the majority of TES scholars are able to enroll on a full-time basis, there are always exceptions to the rule that cannot be avoided.

Following that inaugural academic year, it became apparent that not all of our TES scholars starting college for the first time were up to the challenge of handling the rigors of college level coursework while taking that first step into adulthood. For some of them, it meant living away from home for the first time. For others, it meant working a part-time job and going to school full-time. The result was that for some, their GPA did not meet the mandated 3.0 required to maintain eligibility for the scholarship. Of 34 TES scholars at Northcentral Technical College, 9 of them lost their scholarships following that first year because of not maintaining a 3.0 GPA. In most instances, the GPA of these 9 students was better than average, with some just falling short with a 2.9 or a 2.7 GPA. These students left high school as very high performing scholars who uncharacteristically underperformed that first year of college. If given the chance to regain their eligibility, as the provision in AB 266 allows, these students would have the ability to recover from a bad semester.

The provisions outlined in Assembly Bill 266 address concerns that impact student success and I respectfully request your support for these changes.

Sincerely,

Jeff Cichon
Director of Financial Aid
Northcentral Technical College