Washington College Grant
Equity for Washington Residents Attending Not-For-Profit, Private Universities

Issue: Workforce Education Investment Act, Chapter 406, 2019 Laws Sets Up an Equity Divide
As adopted, the Workforce Education Investment Act, Chapter 406, 2019 Laws sets up an equity divide for those Washington residents who are eligible for the Washington College Grant but who do not participate in the College Bound program and wish to enroll at an independent, not-for-profit, private college or university in the state.

Departing from established state higher education public policy, Sec. 21 (5) sets the maximum Washington college grant as: “For students attending private four-year not-for-profit institutions of higher education in Washington, in the 2019-20 academic year, is nine thousand seven hundred thirty-nine dollars and may increase each year afterwards by no more than the tuition growth factor” [emphasis added]. At the same time, for the 2019-20 academic year, qualified Washington residents enrolled at the University of Washington will receive $10,768, to fully cover tuition and fees. Similarly, that same student would receive $10,479 to attend Washington State University.

As the illustration highlights, the maximum award for qualified students attending the state’s public research universities will rise in coming years, while with the maximum grant for students enrolled at non-profit campuses starts at a lower base, and may or may not rise.

Recommendation: Amend Language in Workforce Education Investment Act to Reinstate Established Public Policy in Washington
Equity would result from a statutory change in the maximum Washington College Grant for students attending private four-year not-for-profit institutions to the lesser of either the grant for a student...
attending a four-year public research institution or the private institution's tuition for 15 quarter credits or the equivalent.

The relevant section in the Workforce Education Investment Act, Chapter 406, 2019 Laws reads: Sec. 21 (5) "Maximum Washington college grant": (b) For students attending private four-year not-for-profit institutions of higher education in Washington, in the 2019-20 academic year, is nine thousand seven hundred thirty-nine dollars and may increase each year afterwards by no more than the tuition growth factor.

**Proposed amendatory language:** In Sec. 21 (5)(b), Chapter 406, 2019 Laws, after "Washington," strike all material through "factor" on line 10 and insert "is the lesser of the maximum college grant under (a) of this subsection, or the individual institution's tuition for fifteen quarter credit hours or the equivalent" [Sec. 21 (5)(b), Chapter 406, 2019 Laws].

The required increase in appropriations to the Washington Student Achievement Council to account for the change in grant amounts for students attending private four-year not-for-profit institutions is estimated at $3.731 million, approximately one percent of total funding for the Washington College Grant in 2018-19.

**Rationale: Leverage the Capacity of Washingtons’ Not-for-Profit Universities**

As an issue of equity, state residents who may not wish to leave their home communities—whether Lacey, Yakima, Walla Walla or Spokane—should have access to the same level of funding to enroll at a nearby nonprofit college or university. Students choose to enroll at specific campuses for a variety of reasons, including academic program offerings, size, proximity to home, and sense of community. A differential in state assistance should not be a reason.

By making it equitably possible for a student to attend a private, not-for-profit college or university, the state of Washington leverages the capacity of its non-profit campuses in service to the state goal of seeing more state residents pursue postsecondary education. This private-public partnership delivers results: The state is able to educate greater numbers of students without the related and necessary investments in operating and capital investments.

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