



# JOAN BALLWEG

WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE

PO Box 8952, State Capitol  
Madison, Wisconsin 53708-8952  
Toll-free: (888) 534-0041  
Fax: (608) 282-3641  
Rep.Ballweg@legis.wi.gov

41<sup>ST</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AB 260: Enrollment requirements for recipients of talent incentive grants  
Testimony of State Representative Joan Ballweg  
Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities  
August 15, 2013

Thank you, Chairman Nass, and members of the committee for hearing Assembly Bill 260 today.

This bill makes a change to the Talent Incentive Grant Program, which is administered by the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) and provides grants to uniquely needy students attending colleges and universities in the state. AB 260 specifies that grant recipients will not be automatically disqualified because they fail to maintain continuous enrollment in their higher education institutions. Instead, it provides that grant recipients will be eligible to receive the grants for up to 10 semesters during a six-year period.

The legislation responds to a concern raised by HEAB that students receiving financial aid through the program currently may lose their grants if they miss a semester or year of school. Under current law, those students must apply for a waiver to retain eligibility, and although they are regularly approved, this change makes commonsense.

This extension is not meant to slow down a student's time to completion. Rather, we know from experience that economically and educationally disadvantaged students are the most likely to need breaks during their college careers. Whether they are taking time off to work in order to save money, or to care for a family member, by extending the time they are eligible for this grant we are helping to ensure those students will return to the classroom.

AB 260 was introduced last session as 2011 AB 142. It was the result of the Joint Legislative Council Study Committee on Review of Higher Education Financial Aid Programs and was also recommended by the 2012 Commission on Financial Aid Consolidation and Modernization.

Thank you for your time, I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.



State of Wisconsin  
Higher Educational Aids Board

P.O. Box 7885  
Madison, WI 53707-7885  
E-Mail: HEABmail@wi.gov

Telephone: (608) 267-2206  
Fax: (608) 267-2808  
Web Page: <http://heab.wi.gov>

Scott Walker  
Governor

John Reinemann  
Executive Secretary

TO: Members, Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities  
FROM: John Reinemann, HEAB Executive Secretary  
RE: HEAB Support for AB 260  
DATE: August 15, 2013

I support AB 260, which is being heard before the Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities today, Thursday, August 15.

AB 260 is a proposal recommended by a nonpartisan study committee on financial aid. The 2012 Commission on Financial Aid Consolidation and Modernization was created in 2011 Wisconsin Act 176 to study possible changes to some of the financial aid programs administered by the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB). (The final report of the Commission as well as other material can be found on HEAB's web site at <http://heab.wisconsin.gov/commission/index.html>)

The 2012 Commission included legislative membership: Senator Risser and Representative Ballweg were members of the Commission and support its recommendations. HEAB thanks them for their work on the Commission and for their authoring of AB 260.

HEAB awards several grants to post-secondary students in Wisconsin, including grants under the Talent Incentive Program or TIP. TIP grants go to uniquely needy students enrolled at public and private nonprofit institutions of higher education in Wisconsin. (TIP is established under s. 39.435(2) and is administered under HEA 5.04 and HEA 5.05.)

First-time freshmen students are nominated for the TIP Grant by the school financial aid offices or by counselors of the Wisconsin Educational Opportunity Programs (WEOP). To continue to receive the TIP Grant, students must be enrolled consecutive terms and continue to show financial need. Eligibility cannot exceed ten semesters.

TIP grants may be for any amount from \$600 to \$1,800 for initial awards. There is a \$250 minimum for continuing awards, and a maximum continuing award is set annually by HEAB. (The maximum continuing award may not exceed \$1,800.)

In 2009-2010 HEAB awarded TIP grants to 4,311 students who received a total of \$4.4 million under the program. In 2010-2011 HEAB awarded TIP grants to 4,534 students totaling \$6.7 million.

***MORE***

AB 260 makes a small but important change to the TIP grant.

- Under current law, a student must maintain continuous enrollment to remain eligible for a talent incentive grant.
- AB 260 provides that a student need not maintain continuous enrollment to remain eligible for a talent incentive grant.
- AB 260 would retain provisions of current law for TIP that limit the number of semesters a student may receive TIP (ten) and how many years may elapse after the first award (six).

AB 260 would allow students to remain in TIP even if they needed to take a year off their studies. Reasons for such a break could include a medical situation, a non-campus educational opportunity, or some other issue.

Currently such leeway is afforded to students in other HEAB programs, and AB 260 would simply extend to TIP students the same flexibility that is afforded to students participating in other grant and scholarship programs administered by HEAB.

Some may express concern that allowing students to take a hiatus from their studies may reduce the odds that a student will finish a course of study. Certainly HEAB would like to see students return to their studies if they do take a leave. We feel that the provisions now part of TIP (a semester limit totaling ten semesters and a time limit of six years) are an incentive to students to finish their educations while they can benefit from TIP.

AB 260 is a simple proposal that had unanimous support among members of the 2012 Commission on Financial Aid Consolidation and Modernization. I hope that the bill will receive your support as well.

Should you have questions or concerns about AB 260, please feel free to contact me.



August 13, 2013

Dear Representative Berceau:

I am writing today to express my support for AB 260, which will be heard before the Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities on Thursday, August 15.

AB 260 is a proposal recommended by a nonpartisan study committee on financial aid. The 2012 Commission on Financial Aid Consolidation and Modernization was created in 2011 Wisconsin Act 176 to study possible changes to some of the financial aid programs administered by the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB).

The 2012 Commission included legislative membership: Senator Risser and Representative Ballweg were members of the Commission and support its recommendations.

The final report of the Commission as well as other material can be found on HEAB's web site at <http://heab.wisconsin.gov/commission/index.html>

HEAB awards TIP grants to uniquely needy students enrolled at public and private nonprofit institutions of higher education in this state. Currently a student must maintain continuous enrollment to remain eligible for a talent incentive grant. AB 260 provides that a student need not maintain continuous enrollment to remain eligible for a talent incentive grant. Current provisions of TIP would remain in place that would limit the number of semesters a student may receive TIP and how many years may elapse after the first award.

AB 260 would allow students to remain in TIP even if they needed to take a year off their studies. Reasons for such a break could include a medical situation, a non-campus educational opportunity, or some other issue. Currently such leeway is afforded to students in other HEAB programs, and AB 260 would simply extend to TIP students the same flexibility that is afforded to students participating in other grant and scholarship programs administered by HEAB. **UW-Madison averages @ 185 students per year who benefit by these very important State funds for needy students, some of whom might benefit by this adjustment to the current TIP rules.**

AB 260 is a simple proposal that had unanimous support among members of the 2012 Commission on Financial Aid Consolidation and Modernization. I hope that the bill will receive your support.

Should you have questions or concerns about AB 260, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Susan Fischer

Office of Student Financial Aid  
Susan Fischer, Director

University of Wisconsin-Madison 333 East Campus Mall #9701 Madison, WI 53715-1382  
608/263-3202 Fax: 608/262-9068 Email: [susan.fischer@finaid.wisc.edu](mailto:susan.fischer@finaid.wisc.edu)

ALVERNO COLLEGE  
BELLIN COLLEGE  
BELOIT COLLEGE  
CARDINAL STRITCH UNIVERSITY  
CARROLL UNIVERSITY  
CARTHAGE COLLEGE  
COLUMBIA COLLEGE OF NURSING  
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY  
EDGEWOOD COLLEGE  
LAKELAND COLLEGE  
LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY  
MARIAN UNIVERSITY



WISCONSIN'S PRIVATE, NONPROFIT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES  
WORKING TOGETHER TO ADVANCE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY  
MEDICAL COLLEGE OF WISCONSIN  
MILWAUKEE INSTITUTE OF ART & DESIGN  
MILWAUKEE SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING  
MOUNT MARY UNIVERSITY  
NORTHLAND COLLEGE  
RIPON COLLEGE  
ST. NORBERT COLLEGE  
SILVER LAKE COLLEGE OF THE HOLY FAMILY  
VITERBO UNIVERSITY  
WISCONSIN LUTHERAN COLLEGE

## Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities

August 15, 2013

### TESTIMONY

#### ASSEMBLY BILL 260

By

Dr. Rolf Wegenke, President

Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

Chair Nass and members of the Committee, my name is Rolf Wegenke. I am the President of the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, or WAICU, representing the 23 private, nonprofit colleges and universities in Wisconsin and their more than 61,000 students.

I am speaking in support of AB 260 which relates to the Talent Incentive Program, or TIP, grants administered by Higher Educational Aids Board, or HEAB. AB 260 allows HEAB to award a TIP Grant to a fully-qualified student for up to ten semesters whether or not that enrollment is continuous. This would ensure that the rules for of TIP grants are the same as those for other HEAB grants.

I am grateful that this bill has bipartisan sponsors including the chair and 19 other legislators.

I was a member of the 2012 Commission on Financial Aid Consolidation and Modernization as were Representative Joan Ballweg and Senator Fred Risser, sponsors of AB 260 and its companion bill, SB 229. Among the recommendations of the Commission was *"The Commission endorses passage of legislation comparable to 2011 Assembly Bill 142, a product of the 2010 interim study committee, which would allow student recipients of the Talent Incentive Grant to continue receiving the grant through a discontinuous enrollment as is done for other HEAB grant programs."* AB 260 accomplishes this goal of the 2012 Commission.

The TIP Grant funds Wisconsin resident students attending Wisconsin's public or private, nonprofit colleges and universities. First-time freshman students are nominated by their financial aid offices or by counselors of the Wisconsin Educational Opportunities Program. HEAB reports that in 2011-12 there were over 3,400 students at UW, WTCS, and WAICU awarded TIP Grants. The awards totaled over \$2.6 million.

Wisconsin's other major student aid programs do not require consecutive semesters of enrollment, although they do cap the overall number of semesters of eligibility, as does TIP. This bill amends the TIP

Grant eligibility requirements to make them similar to the Higher Educational Aids Board's other grant programs by allowing a fully-qualified student to receive TIP for up to ten semesters which could be discontinuous. Wisconsin needs more college graduates. Reality happens. These fully-qualified Wisconsin students may need to "stop out" in their college career to earn additional money for tuition or for their families. The state should not penalize them for being responsible. The state, by allowing this flexibility, protects its investment by helping assure that students who "stop out" can pick up their college career where they left off and, ultimately, graduate. Changing the eligibility requirements will have no impact on increasing the costs of the program.

WAICU's mission, "Wisconsin's private, nonprofit colleges working together to advance educational opportunity" is exemplified in state student financial aid targeted toward fully-qualified, low-income, first-generation, or minority students. I am grateful that in 2013 Act 20, the biennial budget act, the Legislature and Governor ensured that student financial aid remained stable and, for one year only, increased both the WHEG-Wisconsin Technical College Grant and the Wisconsin Tuition Grant to address the challenges facing Wisconsin students. While over 61,000 students received one of HEAB's major grants, fully 76,000 qualified and eligible students were turned away for lack of funding. These are Wisconsin students attending a Wisconsin college or university who, without help, cannot achieve their or the state's educational goals. Sustaining and increasing those funds are the only way many students attending two- and four-year institutions can stay in school. Ensuring that the TIP Grant can be used as all other HEAB grants are will go one step farther, in a cost-effective manner, to assist these Wisconsin citizens.



**Bill Position**  
**Board of Regents - University of Wisconsin System**  
**2013-14 Legislative Session**

**Assembly Bill 260**

**Talent Incentive Program Grants**

**LEGISLATION**

**Assembly Bill 260**

Under current law, the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) awards Talent Incentive Program (TIP) grants to uniquely needy students enrolled at public and private nonprofit institutions of higher education in the state. Currently, HEAB may not award a TIP grant to the same student for more than 10 consecutive semesters. In addition, under both state statutes (§39.435(2), Wis. Stats.) and administrative rules promulgated by HEAB, a student must maintain continuous enrollment to remain eligible for a talent incentive grant.

This bill provides that a student need not maintain continuous enrollment to remain eligible for a TIP grant. Under the bill, HEAB may award a TIP grant to the same student for up to 10 semesters, whether or not consecutive, but may not award a grant to the same student more than six years after the initial grant is awarded to that student.

Introduced: July 2, 2013

Referred to: Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities

Public hearing scheduled: August 15, 2013

**UW SYSTEM POSITION**

**SUPPORT:**

AB 260 is similar to 2011 AB 142, which was based upon recommendations from the [Joint Legislative Council Special Committee on Review of Higher Education Financial Aid Programs](#), a bi-partisan committee of higher education leaders that included UW financial aid experts. That bill was passed unanimously by the Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities on a 10-0 vote but failed to advance further before the legislative session adjourned.

Like the previous bill, AB 260 maintains eligibility for student recipients of Talent Incentive Program (TIP) grants who may have to stop-out and re-enroll.

While it is a relatively small change to the program, it is essential to those students who for some reason, such as a health concern or a family crisis, may have to change their educational plans.

This bill provides that, so long as they continue to meet financial and other qualifications, students will remain eligible to receive grants for up to 10 semesters during a six-year period.

The UW Board of Regents supports this legislation. It is consistent with previous efforts to reduce barriers to college, improve affordability, and modernize financial aid programs.