



UW SYSTEM GUIDELINES

Lawton Undergraduate Minority Retention Grant Program

(Guidelines apply to awards granted as of the 2015-16 academic year)

The 1985-87 Biennial Budget established (1986) an undergraduate minority grant program entitled the Lawton Undergraduate Minority Retention Grant Program (LUMRG). The legislative intent of the Lawton grant program is to provide financial assistance to statutorily designated (African-American, Hispanic, Native American (or American Indian) and Southeast Asian of Vietnamese, Cambodian or Laotian descent who entered the United States after December 31, 1975 minority undergraduate students to improve their opportunities for retention and graduation and lessen the burden of student debt. UW System updated these Guidelines in March, 2013. Versions of the Guidelines issued before that date are obsolete.

The Lawton Undergraduate Minority Retention Grant Program is designed to increase the retention and degree attainment for underrepresented racial/ethnic minority students at all UW System institutions. Achieving that outcome not only increases and strengthens the compositional diversity of the UW System undergraduate student body, it also improves the educational experiences and learning environments for all students. In practice, this is accomplished through the integration of this financial aid program with a set of well-coordinated, data-informed strategies aimed at increasing student engagement, persistence, retention and degree attainment for underrepresented racial/ethnic minority students. Fundamental components of the Lawton Program consist of academic excellence and increased student success through purposeful and meaningful programming and engagement.

Flexibility is provided within the System guidelines to encourage the development of successful methods for retaining minority students and to permit institutions to experiment in tailoring their award criteria to fit their unique populations. Assessment standards shall be sufficiently consistent to enable measurement of programmatic effectiveness assessment across UW System. Each UW System institution will submit an annual Lawton Report to be evaluated by the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) detailing and assessing their Lawton program. UW System will conduct periodic program assessments using data submitted by UW System institutions, and data from the UW System Central Data Request (CDR) data warehouse. Every five years the UWSA Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion will facilitate a review process of the Lawton Program, including the guidelines and procedures.

These are the guidelines and processes for administering the program:

Administration of Program and Coordination of Institutional Partners

- (1) Responsibility for locally administering and assessing the program will be based on a joint partnership between the Multicultural/Disadvantaged Coordinator (M/DC) (or is/her appointed designee, hereto referred to as the Multicultural/Disadvantaged Coordinator), the Financial Aid office, including other related institutional partners. These offices will develop institutional Lawton award criteria, related guidelines and procedures and programmatic activities to enhance linkages between Lawton and larger institutional goals related to diversity and inclusion, retention, and student success, or so charge an existing group, with that partnership in mind. Shared assessment of program effectiveness across the UW System will be collaboration between UW institutions and UWSA.
- (2) Responsibility for promoting and administering the program will be collaboration between the M/DC and the Financial Aid offices at each institution. Identification of, and initial contact with, potential student award recipients may be through either the M/DC or Financial Aid offices, with the M/DC office coordinating the process in a timely manner. The M/DC and Financial Aid offices will jointly determine if a student is eligible to be considered for an award. Students' receipt of the award is conditional upon them meeting annually with the M/DC's office and developing a mutually agreed upon plan for student success. These conditional prerequisites for the Lawton program should be included on all institutional program materials.

Eligibility

The purpose of the Lawton Program is to improve the learning experiences and educational outcomes for eligible student recipients/participants. Program impacts will be measured overall using institutionally defined student success measures, including the degree of individual educational attainment and sustained meaningful engagement with programming. The following four sections describe the conditions and characteristics a student is expected to demonstrate to be eligible for consideration and renewals.

To be eligible for Lawton, students must be enrolled as a full time student within the UW System. Students already receiving Lawton funds will have priority for continued funding, pending a determination that they continue to meet requirements for renewal of awards.

- (3) **Eligibility for the program:** Eligibility for the program will be jointly determined based on criteria set by the M/DC and Financial Aid offices (*See also*, paragraph (1) above). Minority student status will be self-disclosed. Students need to ensure that their self-disclosed racial/ethnic identification is consistent across all institutional records and with institutional definitions used by each institution. Records that fall under these provisions include those maintained by the institution's Registrar. Exceptions may be allowed where the change is precipitated by and consistent with a student's developmental and evolving understanding of his/her own racial/ethnic identity.

- (4) **Eligibility for initial awards:** Statutorily designated minority undergraduate students who have completed at least 24 creditsⁱ, who enroll for at least 24 credits per academic year, who are in good academic standingⁱⁱ and making satisfactory academic progressⁱⁱⁱ are eligible. Institutions should attempt to have awards reasonably distributed among the three student levels. The M/DC office will have contact with eligible students to detail required programmatic aspects and/or certain programmatic goals, as defined by the institution's Lawton programmatic criteria, and must sign off for a student to be enrolled into the program.
- (5) **Eligibility for renewal awards:** Statutorily designated minority undergraduate students who enroll in and complete at least 24 credits per academic year, and who are in good academic standing^{iv} and making satisfactory academic progress^v are eligible. Exceptions to the above may be made on a case-by-case basis as decided by the M/DC, Financial Aid, including related offices.
- (6) **Only Wisconsin residents** are eligible to receive Lawton Awards. Minnesota reciprocity students are not eligible^{vi}. Special students and students working toward a second undergraduate degree are not eligible. Lawton money may not be awarded to a student whose name appears on the statewide support lien docket under s. 49.854 (2) (b) ^{vii}, unless the student provides to the board a payment agreement that has been approved by the county child support agency under s. 59.53 (5) ^{viii} and that is consistent with rules promulgated under s. 49.858 (2) (a) ^{ix}.

Programmatic Activities

- (7) Specific programmatic activities used to enhance linkages between Lawton and overarching institutional goals related to diversity, retention, and student success may vary by institution. To aid in assessment across the UW System, programmatic decision-making shall be informed by one or more of the following four pillars: 1) cohort group or learning community; 2) High Impact Educational Practices (HIPs)^x learning and academic enrichment; 3) academic instruction and support; and 4) leadership and community engagement. EDI will facilitate regular sharing of programmatic activities and practices that support successful results amongst UW institutions.
- (8) Institutions will offer financial literacy as one component of their programmatic activities in which students are **required** to participate.
- (9) Differential award levels based on academic progress (such as progression towards degree and/or an incrementally increasing semester GPA) may be determined by institutionally developed criteria, where the total awarded funds per student is not to exceed \$4,000 annually.

Award Distribution

- (10) For this grant to be significant, it should be employed in a way that addresses the larger financial burden that underrepresented minority students are facing in their effort to complete their baccalaureate degrees. Institutions may tailor the amount awarded to

reflect the needs of their particular student populations within the amount range of \$1,000 - \$4,000, awarded annually per student. The minimal annual amount awarded will be \$1,000 per student. Institutions have discretion of making awards under the minimum amount at the end of the academic year.

- (11) Full-time students are eligible for grants up to **\$4,000 per academic year**, for up to four academic years (preferably consecutive) for a maximum of \$16,000 per student^{xi}. The receipt of the award is conditional upon the student meeting with the M/DC's office and developing a mutually agreed upon plan for student success.
- (12) Lawton is a need-based program with programmatic prerequisites for receipt of funds. Funds are distributed in the following manner:
 - a) Need is calculated by the prevailing federal methodology. The following formula will be used to calculate need: 'Cost of Attendance' minus 'Expected Family Contribution' equals 'Need.' Unmet need for the purposes of Lawton is defined as the need remaining after all gift aid (federal, state, institutional, and private grants/scholarships) has been applied.
 - b) LUMRG may not be used to replace any other grant for which the student is eligible. In the financial aid award process, an award sequence such as: Pell, WHEG/TIP, IG/BIA, SEOG, Institutional/Other, LUMRG, will be followed. Thus, LUMRG should be the last grant applied to a student's unmet need after all other grants, including tuition remission, are applied. Whenever possible and feasible, LUMRG will replace student loans (need-based and non-need based loans). The inclusion of federal work study aid in an award package should be carefully considered (assuming funding and employment opportunities are available). Should the amount of unmet need fall below the range, institutions are allowed to grant students less than the monetary range of \$1,000 - \$4,000 per academic year. Financial Aid officers are strongly encouraged to be sensitive to the special needs of minority students and to carefully examine the student's available resources in developing a financial aid package.
 - c) Fundamental components of the Lawton Program consist of academic excellence and increased student success through purposeful and meaningful programming and engagement. Participation in programming prerequisites are described in the "Eligibility for initial awards" and "Eligibility for renewal awards" sections. All Lawton funds should be utilized solely for students who fully meet Lawton's eligibility requirements in terms of racial/ethnic identity and socioeconomic status.
- (13) Funding allocations to each institution are based on their proportion of the three-year rolling average headcount enrollment of African American, Hispanic, Native American (or American Indian) and statutorily designated Southeast Asian resident sophomores, juniors and seniors who are Wisconsin residents enrolled full-time.
- (14) Students who withdraw, drop out, are dismissed, or take a leave of absence during the semester may need to return Lawton Grant Funds based on the Return of Funds calculation. The calculation must be performed in accordance with the Higher Educational Aids Board Return of Funds policy ^{xii}If a student withdraws after beginning attendance, Lawton Grant funds must be returned within 30 days of the last date of

attendance; or the date the student officially notifies school officials of withdrawal; or the date the school officially designates as the withdrawal date. From the HEAB return of funds policy, Federal methodology will be used to determine the amount of funds to be returned. State aid programs will have priority for any credit balance remaining from an institutional refund after the federal Return of Title IV Funds requirements are satisfied. In the case where multiple state aid programs are impacted, discretion will be given to the school to decide which state aid program to return first in accordance with being in the student's best interest.

Assessment and Reporting

Assessment and reporting will take place at both the institutional and system levels. The following guidelines are preliminary and are subject to change.

(15) Institutional Assessment and Reporting

Institutions will report on the prior academic year to the UW System Administration by February 1st of each year. The institutional M/DC's office or its designee will be responsible for submitting the following to UW System Administration^{xiii}:

- a. The number of Lawton participants enrolled at the institution and the total Lawton aid received.
- b. The number of *new* Lawton participants enrolled in the fall term and the total Lawton aid received.
- c. Award criteria and guidelines.
- d. Programmatic activity made available to Lawton recipients, such as counseling, high impact practices, etc., along with an estimate of utilization by Lawton participants.

(16) System Assessment and Reporting

At least annually, the UW System Administration Office of Policy Analysis and Research (OPAR) will assess the Lawton program. UW System maintains a large and comprehensive database of student enrollments and financial aid awards that will be used to track students throughout their UW careers, and follow transfer students as they move from one UW institution to another. Assigning assessment responsibilities to OPAR ensures that program evaluations are conducted uniformly^{xiv}.

- a. **Outcomes:** The UW System Central Data Request (CDR) data warehouse includes several student performance indicators that should be affected by the Lawton Grant revisions, including year-to-year retention, graduation, grade point average, and credits earned. Other indicators may be added later, as appropriate.
- b. **Comparisons:** The effectiveness of the Lawton programmatic changes can be assessed by comparing the outcomes of Lawton participants with either a baseline or with a comparison group. Historical baseline Lawton outcomes can be measured in recent cohorts of Lawton grant recipients before the guideline revisions go into effect. A comparison group can be constructed from the group of underrepresented minority students who do not participate in the Lawton

program after the guideline revisions are implemented^{xv}. In both cases it is expected that students participating in the “new” Lawton program will show desirable academic outcomes.

- c. Timing: The timing of the UW System assessment is to be determined. It will presumably be conducted annually or biannually.

Appeal Procedures

- (17) Appeal procedures for special circumstances shall be established by each institution. A limited number of exceptions to these provisions may be granted on a case by case basis by the M/DC’s office in coordination with the Financial Aid office. Appeals can be based on: 1) denials based on proof of eligibility (e.g. race, need, completion of satisfactory programmatic requirements for awards) 2) denials based on mistakes on GPAs, and 3) denials based on institutional error. Appeals may not be based on: 1) residential status, 2) amount of award, 3) failure to participate in pre-determined programmatic prerequisites, 3) conduct and discipline (e.g. suspensions^{xvi} and expulsions)

ⁱ Earned credits may come from high school coursework (i.e. Advanced Placement coursework).

ⁱⁱ Good academic standing for initial eligibility in Lawton is defined as a minimum or higher 2.0 cumulative GPA.

ⁱⁱⁱ Satisfactory academic progress (SAP) for initial eligibility in Lawton is defined by a student’s agreement to participate in required programs and/or meet certain goals, as defined by the institution’s Lawton programmatic criteria and federally defined financial aid SAP. Federally defined financial aid SAP asserts that students are expected to be making satisfactory “pace” toward a degree, by passing 2/3 or 66.67% of the classes they enroll in (Pace = Total number of completed credits in academic career / Total number of credits attempted in academic career). Further, students’ aid eligibility will be limited to 180 attempted credits for their first undergraduate degree; other degrees will be limited to 150% percent of credits required to complete the program. Students are notified of their status under the SAP standards shortly after grades are posted for every term or academic year.

^{iv} Good academic standing for renewal of eligibility in Lawton is defined as a minimum or higher 2.0 cumulative GPA.

^v *Satisfactory academic progress* (SAP) for renewal of Lawton is defined by a student’s continued participation in required programs and/or meets certain goals, as defined by the institution’s Lawton programmatic criteria and federally defined financial aid SAP.

^{vi} The Minnesota Reciprocity compact is not applicable to financial aid.

^{vii} **s. 49.854 (2) (b) Statewide Support Lien Docket.** The department shall maintain a statewide support lien docket. The department shall provide a copy of the statewide support lien docket to the register of deeds and the county child support agency of each county in this state, and to each state agency that titles personal property. Each entry in the statewide support lien docket shall contain the name and the social security number of the obligor and the date that the lien is entered in the docket, as well as the amount of the lien as of the time that the entry is made.

^{viii} **59.53 (5) Child and spousal support; paternity program; medical support liability program.**

59.53(5)(a)(a) The board shall contract with the department of children and families to implement and administer the child and spousal support and establishment of paternity and the medical support liability programs provided for by Title IV of the federal social security act. The board may designate by board resolution any office, officer, board, department or agency, except the clerk of circuit court, as the county child support agency. The board or county child support agency shall implement and administer the programs in accordance with the contract with the department of children and families. The attorneys responsible for support enforcement under sub. (6) (a), circuit court commissioners and all other county officials shall cooperate with the county and the department of children and families as necessary to provide the services required under the programs. The county shall charge the fee established by the department of children and families under s. 49.22 for services provided under this paragraph to persons not receiving benefits under s. 49.148 or 49.155 or assistance under s. 48.645, 49.19, 49.46, 49.465, 49.47, 49.471, or 49.472.

(b) The county child support agency under par. (a) shall electronically enter into the statewide data system related to child and spousal support payments that is operated by the department of children and families the terms of any order made or judgment granted in the circuit court of the county requiring payments under s. 948.22 (7) or ch. 767 or 769 that are directed under s. 767.57 (1) to be paid to the department of children and families or its designee. The county child support agency shall enter the terms of any such order or judgment within the time required by federal law and shall enter revisions ordered by the court to any order or judgment the terms of which are maintained on the data system.

^{ix} s. **49.854 (2) (a)** Establishing guidelines for appropriate payment plans or alternative payment arrangements for the payment by obligors of delinquent support.

^x Excerpt from *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter*, by George D. Kuh (AAC&U, 2008) High Impact Educational Practices (HIPs) are teaching and learning practices have been widely tested and have been shown to be beneficial for college students from many backgrounds. These practices take many different forms, depending on learner characteristics and on institutional priorities and contexts. Examples of high-impact practices that educational research suggests increase rates of student retention and student engagement include: first year seminars and experiences; common intellectual experiences; learning communities; writing-intensive courses; collaborative assignments and projects; undergraduate research; diversity/global learning; service learning and community based learning; internships; and capstone courses and projects.

^{xi} The M/DC and Financial Aid offices at each institution will jointly determine a process for determining current funding allotments for transfer students so as to not exceed the maximum Lawton Award of \$16,000 per student.

^{xii} <http://www.heab.state.wi.us/docs/finadmin/manual/manual-ch10.pdf>

^{xiii} This is a preliminary list of criteria and may change later.

^{xiv} The final design of the UW System assessment will be affected by external factors, such as the outcome of an ongoing Office of Civil Rights action. These guidelines are preliminary.

^{xv} The comparison group should consist of Lawton-eligible students.

^{xvi} Once suspension has been served, the student will regain eligibility status.