

Changes

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The report also says the reauthorization could change the Pell Grant program. Tentative provisions in the House bill call for Pell Grant eligibility to be extended to less than half-time students.

The Senate bill does not include these provisions.

Ozer said the USSA supports the House bill on an "equity" principle.

"As an organization representing students, USSA supports a basic fed-

eral grant program available to all students," she said. "A lot of different kinds of students are on campus. They shouldn't be penalized if they can't take a full load."

Bormann said the Pell program uses index numbers assigned to students based on financial need, the amount of hours being taken during the semester and the costs of the institution the applicant attends. He explained that under this system a student eligible for maximum funds would have a zero index number.

This year students with index numbers up to 1900 were eligible for the Pell program, Bormann said. However, because of a shortage in allocation of funds for the program the index number requirement was dropped to 1200. This meant students who were rightfully eligible for the program with indexes of 1201 to 1900 were denied funding, he said.

To compensate for the problem legislators passed a new bill which increased the index requirement to

1500. Still, Bormann said, students who rightfully were eligible for aid were denied.

Ozer attributed the shortfall in the program to the Department of Education's underestimation of the number of applicants as well as the \$154 million cut in the program from the Gramm-Rudman deficit reduction law.

Bormann is concerned that allowing the less than half-time students into the program next year may mean another drop in the index

number to accommodate the larger population of eligible students applying for the program.

The result will be a decrease in the amount available to each student, Bormann said.

"It's like a paradox," he said. "It would appear more students would be eligible in Pell Grants because less than half-time students would qualify. However, since the federal program is not fully funded, more students would be qualified than the amount of appropriated dollars for

the program — thereby disqualifying eligible students."

The funding philosophy change to meet the larger population if half-time students are added, Bormann said.

"There is nothing wrong with the (proposed House bill) program, there are proper appropriations," said.

Bormann said his concern is the proposal may deny funds to students who are truly needy.

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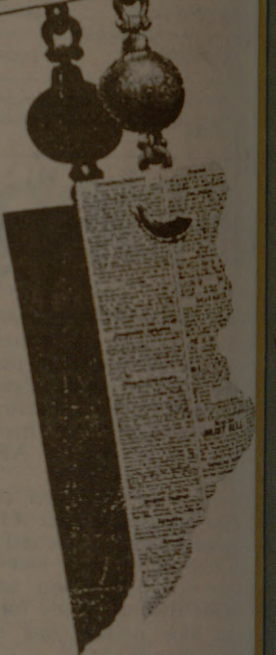
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