

DISCUSSION/ACTION
July 30, 2014

HIGHER EDUCATIONAL AIDS BOARD

BOARD REPORT #15-05

2015-2017 BIENNIAL BUDGET ISSUES

TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM



July 17, 2014

Mary Jo Green, Chair
John Reinemann, Executive Secretary
Higher Educational Aids Board
131 W. Wilson Street
PO Box 7885
Madison, WI 53707-7885

Dear Board Chair Green and Executive Secretary Reinemann:

On behalf of the Wisconsin Technical College System Board and students across the state, we request that the Higher Educational Aids Board seek additional funding for WTCS students through the Wisconsin Grant. We urge HEAB to include a request for an increased appropriation for this program in its 2015-17 biennial budget proposal.

In 2013-14, nearly 24,000 financially needy technical college students were awarded Wisconsin Grants. However, because the appropriation is significantly underfunded, WTCS Wisconsin Grants have not met demand in years. For example, nearly 37,000 students did not receive a Wisconsin Grant award for which they were eligible during the 2013-14 academic year. By early June 2014, the WTCS Wisconsin Grants were fully awarded for the entire 2014-15 academic year. As technical colleges continue to enroll students throughout the upcoming academic year, the lack of aid means students will face more challenges - and potentially more debt from loans - as they seek the economically invaluable education and training that technical colleges provide.

The WTCS Board realizes that HEAB, like all state agencies, will likely seek to exercise restraint in its 2015-17 biennial budget request. At the same time, we cannot ignore the exceptional financial needs of our students, the critical workforce shortages faced by our employer-partners and the important role of in-demand technical college graduates in securing the state's long-term economic health.

Therefore, to address the immediate need for additional student financial aid resources, the WTCS Board respectfully requests that the HEAB 2015-17 budget request include:

- **\$74.8 million GPR over the biennium for WTCS Wisconsin Grants, including an additional \$37.4 million in FY 2015-16 and \$37.4 million in FY 2016-17.** This increase would eliminate the waitlist of eligible students and ensure continued access to financial assistance to attend college.



Morna K. Foy, President
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HEAB
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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue before the Board. We hope this is helpful to your deliberations on the next biennial budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Drew Petersen'.

Drew Petersen, President
Wisconsin Technical College System Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Morna K. Foy'.

Morna K. Foy, President
Wisconsin Technical College System

cc: Bryan Kirschbaum, DOA Budget Analyst
Emily Pope, LFB Fiscal Analyst