

OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP EXPANSION (ADULT LEARNER) BILL

Talking Points – Idaho State University

As is the case at most institutions, ISU earmarks a large percentage of scholarships to incoming freshman and transfer students for recruitment purposes. Few scholarships are earmarked specifically for non-traditional students or former students returning after a break in their post-secondary education. Expansion of the Opportunity Scholarship for awarding to non-traditional students who completed 24 or more post-secondary credits and stopped out (due to various reasons) would be a huge incentive to this population of students.

-Approximately 40% of ISU undergraduate degree-seeking students are non-traditional. (Note: Non-traditional is defined as a student who is over the age of 24 or the student is considered independent for FAFSA purposes, and has a family size > 1 as determined by their FAFSA Application).

-Many of these students face a variety of life barriers which prevent them from completing an undergraduate degree or certificate. For Academic Year 2017-2018, 3,131 (47%) of enrolled, undergraduate ISU students are

independent. Of these, 2,249 (71%) qualified and were offered pell grants (showing high financial need).

-As is the case at most institutions, ISU earmarks a large percentage of scholarships to incoming freshman and transfer students for recruitment purposes. Few scholarships are earmarked specifically for non-traditional students or former students returning after a break in their post-secondary education.

-Survey results:

In late September 2015, a survey was conducted to target students that attended ISU fall 2010 through summer 2014 and had not re-enrolled by fall of 2015. The analysis was based on Idaho degree seeking undergraduate students.

-Our survey data indicates that for adult learners, life gets in the way--children, jobs, family obligations--and that they often leave in good academic standing. In fact, the overall GPA for Sophomores (27 credits or greater) who left ISU was 2.5 or greater; Juniors was 2.7 or greater, and Seniors was 2.75 or greater.

-Based on the survey results, a total of 4,910 (63%) did not return to college. The other 37% were attending another institution. Of the 63% that did not return to college, the primary issue was related to tuition and funding resources.