

Texas' "B On Time" loan program falls short of funding

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Created to encourage students to graduate on time, Texas' "B On Time" interest-free loan program will fall short of funding this year. The program spent \$49 million on loans last year and helped 12,800 students. This year, the amount allocated has been reduced to \$41 million, enough for only 9,900 students. Additionally, 650 students who took out "B On Time" loans last year will not get them renewed this year. Financial aid officers are trying to create alternative financial aid packages for these students, but they will not be as helpful as the "B On Time" assistance they previously received. Students participating in the program who maintain "B" grade point averages and graduate on time may have their loans forgiven.

West Virginia named among top spenders on college grants

In a National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs survey, West Virginia came in fourth (after South Carolina, Vermont, and Georgia) in terms of how much tax income it spends on college grant programs. According to the report, the state provided \$71 million to grant programs in 2005-2006; the equivalent of 20.6% of state tax appropriations was spent on West Virginia's higher education institutions. The biggest merit-based program in West Virginia is the PROMISE Scholarship Program, while its biggest need-based program is the Higher Education Grant Program.

Texas A&M's minimum wage for student employees increases

The minimum wage rate for Texas A&M University's "Student Worker I" category has been revised by the university's department of student financial aid. The wage rate for student employees now falls between \$5.85 and \$8 per hour, and the wage rate for federal work-study and Texas work-study students now falls between \$5.85 and \$16 per hour. The increase in the federal minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$5.85 per hour triggered the increases. States have the authority to set minimum wage rates higher than the national rate.