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“Go Grant” Poised To Enhance College Access in Louisiana

Beginning this fall, thousands of low- and moderate-income Louisiana students will find it significantly easier to afford college. The reason: Louisiana’s “Go Grant.”

The Go Grant, the state’s new need-based college aid program, proposed by Governor Blanco and funded by the state legislature last month, is aimed at bridging the gap between the amount of financial aid a needy student is awarded through the federal Pell Grant aid program and the actual cost of attending a Louisiana college or university.

“Louisiana’s recovery and long-term economic future are tied to improving the educational attainment levels of our citizens,” said Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie. “Unfortunately, when Louisiana was already facing a declining supply of high school graduates, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita decimated enrollment at both our colleges and high schools. So maximizing college access is more important than ever, especially for those students who have not traditionally been financially able to go to college. This plan gets at the heart of Louisiana’s dilemma: It not only will help rebuild college enrollment, but it will also help ensure that many of those who have long been deprived of a chance for college now have the opportunity to earn a postsecondary credential.”

The details of the program are as follows:

Enrollment criteria —

Louisiana resident admitted and enrolled as a certificate- or degree-seeking undergraduate student at a Louisiana public or private (LAICU) college or university: (1) as a first time freshman or (2) aged 25 or older and not having enrolled in a college or university in credit bearing courses for at least one academic year.

Financial need criteria –

Financial need is based on information reported on the FAFSA.

Student must be awarded the federal Pell grant.

Student must have an Education Cost Gap (ECG) (unmet need) beyond the amount covered by the Pell grant.

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The ECG is calculated as follows:

Fulltime Student
Tuition and mandatory fees
<i>plus</i>
\$2,000 for textbooks, supplies, materials and other related education expenses
<i>minus</i>
Federal Pell grants
<i>minus</i>
State grants
<i>equals</i>
Education Cost Gap

Award amount —

Annual award of \$2,000 for ‘Fulltime’, \$1,000 for ‘≥= Half-time’, and \$500 for ‘< Half-time’ students.

Renewal eligibility criteria –

Student eligibility will be reevaluated annually, using the ECG formula, for students with continued Pell eligibility who meet satisfactory academic progress as defined by the institution (*consistent with federal guidelines*).

For more information on the Go Grant program, interested students should contact the financial aid office at the college or university in which they plan to enroll.