

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM: 5.K

DATE: June 11, 2014

SUBJECT: Institutional Scholarships

When the Opportunity Scholarship program was established, the credit hour requirements were modeled slightly after the various institutional scholarship programs that had been in place for a number of years prior to Fall 2014. During the initial years of the program, students raised a number of concerns regarding the hardships they faced as they sought to attempt and complete 15 credit hours during each fall and spring semester, and many highlighted the flexibility afforded in the institutional programs which allowed for coursework to be completed during the summer to meet the 30 hour requirement. During the 2010 legislative session, the Board of Regents were successful in modifying the credit hour requirements for the program moving to a more flexible credit hour “threshold” framework that has limited the need for exemption requests and allowed dual credit, AP, CLEP, and summer hours to meet the credit thresholds outlined below:

- 30 credit hours completed prior to the 3rd semester of eligibility
- 60 credit hours completed prior to the 5th semester of eligibility
- 90 credit hours completed prior to the 7th semester of eligibility

As the credit hour threshold structure has taken hold over the past few years, students/parents routinely contact the central office to indicate their frustration with having to meet the 30 credit hour requirement each semester for institutional specific scholarships. While our response has been that since Foundation funds are being used to sponsor these scholarship programs, the BOR (and the state in particular) does not have control over the requirements that are established continuing eligibility requirements. However, over the past two years a number of policy decisions by the BOR, and the Governor, suggests a need to discuss institutional approaches. Most recently, the Governor’s Dual Credit program is providing greater opportunities for students to earn college credit while in high school. Our intent to encourage students to complete coursework that meets System Graduation Requirements increases the likelihood that an increasing number of students will arrive needing to take fewer credits each semester to graduate on time. When coupled with the system move to lower the credit hour requirements from 128 to 120 and the growing number of students enrolling in Advanced Placement courses, the norm of needing 15 or more credits each semester to graduate in four years is declining. A

(Continued)

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Discussion & Recommendation.

Institutional Scholarships

June 11, 2014

Page 2 of 2

scholarship policy that enforces a 30 credit hour per year requirement continues to present students with a choice of either enrolling in unnecessary credits or forfeit institutional scholarships.

Institutional personnel were asked to provide the credit hour requirements for the primary scholarship program (see Attachment I), and AAC should be prepared to discuss the institutional policy decisions associated with the approach currently employed. SAC representatives will be asked to engage in a similar discussion.

BHSU: BHSU's institutional scholarship program, the Buzz Bonus Scholarship, requires a minimum of 30 credit hours per year for continued eligibility.

DSU: DSU has a requirement that students must be enrolled full time in 12 DSU credits each semester. If those 12 credits are not completed or a student is not registered for 12 credits through DSU, they lose their scholarship.

NSU: WolfPACT requires a student to be enrolled fulltime each semester and have a cumulative gpa of at least 3.0 at the end of each spring semester. There is no minimum number of completed credits required to receive the next year's award.

SDSM&T: SDSM&T requires that all students on any kind of institutional scholarship begin each semester registered for at least 12 credits (at least 9 of which must be SDSM&T credits). All students with a scholarship that continues from one year to the next must complete at least 24 credits annually (between fall, spring, and summer) and maintain at least a cumulative 3.0 GPA or they lose their scholarship for the following year.

SDSU: The credit requirement for the Jackrabbit Guarantee is also 30. These credits must be completed on the main campus.

USD: our Coyote Commitment requires successful completion of 2 fulltime semesters for renewal (12 hours minimum each term). There are several levels of CC and the gpa renewal requirement runs between 2.5 and 3 .5. We have a variety of other scholarship that may require successful completion of more hours - 15 or 16 per term.