

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 2nd Session of the 55th Legislature (2016)

3 SENATE BILL 996

By: Smalley

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6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to higher education; amending 70 O.S.  
8 2011, Section 2632, as amended by Section 1, Chapter  
9 287, O.S.L. 2015 (70 O.S. Supp. 2015, Section 2632),  
10 which relates to eligibility for the Oklahoma Tuition  
Equalization Grant; adding certain eligible  
institutions; providing an effective date; and  
declaring an emergency.

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13 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

14 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2011, Section 2632, as  
15 amended by Section 1, Chapter 287, O.S.L. 2015 (70 O.S. Supp. 2015,  
16 Section 2632), is amended to read as follows:

17 Section 2632. A. To be eligible for an Oklahoma Tuition  
18 Equalization Grant, a student shall:

19 1. Be an Oklahoma resident as defined by the Oklahoma State  
20 Regents for Higher Education;

21 2. Have enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student in an  
22 eligible institution of higher education as prescribed in subsection  
23 D of this section;

1           3. Meet the income eligibility level, which is the student's  
2 parents' income from taxable and nontaxable sources which shall not  
3 be more than Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00) per year or the  
4 student's income if the student is independent and self-supporting  
5 as determined by the State Regents consistent with federal financial  
6 aid regulations;

7           4. Pay more tuition than is required at a comparable public  
8 institution of higher education and pay no less than the regular  
9 tuition required of all students enrolled at the institution where  
10 the student is enrolled; and

11           5. Maintain at least minimum standards of academic performance  
12 as required by the enrolling institution.

13           B. The enrolling institution shall forward a completed student  
14 application, documentation of full-time enrollment status, and  
15 certification of resident status to the State Regents no later than  
16 October 15 for the fall semester and March 15 for the spring  
17 semester of each academic year.

18           C. Subject to the availability of funds in the Oklahoma Tuition  
19 Equalization Grant Trust Fund, an Oklahoma Tuition Equalization  
20 Grant in the amount of Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000.00) per academic  
21 year, or One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) per academic semester  
22 shall be awarded by the State Regents by allocation from the  
23 Oklahoma Tuition Equalization Grant Trust Fund, beginning with  
24 eligible students enrolled in the 2003-2004 school year. No grants

1 pursuant to this act shall be provided to students for attending  
2 summer terms or intersessions.

3 D. The State Regents shall implement policies and procedures  
4 for the administration of this act. The State Regents shall approve  
5 as eligible institutions of higher education only those private or  
6 independent, not-for-profit colleges or universities that are  
7 domiciled within this state, meet approved program and accreditation  
8 standards as determined by the State Regents, and are fully  
9 accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central  
10 Association on Colleges and Schools or a national accrediting body  
11 recognized by the United States Department of Education.  
12 Additionally, eligible institutions shall adhere to the complaint  
13 process policies and procedures administered by the State Regents.  
14 The State Regents shall review and take action, as authorized, on  
15 complaints concerning eligible institutions. The eligible  
16 institutions shall include Bacone College, Family of Faith College,  
17 Mid-America Christian University, Oklahoma Baptist University,  
18 Oklahoma Christian University, Oklahoma City University, Oklahoma  
19 Wesleyan University, Oral Roberts University, Southern Nazarene  
20 University, Southwestern Christian University, St. Gregory's  
21 University, the University of Tulsa and Hillsdale Free Will Baptist  
22 College or any member of the Oklahoma Independent Colleges and  
23 Universities Association.

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1 E. If funds are not sufficient in the Oklahoma Tuition  
2 Equalization Grant Trust Fund to provide grants for all eligible  
3 applicants, the State Regents shall award grants on the basis of  
4 need and take into consideration other grants and scholarships  
5 received by an eligible applicant when awarding grants. Students  
6 who have previously received a tuition equalization grant and who  
7 continue to meet the requirements for eligibility shall have  
8 absolute priority for continued financial support superior to any  
9 student who is applying for a grant for the first time.

10 F. Students enrolling as first-time freshmen for the 2003-2004  
11 school year shall be the first class of students eligible to apply  
12 for Oklahoma Tuition Equalization Grants. In subsequent years, all  
13 previously eligible students and the first-time enrolling freshmen  
14 students shall be entitled to apply for a grant pursuant to this  
15 section. Beginning in the 2007-2008 school year, all eligible  
16 students shall be entitled to apply for a grant pursuant to this  
17 section.

18 G. A grant provided by this section shall not be allowed for  
19 courses or other postsecondary units taken in excess of the  
20 requirements for completion of a baccalaureate program or taken more  
21 than five (5) years after the student's first grant is received.  
22 The State Regents may award an Oklahoma Tuition Equalization Grant  
23 for courses of postsecondary units taken more than five (5) years  
24 after the student's first grant is received only in hardship

1 circumstances. No Oklahoma Tuition Equalization Grant recipient may  
2 receive benefits beyond a cumulative time period of five (5) years.

3 H. On or before February 1 after the first semester in which  
4 grants are awarded pursuant to this act and every year thereafter,  
5 the State Regents shall provide a report to the Governor, President  
6 Pro Tempore of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of  
7 Representatives to include, but not be limited to the number of  
8 students awarded grants, grade point average, persistence rates,  
9 degree completion rates, demographic data, and any other indicators  
10 the State Regents deem appropriate.

11 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2016.

12 SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation  
13 of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby  
14 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and  
15 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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