

BOARD OF REGENTS
BRIEFING PAPER
Handbook Revision, Silver State Opportunity Grant

BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:

At its June 11-12, 2015, meeting, the Board of Regents approved a policy to implement the new Silver State Opportunity Grant Program (SSOG Program), a state-supported financial aid program created by the 2015 Legislature pursuant to [Senate Bill 227](#) (*Title 4, Chapter 18, Section 10*). Under the SSOG Program, need-based grants will be awarded to eligible low-income students who are college-ready to pay for a portion of the cost of education at a community college or state college within the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE). This unique program is based on a shared responsibility model and guided by a philosophy for awarding grant aid based on the total cost of attendance (tuition and fees, books and supplies, room and board, and other living expenses) being shared by partners (the state, federal government, family, and the student).

Since the passage of S.B. 227 and the Board policy last month, System staff and the campuses have worked diligently to develop the very complex parameters necessary for identifying students eligible for an SSOG award and implementing the SSOG program. Based on this work and, in particular, the complexity of determinations regarding student eligibility, System staff recommends a revision to Board policy to delete the language adopted in June and direct the Chancellor to adopt the appropriate guidelines and procedures in the NSHE Procedures and Guidelines Manual.

SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:

Adopt a new Title 4, Chapter 18, Section 10 as follows:

The 2015 Nevada Legislature created the Silver State Opportunity Grant Program under Senate Bill 227 (Chapter 387, Statutes of Nevada 2015) for the purpose of awarding need-based grants to eligible low-income students who are college-ready in order to pay for a portion of the cost of education at a community college or state college within the Nevada System of Higher Education. The Chancellor is directed to establish procedures and guidelines to comply with the requirements of the Silver State Opportunity Grant Program pursuant to Senate Bill 227. The Chancellor will report to the Board such steps that have been taken to implement the program. (See attached policy proposal.)

IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):

The complexity of implementing the SSOG Program requires flexibility to work with the campuses in making certain determinations to ensure that the program meets the intent of the Legislature and is able to assist students, as required by Senate Bill 227. Directing the Chancellor to take the steps necessary to implement the program within the requirements of Senate Bill 227 will provide the flexibility necessary in implementing the program, particularly during the critical first two years of implementation.

BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

- The Chancellor will work with all institutions to develop technical procedures to comply with the requirements of S.B. 227.
- The procedures may be immediately implemented by the Chancellor and any changes in the requirements can be quickly incorporated into the procedures, which is particularly important during this initial period of implementation.
- NSHE institutions need to begin packaging the SSOG awards for Fall 2015, and the guiding procedures need to be in place with flexibility to revise quickly as needed to work within the complexity of the student eligibility determinations.
- Directing the Chancellor to develop procedures and guidelines will assist NSHE in consistently, efficiently and effectively implementing the program in compliance with S.B. 227. As an example of the need for

flexibility, while no concerns were identified with utilizing the institutional COA as required by the policy (but not S.B. 227), during the subsequent weeks when institution and System staff were able to run preliminary scenarios for student awards, the award amounts for students varied considerably among the institutions, even for students with similar need and living situations. While System staff worked with the institutions to address this extreme variation in award amounts between like students at different eligible institutions, the policy did not allow the flexibility necessary to adopt this alternative, thus necessitating a policy change.

- The Chancellor is responsible for reporting to the Board on the status of implementation.

POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

None have been presented.

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

- Do not direct the Chancellor to develop SSOG procedures and guidelines for implementation.
- Require Board approval of implementation guidelines.

COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:

- Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title #____ Chapter #____ Section #____
- Amends Current Board Policy: *Title 4, Chapter 18, Section 10*
- Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter #____ Section #____
- Other:_____
- Fiscal Impact: Yes____ No ____
Explain:_____

POLICY PROPOSAL
TITLE 4, CHAPTER 18, *new* SECTION 10
Silver State Opportunity Grant Program

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

Section 10. Silver State Opportunity Grant Program

The 2015 Nevada Legislature created the Silver State Opportunity Grant Program under Senate Bill 227 (Chapter 387, Statutes of Nevada 2015) for the purpose of awarding need-based grants to eligible low-income students who are college-ready in order to pay for a portion of the cost of education at a community college or state college within the Nevada System of Higher Education. The Chancellor is directed to establish procedures and guidelines to comply with the requirements of the Silver State Opportunity Grant Program pursuant to Senate Bill 227. The Chancellor will report to the Board such steps that have been taken to implement the program.

DELETE SECTION 10 IN ITS ENTIRETY