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Some representatives of public universities and community colleges in Florida have lately been arguing that the Access to Better Learning and Education program (ABLE), which offers state-funded grants to students, even those who choose to attend private institutions. They assert that students seeking education in for-profit colleges should not be granted state aid.

However, their opponents contend that private colleges participating in ABLE are regionally accredited and meet the same stringent standards as do public community colleges and state universities; thus, their students should not be barred from receiving state grants. Moreover, they say that private colleges provide flexible schedules, degrees, certifications, and certain features not found in public colleges; and that freedom of choice should not be taken away from students.

CA students to get a break?

A state assembly bill co-sponsored by the California State Student Association and the California State University aims to help more of the state's financially disadvantaged students to cover the cost of attendance.

Authored by assembly member Hector De La Torre (D-South Gate), the bill will increase grant amounts and restructure the Cal Grant program.

At this time, the state offers Cal Grant B awards to students attending four-year institutions, but the grants cannot be used during the first year of college. The proposed legislation would give Cal Grant B recipients financial aid to cover tuition and fees during the first year of attendance.

The bill would also double the funds available to competitive-grant recipients. Currently, although more than 135,000 students were eligible for the grants last year, only 22,500 students received this financial aid.

Dean slammed for finaid fraud

After falsely claiming that four of his institution's academic programs were properly accredited, the former dean of a career school pleaded guilty in federal court in Pittsburgh on May 5, 2006, to a charge of making false statements in order to get federal financial aid for students.

The Western School of Health and Business Careers' former dean, Thomas Wollett, admittedly forged signatures on documents sent to the U.S. Department of Education. These documents contained statements that four programs were accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology.



The programs in question are the veterinary technology, massage therapy, and criminal justice programs at the WSHBC campus in Pittsburgh and the massage therapy program at the Monroeville campus.

Map plus scholarships expanded

Legislation passed in the state of Illinois has expanded the Monetary Award Program (MAP), which now includes a \$34.4 million plan to award \$500 scholarships to 68,000 college students. Even students from families with incomes of up to \$200,000 could now benefit from state-funded tuition assistance.

The money would be put into a “MAP Plus” program along with a similar amount for MAP, thus increasing the total number of students eligible by 225,000. According to the plan, The Illinois Student Assistance Commission, which operates MAP and other college-aid programs, will be required to generate \$100 million.

Supporters say the scholarships will help a greater number of students without damaging existing, need-based grants programs; however, many financial aid administrators are troubled that public funds are being used for non-need-based student aid.

Georgetown-china establish fellowship

The China Scholarship Council-Georgetown University Fellowship Program was established on May 8 by Georgetown University and the China Scholarship Committee. The program will support graduate and post-graduate education programs for students from China at Georgetown University.

Georgetown will now support one-year post-doctoral fellowships for studies at Georgetown in fields such as applied social sciences, physical and life sciences, public policy, and international affairs. Applicants will be considered for the 2007-2008 academic year, and the number of fellows may vary from year to year.

Fellows will receive a financial aid for travel as well as a stipend, and they will have access to Georgetown's academic facilities, the ability to audit certain graduate-level classes, and an appropriate space for academic work and research. Applicants should have completed a doctoral degree from a university in China within the past five years and must be employed at a Chinese university or research institute.