

CHAPTER 298

AN ACT establishing the "Tuition Aid Grant Study Commission."

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. a. There is established a Tuition Aid Grant Study Commission for the purpose of examining the operation of the Tuition Aid Grant Program established pursuant to N.J.S.18A:71B-18 et seq., and developing recommendations for improvements to the program. The commission shall consist of 10 members as follows:

(1) the Executive Director of the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority, or a designee;

(2) five members appointed by the Governor, including a representative of the State colleges and universities established pursuant to chapter 64 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes, a representative of the public research universities, a representative of the county colleges, a representative of the independent colleges and universities, and a representative of the proprietary schools which have been authorized to offer licensed degree programs;

(3) two public members appointed by the President of the Senate; and

(4) two public members appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly.

b. Appointments to the commission shall be made within 30 days of the effective date of this act. Vacancies in the membership of the commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments were made.

c. Members of the commission shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties within the limits of funds made available to the commission for its purposes.

2. a. The commission shall organize as soon as practicable, but no later than 30 days following the appointment of its members. The commission shall choose a chairperson from among its members and shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the commission.

b. The Higher Education Student Assistance Authority shall provide such professional staff and related support services as the commission requires to carry out its work. The commission also shall be entitled to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as it may require and as may be available to it for its purposes.

3. It shall be the duty of the Tuition Aid Grant Study Commission to examine and evaluate the Tuition Aid Grant Program established pursuant to N.J.S.18A:71B-18 et seq.; to identify any barriers, gaps, or deficiencies in the successful operation of the program; and to develop recommendations for improvements to the program. The commission shall study and consider issues, including but not limited to, the following:

a. the tuition aid grant amounts currently awarded to eligible students;

b. the percentage of higher education tuition costs covered by tuition aid grants;

c. adjustments in the level of tuition aid grant awards from one fiscal year to the next, including a review of the different formulas or methods used over different fiscal years to calculate the amount of a tuition aid grant;

d. the characteristics of students whose eligibility for a tuition aid grant differs from their eligibility for federal need-based aid, as calculated by the New Jersey Eligibility Index and the federal methodology for the Expected Family Contribution, respectively;

e. the graduation rates of tuition aid grant recipients;

f. the history of State appropriations made to support the Tuition Aid Grant Program;
and

g. the sufficiency of the tuition aid grants awarded to eligible students in light of the original intent of the statute establishing the Tuition Aid Grant Program.

4. The commission shall issue a report of its findings and recommendations concerning the Tuition Aid Grant Program to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), no later than 12 months after the commission organizes.

5. This act shall take effect immediately, and the commission shall expire 30 days after the submission of its report.

Approved January 13, 2020.