

BOARD OF REGENTS BRIEFING PAPER

Handbook Revision: Millennium Scholarship Spring 2020 Continuing Eligibility Waiver
August 7, 2020

BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:

Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 396.930 and 396.934 establish the initial and continuing eligibility requirements for the Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship (GGMS) program and sets forth the related duties and powers of the Board of Regents. Existing Board policy under Title 4, Chapter 18, Section 9 of the *Handbook* (Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship: Policy and Procedures) reflects NRS 396.930 and 396.934 and establishes related provisions.

In response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on NSHE students, during the 2020 Special Session the Nevada Legislature passed Senate Bill 2 (Chapter 2, *Statutes of Nevada 31st Special Session*), providing authority to the Board of Regents to grant a waiver of continuing eligibility requirements to certain recipients of the Millennium Scholarship. This will effectively allow the Board of Regents to waive requirements for students that lost eligibility at the end of the Spring 2020 semester, effectively holding them harmless in terms of their eligibility status. The result of the waiver will be that the students who lost eligibility at the end of the Spring 2020 semester will retain eligibility for the immediately subsequent semester of enrollment and will not earn a strike on their Millennium Scholarship eligibility record. The authority granted in Senate Bill 2 will be in place through July 1, 2021, so that if the Board deems it necessary, they may invoke a waiver for continuing eligibility requirements in Fall 2020 and/or Spring 2021, depending on the situation.

Upon the Board's approval of this *Handbook* revision, System staff will promptly submit a list of Millennium Scholarship students receiving the waiver to the State Treasurer's Office. This will make it possible for students attending an NSHE institution in Fall 2020 and meeting all other program eligibility requirements to receive a Millennium Scholarship award by the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester. Students receiving the waiver would also be eligible for reimbursement for credits completed during Summer 2020 (this normally occurs in September).

As of July 24, 2020, 2,191 students lost eligibility at the end of the Spring 2020 semester. Pursuant to the proposed revisions, the Chancellor's Office will transmit to the Treasurer's Office a list of students who are receiving the waiver and for the purpose of identifying those students as "eligible" in the Treasurer's records. As part of this process, the Treasurer's Office will verify the list submitted by NSHE to ensure all students who are eligible receive the waiver. In addition, in accordance with the provisions of Senate Bill 2, within 45 days of the Treasurer's Office updating the student eligibility record, System staff will submit a report on the waiver (indicating the number of students that received the waiver) to the Governor and the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

Finally, the provisions of Senate Bill 2 require the Board of Regents to select "a person" to appear on behalf of the Board before the appropriate committees of the Legislature or, if the Legislature is not in session, the Legislative Committee on Education, at the next practicable opportunity after the waiver is effective. It is recommended that the Board select "the Chancellor or the designee" to represent the Board when presenting on the matter of the waiver to the Legislature.

This proposed *Handbook* revision has been vetted with the Financial Aid Directors and the Treasurer's Office, each of whom indicated their support for the proposal as presented herein.

SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:

Revise Title 4, Chapter 18, Section 9 of the *Handbook* to implement the provision of Senate Bill 2, enacted by the Nevada Legislature, that provide, authority to the Board to issue a waiver of continuing eligibility requirements for certain Millennium Scholarship recipients. The current proposal provides waivers for Spring 2020 recipients only.

IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):

This proposal is brought forward to implement the provisions of Senate Bill 2, enacted by the Nevada Legislature during the 31st Special Session and authorizing the Board to implement a waiver of continuing eligibility requirements for certain Millennium Scholarship recipients. Timely approval by the Board will make it possible for students attending an NSHE institution in Fall 2020 and meeting all other program eligibility requirements to receive a Millennium Scholarship award by the beginning of the fall semester.

CHECK THE NSHE STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL THAT IS SUPPORTED BY THIS REQUEST:

- Access (Increase participation in post-secondary education)
- Success (Increase student success)
- Close the Achievement Gap (Close the achievement gap among underserved student populations)
- Workforce (Collaboratively address the challenges of the workforce and industry education needs of Nevada)
- Research (Co-develop solutions to the critical issues facing 21st century Nevada and raise the overall research profile)
- Not Applicable to NSHE Strategic Plan Goals

INDICATE HOW THE PROPOSAL SUPPORTS THE SPECIFIC STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

The proposed revision implements a waiver for students that lost eligibility at the end of the Spring 2020 semester to mitigate the negative impact on Millennium recipients who lost continuing eligibility due to the COVID-19 emergency. By maintaining eligibility that would have otherwise been lost, all Millennium students who were enrolled in Spring 2020 and lost eligibility at the end of that term will retain uninterrupted access to the Millennium Scholarship, supporting the Access, Success, and Close the Achievement Gap goals.

BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

- Adoption of the policy revision will effectively implement a waiver for students that lost eligibility at the end of the Spring 2020 semester utilizing the authorization provided under the provisions of Senate Bill 2.
- Due to circumstances beyond their control, many students receiving the Millennium Scholarship who originally enrolled in traditional face-to-face courses were transitioned to remote instruction during Spring 2020. In addition to the shift in instruction to distance learning, Millennium recipients faced additional stressors due to the pandemic including loss of employment, caring for family members, etc. This measure allows students who would have otherwise lost eligibility at the end of the Spring 2020 term to be held harmless.

POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

None have been brought forward.

ALTERNATIVE(S) TO WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED/RECOMMENDED:

The Board may choose not to issue the waivers authorized by Senate Bill 2.

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHANCELLOR’S OFFICE:

The Chancellor’s Office recommends issuing the waivers for students who lost eligibility at the end of Spring 2020 semester.

COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:

- Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title #_____ Chapter #_____ Section #_____
- Amends Current Board Policy: *Title 4, Chapter 18, Section 9*
- Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter #_____ Section #_____
- Other: _____
- Fiscal Impact: Yes _____ No X _____

Explain: *This proposed revision does not have direct fiscal impact (cost) to the NSHE or its institutions; however, it is estimated that cost to the Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship Trust Fund that is administered by the State Treasurer's Office will be up to \$2.6 million over the subsequent semesters in which the students who would have otherwise lost eligibility enroll and are funded.*

POLICY PROPOSAL - HANDBOOK
TITLE 4, CHAPTER 18, SECTION 9

Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship: Policy and Procedures

Additions appear in *boldface italics*; deletions are [~~stricken~~ and bracketed]

Section 9. Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship: Policy and Procedures

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9.14 *Except as otherwise provided*, to remain eligible for a Millennium Scholarship, a student must meet all of the following conditions at each institution where the student is a Millennium Scholarship recipient:

- a. The student must make satisfactory academic progress, as defined by the home institution, toward a recognized associate degree, baccalaureate degree, or a pre-baccalaureate certificate;
- b. The student must maintain for each fall and spring semester that Millennium Scholarship funding is received at least a 2.75 semester grade point average.
- c. The student must satisfactorily complete the minimum credit requirements in each Fall and Spring semester in which enrolled pursuant to Section 9.6.

9.14.1 *The Nevada State Legislature pursuant to Senate Bill 2 of the 31st Special Session authorized the Board of Regents to implement temporary waivers to address the impact of the COVID-19 emergency on continuing eligibility of Millennium recipients.*

- a. *Students that received the Millennium Scholarship in Spring 2020 who lost eligibility at the end of that term pursuant to subsection 9.14 shall receive a waiver and be deemed eligible to receive funding in the subsequent term for which they enroll pursuant to subsection 9.14. Further, such students deemed eligible pursuant to this subsection will not receive a strike pursuant to subsection 9.16.*
- b. *The Chancellor's Office shall transmit to the State Treasurer's Office a list of students deemed eligible pursuant to this subsection for the purpose of updating student eligibility records.*

The Chancellor or their designee shall report on the waivers issued pursuant to this subsection to the Legislature or, if the Legislature is not in session, the Legislature Committee on Education at the next practicable opportunity.

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