

CHAPTER 476  
FORMERLY  
HOUSE BILL NO. 399  
AS AMENDED BY  
HOUSE AMENDMENT NOS. 1 & 3

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO EDUCATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE :

WHEREAS, Delaware State University can contribute to the workforce needs of the state for jobs requiring a minimum of a bachelor's degree, projected to be 26,000 by 2016; and

WHEREAS, Delaware State University's in-state students are 70% first-time generation college-goers, many requiring extensive financial assistance; and

WHEREAS, in-state students can expect to accumulate more than \$23,000 in total debt by the time they enter their senior years; and

WHEREAS, financial assistance will help Delaware State University meet the national challenge, particularly as it pertains to Historically Black Colleges and Universities, to raise graduation rates across the United States; and

WHEREAS, Delaware State University seeks to improve the retention rate of its in-state students (71%) whose families have experienced, in one year, a 34% increase in federal debt to finance their students' education.

NOW, THEREFORE:

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

Section 1. Amend Chapter 34, Title 14 of the Delaware Code by adding thereto a new subchapter designated as Subchapter XV, which shall read as follows:

"SUBCHAPTER XV. THE DELAWARE STATE INSPIRE SCHOLARSHIP ACT

§3409A. Purpose.

There is hereby created the Delaware State Inspire Scholarship Program. Under this subchapter, qualified, college-bound state resident students are relieved of a substantial part of the burden of paying undergraduate tuition at Delaware State University provided that these students meet the criteria set forth in this subchapter and are pursuing studies leading to a bachelor's degree at Delaware State University. Students who qualify under this subchapter shall not have to repay the State because it is the intent and purpose of the General Assembly, through this subchapter, to help ensure that Delaware students stay in high school, excel academically, and have better access to higher education regardless of a family's financial circumstances and therefore payments under this program shall be grants, not loans.

§3410A. Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this subchapter, shall have the meaning ascribed to them except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

(1) "Academic year" shall mean the two consecutive academic semesters beginning with the fall semester.

(2) "Family" for a dependent applicant shall mean the applicant, the applicant's parents or legal guardian, relative caregiver, and other children under the age of 21 of the applicant's parents, legal guardian or relative caregiver. The term "family" for an independent applicant shall mean the applicant, an applicant's spouse and any dependent children.

(3) "Full-time" shall mean a minimum of 24 credit hours in each academic year.

(4) "Institution" shall mean Delaware State University.

§3411A. Administration.

(a) This subchapter shall be administered by the institution.

(b) The institution shall adopt such rules and regulations as it deems necessary and proper to the administration of this subchapter. Such rules and regulations may include an appeals process to grant exceptions to the eligibility requirements set forth in §3412A(a)(6) of this title for applicants who are unable to attend classes in the fall semester immediately after graduation from high school due to military service or a documented medical condition. Admission deferrals of up to 1 calendar year in duration may be offered to those students who defer admission due to military service or a documented medical condition. Upon passage of 1 year, students may appeal for an admission deferral for 1 additional consecutive year for the reasons stated above.

(c) The institution shall annually report to the General Assembly of the State the names of its students enrolled in the Inspire Scholarship Program and the total amount of expenditures made under this subchapter.

§3412A. Eligibility.

(a) To be eligible to participate in the Inspire Scholarship program and to qualify for a grant towards tuition assistance by the State pursuant to this subchapter students shall meet all of the following:

(1) A student who satisfies the state residency requirements set forth in the Institution's residency policy shall be eligible for such grant if that student is enrolled on a full time, degree seeking basis or is a student with a disability seeking a degree through the institution's academic accommodation policy.

(2) The student shall not have been convicted of any felony and the student's parent, legal guardian, or relative caregiver shall certify such fact.

(3) A student shall have applied for all appropriate forms of financial aid for which the student is eligible including, but not limited to, the Federal Pell Grant, financial aid programs administered by the Delaware Higher Education Commission, and financial aid programs administered by Delaware State University, and shall have accepted all such financial assistance offered or awarded to the student, except for loans.

(4) A student shall have graduated from a Delaware public or nonpublic high school with a minimum cumulative average of either 80% or higher on a 100 point scale or a grade point average (G.P.A.) of 2.75 or higher on a 4.0 scale as indicated on the student's official high school transcript. For purposes of this subchapter, a student who does not meet the qualifying criteria may request the institution recalculate the point percentage or G.P.A. based on the student's official high school transcript and the following conversion table:

G.P.A. Conversion

Letter Grade	Numerical Grade	G.P.A.
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A	92-100	4.00
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B	83-91	3.00
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C	75-82	2.00
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D	65-74	1.00
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F	< 65	0.00
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For purposes of this conversion chart, the numerical value assigned to a letter grade shall be the lowest value in the numerical scale.

(5) A student shall have satisfied admission standards as determined by Delaware State University.

(6) A student shall be admitted and attend classes at the institution no later than the fall semester immediately after the student's graduation from high school.

(7) The institution shall create and implement its own equivalency standards for paragraphs (4) and (6) of this subsection in establishing eligibility of Delaware home schooled students for grants under the Inspire Scholarship Program.

(b) Notwithstanding other provisions in this subchapter, for those individuals who have lived in foster care under the jurisdiction of the Department of Services for Children and Their Families at any point in time between the ages of 16 and 18, whether placed within Delaware or outside Delaware, the provisions of §3412A(a)(4), §3412A(a)(6), §3414A(a)(1), and §3414A(c) of this Title do not apply. Any individual qualifying under this subsection shall make steady academic progress toward a bachelor's degree and shall not be eligible to receive grants if (1) the individual does not begin his or her higher education before age twenty-five, or (2) he or she takes longer than six years to attain a bachelor's degree.

§3413A. Grant Awards/Operations.

The institution shall establish and implement its own procedures to award grants to eligible students subject to appropriations for such purpose, including, but not limited to, a procedure to determine priority among applicants in the event that the amount of grants requested by eligible applicants exceeds the appropriation, which may include consideration of financial need and academic achievement.. Grant awards shall not exceed the available appropriation for each fiscal year. Grant awards shall be disbursed as follows:

Beginning with the 2010-2011 academic year, tuition assistance shall be provided to qualifying applicants in an amount equal to the following:

(1) A recipient shall receive a grant for tuition assistance that shall be equal to what would be received by a similar SEED scholarship recipient.

(2) Inspire grants are renewable, provided that the recipient meets eligibility requirements in §3414A, however, the entire amount of the grant over the recipient's education may not exceed the total amount of a SEED grant over a SEED recipient's education.

(3) If, as a result of applying for federal and state student financial aid, or through other means, it becomes apparent that deliberate fraud was involved in the application process, the institution may reevaluate the recipient's eligibility for grant assistance, and may withdraw a grant award. Any grant award made as the result of deliberate fraud may be recovered by the State through an action at law.

§3414A. Maintaining Eligibility.

(a) To maintain continued State payment of tuition once enrolled at the institution shall meet all of the following:

(1) Make steady academic progress toward a degree, earning not less than the minimum number of hours of credit required for full-time standing in each academic year.

(2) Maintain continuous enrollment for not less than 2 semesters in each successive academic year, unless granted an exception for cause by the institution.

(3) Have a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.75 calculated on a 4.0 scale at the end of the first academic year and thereafter maintain such a cumulative grade point average. The institution may grant exceptions upon appeal.

(4) The student and family shall certify that the student has not been convicted of any felony.

(5) Complete ten hours of community service, as defined by the institution, per semester.

(b) Grants made by the Inspire Scholarship program shall not be allowed for courses or other post-secondary units repeated or taken in excess of the requirements for completion of an bachelor's degree with the exception of those courses required by the institution for program admission and.

(c) Students are eligible to participate in this program for a period not to exceed 6 continuous semesters, not including the summer semester.

§3415A. Disbursement.

(a) Funds awarded from this program shall be disbursed on a semester by semester basis upon receipt of enrollment verification.

(b) No disbursement on behalf of an individual student, pursuant to this subchapter, shall be greater than the tuition charged by the institution.

§3416A. Additional Responsibilities.

(a) The Institution shall develop, promote, and coordinate a public awareness program to inform students and parents of the Inspire Scholarship program.

(b) The Department of Education shall ensure that every school district, and each charter and nonpublic high school, designates at least one Inspire Scholarship program contact person, who shall be either a counselor or teacher, at each high school site in this State.”.

Section 2. This Act shall become effective upon the appropriation by the General Assembly of funds sufficient to accomplish the purpose and implement the provisions of this Act.

Approved October 04, 2010