

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Terrie Huntington at 1:30 p.m. on February 11, 2009, in Room 786 of the Docking State Office Building.

All members were present.

Committee staff present:

Renaë Jefferies, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Mary Galligan, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Kay Scarlett, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Representative Deena Horst
Phil Black, Dean of Academic Affairs, Brown Mackie College, Salina
Christina Lakkari, Student at Brown Mackie College
Ramona Newsom, Graduate of Brown Mackie College
Kristy Green, Student at Brown Mackie College (written only)
Doug Penner, President, Kansas Independent College Association
Diane Lindeman, Director of Student Financial Aid, Kansas Board of Regents

Others attending:

See attached list.

Hearing on HB 2228 - Private postsecondary institutions eligibility for the Kansas comprehensive grant program

Chairman Huntington opened the hearing on **HB 2228**. Renaë Jefferies, Office of the Revisor of Statutes, explained that this legislation would amend the Kansas Comprehensive Grant statute to allow eligible students of a private post secondary institution of higher education to qualify for the grant. The bill would expand the definition of a full-time resident postsecondary education student; and would change the definition of a "Kansas educational institution" from "not-for-profit independent" institution to "private postsecondary" institution, thus including for-profit independent institutions. ([Attachment 1](#))

Representative Deena Horst spoke in support of **HB 2228** introduced at her request. She reported that an administrator at Brown Mackie College, which is located in her district, suggested this change. This bill extends access to Kansas Comprehensive Grants to eligible Kansas students who attend for-profit institutions located in Kansas. She noted these students have similar financial needs as other students who are eligible to receive comprehensive grants, but are unable to access the grants because the school is a for-profit entity. ([Attachment 2](#))

Phil Black, Dean of Academic Affairs, Brown Mackie College, Salina, testified in support of **HB 2228** to make Kansas Comprehensive Grants available to all Kansans attending degree-granting institutions of higher learning. He stated that most students at Brown Mackie are non-traditional students that are highly motivated to improve their lives and contribute to the Kansas economy, noting that most of their students stay in Kansas. ([Attachment 3](#))

Christina Lakkari, a student at Brown Mackie College, appeared in support of **HB 2228** and related her experience as a single working mom and full-time nursing student at Brown Mackie. She said this was one of the most difficult and best decisions she ever made. She knew she was going to need assistance and decided the only way to ensure the assistance was temporary was to get an education. She said the Kansas Comprehensive Grant would be very helpful to students like herself. ([Attachment 4](#))

Ramona Newsom, a graduate of Brown Mackie College with an Associate of Applied Science degree in Business Management, appeared in support of **HB 2228**. She said she was able to attend school by searching out and applying for grants and scholarships and the work study program; however, most of her financial aid consisted of student loans. Therefore, as a result of those 24 months of school, she amassed upwards of \$14,000 in debt. She said that an additional grant would have been helpful. ([Attachment 5](#))

Kristy Green, a student at Brown Mackie College, submitted written testimony in support of **HB 2228** and

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the House Higher Education Committee at 1:30 p.m. on February 11, 2009, in Room 786 of the Docking State Office Building.

the importance of grants. ([Attachment 6](#))

Doug Penner, President, Kansas Independent College Association, representing 18 non-profit colleges and universities in the state testified in opposition to **HB 2228**. He reported that when the Kansas Comprehensive Grant Program was enacted into statute in 1998, the statute explicitly identified not-for-profit institutional status as a qualifying criterion. The Legislature deemed that limited state funds should be directed to needy students at public or independent four-year institutions whose business model returned any surplus funds to strengthening programs, facilities, and institutional aid to students. This legislation would modify the institutional criteria to include any accredited college or university, regardless of for-profit status. Their Association would argue that this change would be a fundamental shift in the program's intent, and that two key issues should be considered: 1) Appropriations in the current budget are already inadequate to fund all of the students who qualify for the grant; and 2) The committee should seriously consider whether the state should direct its limited financial aid resources to the for-profit sector. ([Attachment 7](#))

Diane Lindeman, Director of Student Financial Aid, Kansas Board of Regents, offered neutral testimony on **HB 2228**. She explained that under the Kansas Comprehensive Grant Program eligibility requirements, there is one accredited institution that meets the definition and does not currently receive grant funding—Brown Mackie College. She explained that, potentially, an additional 63 students might be eligible for the Kansas Comprehensive Grant Program at the Brown Mackie College locations in Salina and Lenexa. The current maximum award for the Kansas Comprehensive Grant is \$3,500. If the Board of Regents received additional funding for the 63 students, it would require an increase of \$220,500 in funding. Without additional funding, the bill would just increase the pool of students eligible for the Kansas Comprehensive Grant. She noted that the Kansas Comprehensive Grant Program's Fiscal Year 2009 State General Fund appropriation was \$15.6 million. She reported that during the 2007-08 academic year, there were 23,014 Kansas resident students who were eligible for the Kansas Comprehensive Grant. Only 11,023 or 48% of those students were actual recipients because the current level of funding does not meet the financial need of 52% of our Kansas resident students. If ultimately enacted into law, **HB 2228** would expand eligibility in a program that is already under funded. ([Attachment 8](#))

The hearing on **HB 2228** was closed.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:47 p.m. The next meeting of the House Higher Education Committee is scheduled for February 12, 2009.