

State of Arkansas
91st General Assembly
Regular Session, 2017

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1957

By: Representative M. Gray

By: Senator Hickey

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT CONCERNING THE AWARDING OF SCHOLARSHIPS UNDER THE ARKANSAS ACADEMIC CHALLENGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM; TO ALLOW A SCHOLARSHIP TO BE USED TOWARD A GRADUATE-LEVEL OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE; TO REVISE THE MANNER IN WHICH EARNED SEMESTER CREDIT HOURS ARE CALCULATED; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

CONCERNING THE AWARDING OF SCHOLARSHIPS UNDER THE ARKANSAS ACADEMIC CHALLENGE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 6-85-204(6)(A), concerning the definition of "continuously enrolled" in the Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship Program, is amended to read as follows:

(A) For a traditional student, he or she successfully completes at an approved institution of higher education twenty-seven (27) semester hours in the first academic year as a recipient and, except as provided in § 6-85-212(e)(1)(A)(iv)(c), successfully completes thirty (30) semester hours each academic year thereafter, not including any summer term;

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-85-206(3)(A)(i), concerning programs of study in which an applicant for the Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship Program must be enrolled to be eligible for the scholarship, is amended to



add an additional subdivision to read as follows:

(d) A graduate-level or professional degree;

or

SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-85-210(a)(1), concerning continuing eligibility in the Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship Program, is amended to read as follows:

(a)(1)(A) A recipient who meets continuing eligibility criteria under this subchapter shall receive a scholarship for one (1) academic year renewable annually until the recipient ~~first~~:

~~(A) Earns a baccalaureate degree; or~~

~~(B)(i) Has~~ has earned one hundred twenty (120) semester credit hours.

~~(ii)~~(B) A recipient may continue to receive a scholarship after he or she has earned one hundred twenty (120) semester credit hours, but not more than one hundred thirty (130) semester credit hours, if the student is enrolled in a baccalaureate degree program that requires more than one hundred twenty (120) semester credit hours as provided under § 6-61-232.

SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-85-210(b)(2)(A)(iii), concerning continuing eligibility in the Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship Program, is amended to read as follows:

(iii) By accepting scholarship funds under this subchapter, the receiving institution certifies that students will be enrolled in courses that will meet satisfactory academic progress standards leading toward a certificate, an associate degree, a nursing diploma, ~~or~~ a baccalaureate degree, or a graduate-level or professional degree.

SECTION 5. Arkansas Code § 6-85-210(b)(5), concerning continuing eligibility in the Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship Program, is amended to read as follows:

(5) A recipient shall enroll in courses that lead toward a baccalaureate degree ~~program~~ or graduate-level or professional degree after attempting the lesser of:

(A) Five (5) semesters; or

(B) The completion of an associate degree program; and

SECTION 6. Arkansas Code § 6-85-212(e)(1)(A)(iv)(b), concerning scholarship award amounts, is amended to read as follows:

(b) A recipient shall receive no more than one (1) year of ~~a five thousand dollar~~ the scholarship provided under subdivision (e)(1)(A)(iv)(a) of this section unless the recipient is enrolled in a baccalaureate degree program that requires more than one hundred twenty (120) semester credit hours as provided under § 6-61-232.

SECTION 7. Arkansas Code § 6-85-212(e)(1)(A)(iv), concerning scholarship award amounts, is amended to add an additional subdivision to read as follows:

(c)(1) A recipient who is eligible to receive the scholarship under subdivision (e)(1)(A)(iv)(a) of this section may receive the scholarship while enrolled in a semester as a part-time student if the recipient is enrolled in the number of credit hours necessary to complete the recipient's degree program.

(2) The scholarship amount for the semester in which a recipient is enrolled as a part-time student under subdivision (e)(1)(A)(iv)(c)(1) of this section shall be prorated by the number of credit hours in which the recipient is enrolled.

SECTION 8. Arkansas Code § 6-85-212(e)(1), concerning scholarship award amounts, is amended to add an additional subdivision to read as follows:

(D)(i) The earned semester credit hours under subdivision (e)(1)(A) of this section are those semester credit hours earned after graduating from high school or obtaining a high school equivalency diploma approved by the Department of Career Education.

(ii) Any semester credit hours earned through concurrent credit or any other method before graduating high school or obtaining a high school equivalency diploma approved by the Department of Career Education shall not be counted as earned semester credit hours for the purposes of determining a recipient's scholarship award amount under subdivision (e)(1)(A) of this section.

SECTION 9. Arkansas Code § 6-85-212(e)(2)(C), concerning priority for scholarships for nontraditional students, is amended to read as follows:

(C) Priority for scholarships awarded to nontraditional students and current achiever students is based on:

(i) ~~the~~ The applicant's level of progress toward completion of a certificate, an associate degree, a nursing diploma, or a baccalaureate degree, or a graduate-level or professional degree; or

(ii) ~~on other~~ Other criteria established by the ~~department~~ Department of Higher Education.

SECTION 10. The introductory language of Arkansas Code § 6-85-212(i)(2)(A), concerning the priority of awarding scholarships if the funding is insufficient to fully fund all scholarships, is amended to read as follows:

(A) First, to students who have the highest level of progress toward completion of a certificate, an associate degree, ~~or a baccalaureate degree,~~ or a graduate-level or professional degree, and who are enrolled in a program of study that is:

SECTION 11. Arkansas Code § 6-85-212(i)(2)(B), concerning the priority of awarding scholarships if the funding is insufficient to fully fund all scholarships, is amended to read as follows:

(B) Second, to students who have the highest level of progress toward completion of a certificate, an associate degree, ~~or a baccalaureate degree,~~ or a graduate-level or professional degree, and who are enrolled in a program of study other than those listed in subdivision (i)(2)(A) of this section; and

SECTION 12. Arkansas Code § 6-85-212(j), concerning when sufficient net lottery proceeds exist to fund all eligible students, is repealed.

~~(j) When the General Assembly determines that sufficient net lottery proceeds exist to fund students enrolling in certificate, associate degree, and a baccalaureate degree programs, the department shall submit recommendations to the Legislative Council for the award of scholarships and grants to certain graduate and professional programs at approved institutions~~

~~of higher education.~~

APPROVED: 03/23/2017