LEGISLATION

Authors: Representative David Murphy and Senator Howard Marklein

This bill creates a program to award grants to students enrolled in technical colleges and the two-year University of Wisconsin college campuses (UW colleges) to meet emergency financial need. A student is eligible for a grant to pay the student’s expense resulting from a financial emergency if the student’s expected family contribution, as determined by the federal Free Application for Federal Student Aid, is less than $5,000. “Financial emergency” is defined as an unplanned event causing an unanticipated expense that would cause a student to not complete that term if a grant were not available to cover the expense, and includes such expenses as those for medical treatment or vehicle repair but not for textbooks, student fees, or groceries. The amount of the grants awarded to a student may not exceed a total of $500 per academic year, with a limit of two grants per student per academic year. A student’s grant application must include written proof identifying the nature and amount of the expense and the third party to whom this amount is owed. Grant funding is distributed by the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) Board to the technical colleges, and by the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents (Board of Regents) to the UW colleges, based on the anticipated need and demand for grants at each technical college or UW college. Each technical college and UW college must collect certain information relating to the grant program and, at the end of each academic year, report this information to, respectively, the WTCS Board and Board of Regents, and the WTCS Board and Board of Regents must then report this information to the legislature.

UW SYSTEM POSITION: SUPPORT

This legislation was drafted in close consultation with UW System administration. These so-called “micro grants” have been very successful at other campuses throughout the country and we believe they provide our students a critical tool in managing short term fiscal emergencies that could threaten their ability to continue their education.

The Board of Regents offers a position in support of this legislation.