

**WEST VIRGINIA
SECRETARY OF STATE
NATALIE E. TENNANT
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW DIVISION**

Form #3

Do Not Mark In This Box

2010 JAN 27 PM 3:48

WEST VIRGINIA
SECRETARY OF STATE

**NOTICE OF AGENCY APPROVAL OF A PROPOSED RULE
AND
FILING WITH THE LEGISLATIVE RULE-MAKING REVIEW COMMITTEE**

AGENCY: Higher Education Policy Commission TITLE NUMBER: 133

CITE AUTHORITY: WV Code 18C-7-6

AMENDMENT TO AN EXISTING RULE: YES NO

IF YES, SERIES NUMBER OF RULE BEING AMENDED: Series 7

TITLE OF RULE BEING AMENDED: West Virginia Providing Real Opportunities for Maximizing In-State
Student Excellence (PROMISE) Scholarship Program

IF NO, SERIES NUMBER OF RULE BEING PROPOSED: _____

TITLE OF RULE BEING PROPOSED: _____

THE ABOVE PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE RULE HAVING GONE TO A PUBLIC HEARING OR A PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD IS HEREBY APPROVED BY THE PROMULGATING AGENCY FOR FILING WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE LEGISLATIVE RULE-MAKING REVIEW COMMITTEE FOR THEIR REVIEW.



Authorized Signature

FILED
2010 JAN 27 PM 3:48
OFFICE OF THE CLERK
WEST VIRGINIA
SENATE OF STATE

**TITLE 133
LEGISLATIVE RULE
WEST VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY COMMISSION**

**SERIES 7
WEST VIRGINIA PROVIDING REAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MAXIMIZING IN-
STATE STUDENT EXCELLENCE (PROMISE) SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

§133-7-1. General.

- 1.1. Scope – This rule establishes guidelines and procedures for establishing eligibility for the West Virginia Providing Real Opportunities for Maximizing In-State Student Excellence Scholarship Program, hereinafter referred to as PROMISE.
- 1.2. Authority – West Virginia Code § 18C-7-6
- 1.3. Filing Date – ~~February 22, 2008~~
- 1.4. Effective Date – ~~March 23, 2008~~
- 1.5. Repeals and replaces Title 133, Series 7, dated March 23, 2008.

§133-7-2. Eligibility of High School Graduates for Initial Award.

- 2.1. To be eligible for an initial PROMISE Scholarship, a high school applicant must be eligible for the award at the time of application and at the time the award is received by meeting all academic criteria in place at the time of application and award; and
 - 2.1.1. Must complete high school graduation requirements at a West Virginia public or private high school unless he or she qualified as a military dependent under Section 6 of this rule, or has commuted to an out-of-state school pursuant to Section 7 of this rule; and
 - 2.1.2. Must complete at least one half of the credits required for high school graduation through attendance at a public or private high school in this state, unless he or she qualified as a military dependent under Section 6 of this rule, or has commuted to an out-of-state school pursuant to Section 7 of this rule; and
 - 2.1.3. Must apply for the scholarship within two years of graduation from high school unless the applicant entered the United States armed services pursuant to Section 5 of this rule; and
 - 2.1.4. Must, while enrolled in high school, have attained a cumulative

grade point average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, based on county board grading policies, in both core courses and overall coursework required for graduation by the State Board of Education; and

2.1.5. Must meet standardized test score criteria on an ACT or SAT national test as established by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (Policy Commission); and

2.1.6. Must have resided in West Virginia continuously for a minimum of twelve consecutive months immediately preceding the final date of application for a PROMISE Scholarship, unless a member of the Armed Services pursuant to Section 5 of this rule or a military dependent pursuant to Section 6 of this rule, and be a United States citizen or legal immigrant to the United States; and

2.1.7. Must submit both the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and any application form required by the Policy Commission by the deadline established by the Policy Commission; however:

2.1.7.1. Any student who misses the deadline for application may apply by a later date established by the Policy Commission for a spring semester award. This option is contingent upon the availability of funding for late awards.

2.2. The grade point average required in Section 2.1.4 will be determined by the appropriate school official at the end of the seventh high school semester. However, the final calculation of the grade point average and eligibility for the award may be determined as late as after the eighth semester.

2.3. Weighted grades may be used in the computation of a student's core and overall grade point average based on county board grading policies.

2.4. A student who applied for and was deemed eligible for a PROMISE award must enroll for the first regularly scheduled enrollment period after being selected unless granted a deferment under the leave of absence provisions of Section 10.7 or 10.8.

2.5. A student who was deemed eligible for a PROMISE award but elects not to enroll at an eligible institution set forth in Section 8 of this rule may regain eligibility providing the student discontinues enrollment at the ineligible institution no later than one academic year after high school graduation and re-enrolls at an eligible institution. Any such student must meet the eligibility standards for a PROMISE award renewal set out in Section 10 of this rule.

§133-7-3. Eligibility for the Home-Schooled.

- 3.1. A person who has been home-schooled pursuant to the exemption allowed by W.Va. Code § 18-8-1 for both the 11th and 12th grades as documented by registration with the county school board system is eligible for a PROMISE award, but only if he or she has passed the General Educational Development (GED) examination with a minimum score of 2500 or a score determined by the Policy Commission.
- 3.2. A home-schooled student must apply for a PROMISE award within two years of the earlier of attaining a GED or the date the student's high school class would normally have graduated and meet all other criteria established by the Policy Commission, including required scores on national standardized tests.
- 3.3. The parents or legal guardian and the applicant must meet the residency requirements set out in Section 2.1.6 of this rule.

§133-7-4. Eligibility for Graduates of Alternative Educational Programs.

- 4.1. A person who successfully completed an alternative educational program, such as the Mountaineer Challenge Academy, approved by the Director of State Financial Aid Programs, is eligible for a PROMISE award, but only if he or she has passed the GED examination with a minimum score determined by the Policy Commission.
- 4.2. A graduate of such programs must apply for a PROMISE award within two years of the earlier of attaining a GED or the date the student's high school class would normally have graduated and meet all other criteria at the time of application established by the Policy Commission, including required scores on national standardized tests.
- 4.3. The parents or legal guardian and the applicant must meet the residency requirements set out in Section 2.1.6 of this rule.
- 4.4. A student with a GED under other exceptional circumstances may appeal for scholarship consideration under the provisions of Section 14 of this rule.

§133-7-5. Eligibility of Members of Armed Services.

- 5.1. A person who entered full-time, active duty with the United States armed services within two years of his or her high school graduation and is discharged with a status other than dishonorable is eligible to apply or claim a PROMISE award within seven years of the time he or she has initially entered military service. However, this eligibility ends one year

after discharge from such military service.

- 5.2. The applicant must meet all other criteria established by the Policy Commission for eligible high school graduates at the time of the application, including high school grade point average and required scores on national standardized tests.
- 5.3. The applicant must meet the residency requirements set out in Section 2.1.6 of this rule, or have entered military service from this state, and not have established domicile in another state, at any time during that military service.
- 5.4. A student attending a United States military academy is only eligible for a PROMISE award if he or she leaves the military academy and meets the requirements of Section 2.5 of this rule.

§133-7-6. Eligibility of Military Dependents.

- 6.1. The credit hour requirements in Section 2.1.2 and the residency requirements of Section 2.1.6 of this rule shall be waived if:
 - 6.1.1. The applicant both resided in a state other than West Virginia and attended high school in another state or in a United States territory, United States possession or foreign country; and
 - 6.1.2. Resided with his or her parent or legal guardian; and
 - 6.1.3. The applicant's parent or legal guardian served in the United States armed forces while the student attended high school in such state, territory, possession or country; and
 - 6.1.4. The parent or legal guardian was stationed for military purposes in such state, territory, possession or country; and
 - 6.1.5. The parent or legal guardian maintained legal residence in West Virginia while stationed in such state, territory, possession or country.

§133-7-7. Eligibility of Commuting Students.

- 7.1. The credit hour requirements in Section 2.1.2 of this rule shall be waived if:
 - 7.1.1. The applicant resided in West Virginia while attending high school in another state; and

- 7.1.2. Resided with his or her parent or legal guardian; and
- 7.1.3. The parent or legal guardian and the applicant must have met the residency requirements set out in Section 2.1.6 of this rule; and
- 7.1.4. The student commuted from this state on a daily basis; and
- 7.1.5. The student was a dependent of the parent or legal guardian with whom the student resided; and
 - 7.1.5.1. A dependent student is one who is required to provide parental information on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid because the student does not meet the criteria to be classified an independent student contained in the Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended and implementing regulations.
- 7.1.6. The student has not established domicile in another state; and
- 7.1.7. The school to which the student commuted was fully accredited to a degree acceptable to West Virginia's State Superintendent of Schools; and
- 7.1.8. The school's curriculum requirements for graduation are equivalent, or sufficiently similar to, those required for high school graduation in this state.

§133-7-8. Eligible Institutions.

- 8.1. Only those institutions specified in W. Va. Code § 18C-7-3, or any other regionally accredited, not-for-profit institution in this state approved by the Policy Commission, are eligible to participate in the PROMISE Scholarship Program.

§133-7-9. Awards.

- 9.1. The PROMISE award for a student enrolled in a state institution of higher education, and who was awarded and used a PROMISE Scholarship prior to January 1, 2010, shall be equal to the actual tuition and mandatory fee charges for resident students at the institution.
- 9.2. "Tuition and mandatory fees" means the quarter, semester or term charges imposed by a state institution of higher education upon all students as a required condition of enrollment.
 - 9.2.1. For purposes of this rule, West Virginia University's

undergraduate health sciences students shall be treated as paying the same amount of tuition and mandatory fees as all other West Virginia University undergraduate students.

- 9.2.2. West Virginia University, Potomac State College of West Virginia University and West Virginia University Institute of Technology are considered separate institutions for purposes of determining tuition rates.
- 9.3. Students enrolled in other eligible institutions, and who were awarded and used a PROMISE Scholarship prior to January 1, 2010, shall receive an award based upon the average resident undergraduate tuition and mandatory fees at comparable state institutions of higher education for the previous year as determined by the Policy Commission.
- 9.4. Students awarded and using a PROMISE Scholarship after January 1, 2010, shall receive an award equal to the lesser of \$4,750 or the actual tuition and mandatory fee charges for resident students at the institution.
- 9.5. Awards ~~will not~~ may be made for summer school. ~~except after two semesters of PROMISE awards for associate students or six semesters of PROMISE awards for baccalaureate students if attendance that summer will allow the student to graduate at the end of that summer school or the next fall semester.~~ To be eligible for a summer award, a student must be academically eligible for scholarship continuation at the end of the spring semester preceding the summer that assistance is requested. Any summer award under this provision is dependent upon the availability of funds as determined by the Policy Commission.
- 9.5.1. Priority for summer awards will be based on class rank with the highest priority given to students closest to graduation.
- 9.5.2. Students, other than those graduating at the end of the summer term of enrollment, must be enrolled for at least 12 credit hours. Students graduating at the end of the summer term of enrollment are only required to enroll for a minimum of 6 credit hours.
- 9.5.3. A summer award counts as a semester of utilization toward the maximum number of available semesters.
- 9.6. Only full-time, first-year students may receive initial awards. Students already enrolled at a higher education institution are not eligible to apply for a PROMISE award except as outlined in Section 2.1.7.1.
- 9.7. If the Policy Commission determines that adequate funds are available it may make PROMISE awards greater than \$4,750, but not in excess of actual resident tuition and mandatory fees.

§133-7-10. Eligibility for Renewal of Awards.

- 10.1. For a student to retain or have the PROMISE award renewed each year the student must be continuously enrolled as a full-time student; and-except during the last two semesters of scholarship eligibility; and
- 10.2. Maintain at least a 2.75 grade point average on a 4.0 scale the first year and a 3.0 cumulative grade point average in subsequent years; and
- 10.3. Complete and earn a minimum of 30 credit hours in ~~each two consecutive semester of scholarship utilization~~ each 12 month period.
 - 10.3.1. College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) credits may be used to meet the minimum credit hours requirement.
 - 10.3.2. Credit for a course taken again during the same award year, including the summer, to improve a grade, or for any other purpose, may only be counted once in meeting the credit hour requirement.
- 10.4. A student seeking an associate degree is eligible to receive a PROMISE award for no more than a total of four semesters of a two-year degree program.
 - 10.4.1. The student must maintain the 3.0 cumulative grade point average to receive a PROMISE award for a baccalaureate program.
- 10.5. A student seeking a baccalaureate degree is eligible to receive a PROMISE award for no more than eight semesters of a four-year degree program.
- 10.6. If a student enrolls in summer school to attain the minimum 30 credit hours required by Section 10.3 or achieve the grade point average required by Section 10.2, he or she shall not receive a PROMISE award for that summer school enrollment. The summer school enrollment must be completed before the commencement of the regular semester of the PROMISE eligible institution the student is attending. Summer school credits may be obtained from an out-of-state institution with approval of the home institution.
 - 10.6.1. All college credit hours and corresponding grades beginning with the first semester of regular (fall or spring) semester enrollment after high school graduation must be counted in determining PROMISE Scholarship eligibility regardless of whether or not the college accepts these credits. Any college credit hours earned prior to the first semester of fall or spring enrollment after high

school graduation may not be counted in determining eligibility for award renewal.

- 10.7. PROMISE Scholarship students are expected to maintain continuous enrollment in addition to the other renewal requirements set forth in this section. However, this requirement may be waived by an institution of higher education for a medical or family bereavement absence consistent with program policies. The institution may also grant a leave of absence for students entering or being called to military active duty.
- 10.8. Other requests for leaves of absence must be submitted in writing by the student to the Director of State Financial Aid Programs. Student leave of absence requests submitted to the director may include, but are not limited to, programs directly related to the student's educational program, study abroad, extreme financial hardships of the student or the student's immediate family, service or volunteerism or other extraordinary circumstances beyond the student's control when continued attendance would create a substantial hardship for the student.
- 10.9. A student granted a leave of absence under the provisions of Section 10.7 or 10.8 who resumes his or her education at an eligible institution, assuming he or she meets all other eligibility requirements at the time the leave of absence was granted, shall retain eligibility for a PROMISE Scholarship until the first of the following events:
 - 10.9.1. The student received four semesters of PROMISE Scholarship assistance while enrolled in an associate degree program or graduated from the associate degree program; or
 - 10.9.2. The student received eight semesters of PROMISE Scholarship assistance while enrolled in an associate and/or baccalaureate program or graduated from the baccalaureate degree program; or
 - 10.9.3. The sum of the number of academic years from the date of the student's selection as a PROMISE Scholarship recipient equals six years except for the military service provisions of Section 5.

§133-7-11. Duty of PROMISE Recipient Graduates.

- 11.1. By accepting a PROMISE award, the recipient agrees to provide the information the Policy Commission may request regarding the recipient's address after graduation, employment after graduation, whether and where the recipient is enrolled in post-graduate programs, and such other relevant information as the Policy Commission may deem necessary to assess the effectiveness of the PROMISE Scholarship Program.

§133-7-12. Community Service for Applicants.

- 12.1. Applicants for PROMISE awards are strongly urged to perform at least 20 hours of unpaid community service while in high school and college. The community service may include, but is not limited to, participation with non-profit, governmental, institutional or community-based organizations designed to improve the quality of life for community residents, meet the needs of community residents, or foster civic responsibility.

§133-7-13. Coordination with Other Financial Aid.

- 13.1. PROMISE Scholarship awards shall be coordinated with other financial aid/grant programs in the following manner:
 - 13.1.1. PROMISE awards must be utilized in a manner that maximizes federal scholarship/grant funding (e.g. Pell Grant) and should not be administered in a manner that would result in the loss of federal grant/scholarship funds to a student or to the State of West Virginia.
 - 13.1.2. PROMISE Scholarship awards must be used for tuition and fees.
 - 13.1.3. Institutions are strongly encouraged to allow maximum flexibility in the use of institution based financial aid awards so that they can be used in conjunction with the PROMISE award.
- 13.2. The amount of a PROMISE award in combination with aid from all other sources shall not exceed the cost of the attendance at the institution the recipient is attending. This restriction does not apply to members of the West Virginia National Guard, recipients of an Underwood-Smith Teacher Scholarship, and recipients of a West Virginia Engineering, Science and Technology Scholarship.
- 13.3. For those students eligible for federal grant assistance, such as Federal Pell Grants, the federal assistance should be considered the first source of all scholarship/grant funding to the extent permissible under federal law. For students awarded both a PROMISE Scholarship and a need-based grant through the West Virginia Higher Education Grant Program, the PROMISE Scholarship awards shall be considered the first source for these two scholarship/grant programs. West Virginia Higher Education Grants may be combined with PROMISE awards as provided for annually by program policies.
- 13.4. Should the PROMISE Scholarship award plus the amount of other financial awards exceed the cost of attendance, the institution's financial aid administrator, in consultation with the recipient, will determine what

aid is to be reduced. This adjustment should be to the best advantage of the recipient.

§133-7-14. Appeals.

- 14.1. An applicant for an initial PROMISE Scholarship award may appeal the denial of eligibility for the award with the Director of State Financial Aid Programs.
- 14.2. Any appeal must be filed within fifteen (15) days of the applicant receiving notice that he or she is not eligible for an initial award. The appeal must detail in writing, and with specificity, including the grounds supporting the appeal and a finding of eligibility. The director may require additional evidence or materials from the applicant or other parties.
- 14.3. If the appeal is denied by the director, the reasons for the denial shall be communicated in writing to the applicant with an explanation of the reason for the denial.
- 14.4. An applicant may appeal the director's decision to a review committee appointed by the Policy Commission.
- 14.5. Any appeal to the review committee must be filed within fifteen (15) days of notification to the applicant that his or her initial appeal was denied. The appeal must be in writing and detail, with specificity, the grounds supporting the appeal. The review committee may require additional evidence or materials be submitted. If the review committee denies the appeal, the reasons for the denial shall be communicated in writing to the applicant with an explanation of the reason for the denial. The decision of the review committee is final.
- 14.6. A student granted an initial PROMISE Scholarship may appeal a non-renewal of the award with the person designated at the institution of higher education where the student is enrolled. The appeal process at the institution shall be governed by an established procedure designated by the institution.
- 14.7. If the appeal of the non-renewal is denied by the institution, the student may appeal that decision to the Director of State Financial Aid Programs. The appeal must be filed within fifteen (15) days of notification to the student of denial of the institutional appeal and shall be heard in the same manner as appeals of denials of initial awards.
- 14.8. If a student with a PROMISE Scholarship is not eligible for renewal of the award because of failure to maintain academic progress, he or she may not utilize the procedure set out herein to challenge any grade assigned them.

Challenges to grades must be brought under established institutional procedures for grade appeals. The process set out above may only be utilized to challenge the application of the eligibility requirements to the grade or grades assigned. If a student is successful on a grade or other appeal and the changing of the grade makes him or her eligible once again for renewal, he or she may petition the Policy Commission for a renewal of the award retroactively.

§133-7-15. Reports.

15.1. The Policy Commission shall report findings about recipients of the scholarships each year to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability. Such reports will include the following:

15.1.1. Information on the recipients' demographics including race, income and other variables gathered by the Policy Commission.

.Information on students who graduate from college in West Virginia having utilized the PROMISE Scholarship as indicated in Section 11.1 of this rule.

**Title 133
Legislative Rule
West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission**

**Series 7
West Virginia Providing Real Opportunities for
Maximizing In-State Student Excellence (PROMISE)
Scholarship Program**

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CHANGES

Substantive Changes

Requires that an applicant complete high school requirements at a West Virginia public or private high school unless he or she qualifies as a military dependent under Section 6 of the rule or has commuted to an out-of-state school pursuant to Section 7 of the rule. Section 2.1.1

Transfers PROMISE Scholarship Program oversight responsibilities from the PROMISE Board (abolished by Senate Bill 373) to the Higher Education Policy Commission. Various Sections

Requires an otherwise eligible scholarship recipient to be a United States citizen or a legal immigrant to the United States. Section 2.1.6

Extends the time to one academic year that an otherwise eligible scholar attending an ineligible institution can claim the scholarship. The student must meet the eligibility standards for a PROMISE award renewal set out in Section 10 of the rule. Section 2.5

Provides that a student who was awarded and used a PROMISE Scholarship prior to January 1, 2010 at a state institution of higher education shall receive an award equal to the actual tuition and mandatory fee charges for resident students at the institution. Section 9.1

Provides that a student who was awarded and used a PROMISE Scholarship prior to January 1, 2010 at an eligible independent college or university shall have an award based upon the average resident undergraduate tuition and mandatory fee rates at comparable state institutions of higher education. Section 9.3

Provides that students awarded and using a PROMISE Scholarship after January 1, 2010, shall receive an award equal to the lesser of \$4,750 or the actual tuition and mandatory fee charges for resident students at the institution. Section 9.4

Allows limited summer awards, depending upon the availability of funds, for academically eligible students. Section 9.5

Allows the Policy Commission, if it determines adequate funds are available, to make awards greater than \$4,750, but not in excess of actual resident tuition and mandatory fees. Section 9.7

Permits part-time enrollment in the last two semesters of scholarship eligibility. Section 10.1

Establishes that College Level Examination Program (CLEP) credits may be used to meet the minimum credit hours requirement for scholarship renewal. Section 10.3.1

Provides that a course taken during the same award year to improve a grade or for any other purpose, may only be counted once in meeting the credit hour requirement for scholarship renewal. Section 10.3.2

Establishes that the decision of the review committee for second level appeals is final. Section 14.5

Establishes that the Policy Commission shall report findings about recipients of the scholarship each year to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability. Section 15.1

Technical Changes

Clarifies that an applicant must meet all academic criteria in place at the time of application. Sections 2.1 and 4.2

Clarifies that a student must apply for the scholarship within two years of graduation from high school unless the applicant entered the United States Armed Services. Section 2.1.3

Provides that county board grading standards are used to determine both the core and overall grade point average. Sections 2.1.4 and 2.3

Clarifies that West Virginia University, Potomac State College and West Virginia University Institute of Technology are considered separate institutions for purposes of determining tuition rates. Section 9.2.2

Original language has been restored. Section 10.3

Clarifies that any college credit hours earned prior to the first semester of fall or spring enrollment after becoming eligible for the scholarship may not be counted in determining eligibility for award renewal. Section 10.6.1

APPENDIX B

FISCAL NOTE FOR PROPOSED RULES

Rule Title: West Virginia Providing Real Opportunities for Maximizing In-State Student Excess

Type of Rule: Legislative Interpretive Procedural

Agency: Higher Education Policy Commission

Address: 1018 Kanawha Blvd. East, Suite 700, Charleston, WV 25301
Contact: Brian Noland, Chancellor

Phone Number: 304-558-0699 Email: noland@hepc.wvnet.edu

Fiscal Note Summary

Summarize in a clear and concise manner what impact this measure will have on costs and revenues of state government.

The purpose of this revision was to clarify current practices and award criteria. There is no impact on costs or revenues.

Fiscal Note Detail

Show over-all effect in Item 1 and 2 and, in Item 3, give an explanation of Breakdown by fiscal year, including long-range effect.

FISCAL YEAR			
Effect of Proposal	Current Increase/Decrease (use "-")	Next Increase/Decrease (use "-")	Fiscal Year (Upon Full Implementation)
1. Estimated Total Cost	0.00	0.00	0.00
Personal Services	0.00	0.00	0.00
Current Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00
Repairs & Alterations	0.00	0.00	0.00
Assets	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other	0.00	0.00	0.00
2. Estimated Total Revenues	0.00	0.00	0.00

Rule Title: _____

Rule Title: West Virginia Providing Real Opportunities for Maximizing In-State Student Excellence

3. **Explanation of above estimates (including long-range effect):**
Please include any increase or decrease in fees in your estimated total revenues.

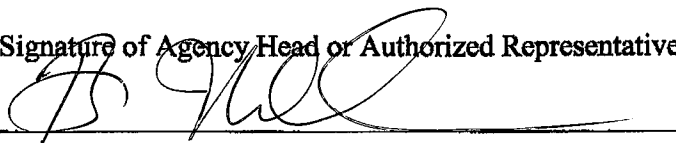
There will be no effect on cost or revenue.

MEMORANDUM

Please identify any areas of vagueness, technical defects, reasons the proposed rule would not have a fiscal impact, and/or any special issues not captured elsewhere on this form.

Date: January 27, 2010

Signature of Agency Head or Authorized Representative



**West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
Meeting of January 22, 2010**

ITEM: Approval of Series 7, PROMISE Scholarship Program, Emergency and Legislative Rules

INSTITUTION: All

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION: *Resolved,* That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the proposed revisions to Series 7, PROMISE Scholarship Program, as an Emergency Rule for submission to and approval from the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability and filing with the Secretary of State.

Further Resolved, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the proposed revisions to Series 7, PROMISE Scholarship Program, as a legislative rule to be forwarded to the Legislative Commission on Education Accountability for approval and further legislative action as well as filing with the Secretary of State.

STAFF MEMBER: Jack Toney

BACKGROUND:

At its November 20, 2009 meeting, the Commission approved proposed amendments to Series 7, PROMISE Scholarship Program, for filing with the Secretary of State for a thirty-day comment period. During the comment period, staff received three sets of comments which are addressed below.

Comment: Two commenters suggested extending summer school eligibility as proposed in Section 9.5 to all PROMISE eligible students meeting the program's renewal requirements at the end of the spring semester.

Response: Change made. The language in Section 9.5 has been changed to provide summer awards based on the availability of funds to students eligible for scholarship renewal at the end of the spring semester. Applications would be prioritized based on the student's projected graduation date with the highest priority given to students closest to graduation. To be eligible for a summer award, other than those students graduating at the end of the summer, students would need to enroll for a minimum of twelve credit hours. Students graduating after summer enrollment would only need to enroll for a minimum of six credit hours.

Comment: A commenter supported the change in Section 9.5 for summer awards as proposed.

Response: As noted above, staff proposes extending summer assistance to the extent funds allow to all eligible students. Staff believes this will be an incentive to all students, not just those closest to graduation, to finish degree program requirements as quickly as possible.

Comment: A commenter suggested that program funding could be better utilized by changing Section 10.1 to allow part-time enrollment during a student's last two semesters of scholarship eligibility.

Response: Change made. Students are now required to enroll on a full-time basis to meet program eligibility requirements. By permitting students to enroll part-time in either or both of their last two semesters of scholarship eligibility, it would not require students take courses they do not need to graduate or register and then later drop classes not needed.

Comment: Staff received informal comments and agrees that the proposed language in Section 10.3 implies that students would no longer have the summer after two consecutive semesters of scholarship utilization to meet renewal eligibility requirements. That was not the intent and the original language has been restored.

A summary of the proposed changes, a proposed emergency rule, and a proposed legislative rule appear on the following pages. Underscoring represents the proposed new language, while strike-throughs represent language to be deleted.

It is recommended that the Commission approve the amended version of Series 7 as an emergency rule for submission to and approval from the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability (LOCEA) and filing with the Secretary of State. It is further recommended that the Commission extend its final approval of the rule and that the rule be submitted to LOCEA for approval as a legislative rule and further legislative action as well as filing with the Secretary of State.

Ashley Schumaker

From: Brian Noland
Sent: Wednesday, December 16, 2009 9:52 AM
To: Ashley Schumaker; Jack Toney
Cc: Cindy Anderson
Subject: FW: Promise Rule

Please see below

Sent from my GoodLink synchronized handheld (www.good.com)

-----Original Message-----

From: Brian Weingart [mailto:weingartba@ab.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, December 16, 2009 09:24 AM Eastern Standard Time
To: Brian Noland
Cc: Jack Toney
Subject: Promise Rule

Dr. Noland,

This is in regards to the Promise Rule that has been published. I support the changes that are being made. One item that could be improved is section 9.5 dealing with summer awards. Currently a student can only receive an award for fall and spring, the proposed rule would allow a summer award only for the last summer they are in attendance if they are graduating early.

For a student to really be able to accelerate through their program, students should be able to benefit from summer awards earlier in their academic progression. For instance, we do have students who are currently accelerating in a bachelor's degree program by taking summer classes so that they will graduate the summer after their junior year. Under the current rule, they would only be able to use 6 semesters of Promise, with the proposed rule, they would be able to get a 7th semester when they attend their last summer semester. But it still penalizes a student if they accelerate and graduate in 3 years because they would not be able to use all 8 semesters of the Promise.

I do agree with the proposed rule that in order to use Promise in the summer, they must meet the requirements for renewal at the end of the spring semester. I would also encourage an increased academic requirement to ensure that students are truly accelerating like completing 42 credits in a 12 month period if they use 3 semesters of Promise.

This would enable and encourage our best and brightest students to accelerate if they want to graduate early. Thank you for your consideration.

Brian Weingart

Director of Financial Aid

<http://www.ab.edu/uploads/me/A6/meA6zXq_BpSQE_1mS19SFw/AB_RealStudents.png>

Alderson-Broadus College

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Ashley Schumaker

From: Jack Toney
Sent: Monday, January 04, 2010 5:35 PM
To: Ashley Schumaker; Cindy Anderson
Subject: FW: Comments on Proposed Promise Changes

-----Original Message-----

From: Brian Noland
Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2009 8:55 AM
To: Jack Toney
Cc: Cindy Anderson
Subject: FW: Comments on Proposed Promise Changes

Fyi

Sent from my GoodLink synchronized handheld (www.good.com)

-----Original Message-----

From: Karen Lay [mailto:karen.lay@glenville.edu]
Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2009 08:51 AM Eastern Standard Time
To: Brian Noland
Subject: Comments on Proposed Promise Changes

Section 9.5 Summer awards

If students are allowed to begin receiving financial aid during the summer, this should be limited to the summer after their third year of receiving Promise. It is only by that time the students are close enough to graduation that they really know if they are going to graduate early. There are so many variables to be considered, that earlier awards are not in the students' best financial interest.

Considering the Promise for summer awards at the end of the second year could be helpful if the student and the school can project course work accurately. Students who have maintained eligibility by the end of their fourth semester of Promise are more likely to continue on track. There would still be a higher risk of students not having a Promise award during their eighth semester of work.

Thank you,

Karen Lay

Director of Financial Aid

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"Having a dream is what keeps you alive. Overcoming the challenges make life worth living."

-Mary Tyler Moore