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How deserving are high school students of coveted state lottery funds?

In May 2005 Tennessee legislation was passed giving high school students the rights to receive HOPE lottery grants to assist in the financial burden of being dually enrolled in a local accredited college.

The legislation left some current college students frustrated that their scholarship money was being given away to high school students.

As the new funding was put into place, restrictions were set banning current college students from receiving any HOPE scholarship money if they had not transferred into college directly from high school.

Currently, the HOPE policies have been revised, allowing for a 16 month gap between high school and college before the student is counted as exempt from the aid.

Full-time HOPE recipients who drop below 12 credit hours per semester are automatically discontinued from the program.

If dually enrolled students do not attend college full-time, why should an admitted college student be penalized for the same?

Why does it seem as though colleges are bending over backwards to accommodate their jointly enrolled

high school students?

Some have argued that students should not be given financial aid until they have graduated from high school and that the monetary amount of HOPE scholarships should instead be increased for full-time college students.

However, HOPE grants could not have worthier recipients than those found in dual enrollment students.

Dual enrollment gives accelerated high school students a chance to challenge themselves while attaining college credit.

When a high school student becomes dually enrolled in a college they are also technically college students and therefore should have no reason to not receive the same financial aid opportunities as normal college students.

As The Settler reported this week, the number of dual enrollment students has nearly doubled at Vol State since offering HOPE scholarships to high school students last fall.

Evidence shows the students want to be here and by the numbers it seems that some were not enrolling due to the financial burden.

It would be a shame to deny an

eager high school student the same financial privileges that most college students simply throw away by failing out of classes.

Students are not required to repay their lottery scholarships if they lose eligibility, therefore the state money is lost forever.

By making dual enrollment more affordable, Tennessee colleges are encouraging students to get a head start on their degrees and take advantage of the idle classtime that has become Tennessee's public high schools.

Dual enrollment students are well-deserving of the grants they receive and in years to come should be offered more opportunities to extend their education outside the tiny walls of their state-funded high schools.

Correction:

In the Jan. 23 edition of The Settler the final score of the men's basketball game was listed as 94-77.

The actual score was 99-77, Pioneers over Eagles. The Settler regrets the error.

German Cartoon

By MAURICE ZOLLER

GERMAN EXTRAORDINAIRE

