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.

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

![Washington College Grant Maximum Award](image)

Recommendation: Reinstate Established Public Policy in Washington

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 non-profit 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.

Restoring equity as described here would require an estimated investment of $4 million, approximately one percent of the total funding for the Washington College Grant.
The Washington Student Achievement Council in September voted to support the policy of tying Washington College Grant awards for students at private, non-profit institutions to those at the public research universities. This had been the policy prior to the passage of HB 2158, which set public awards at full tuition and required fees, but left private awards at the FY 2018 rate.

As written, 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.

The following language would restore equity 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.

**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].

We are pleased to partner with the state of Washington to leverage the capacity of our 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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Please direct questions or comments to Independent Colleges of Washington President & CEO Terri Standish-Kuon (Terri@ICWashington.org, 206.623.4494) or the association’s Olympia representative Mike Burgess (MikeJBurg@comcast.net, 360.223.3020).