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SENATE BILL

**56TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2024**

INTRODUCED BY

Harold Pope

AN ACT

RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION; AMENDING THE GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP ACT; CHANGING ELIGIBILITY; LIMITING ELIGIBLE FIELDS OF STUDY; INCREASING AWARDS; MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. Section 21-21G-3 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1988, Chapter 111, Section 3, as amended) is amended to read:

"21-21G-3. DEFINITIONS.--As used in the Graduate Scholarship Act:

A. "academic year" means ~~[any]~~ the consecutive period of two semesters ~~[three quarters]~~ or other comparable units commencing with the fall term each year;

B. "award recipient" means a New Mexico resident student awarded a graduate scholarship;

C. "department" means the higher education

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1 department;

2 D. "eligible institution" means [~~any~~] a graduate-  
3 degree-granting state university in New Mexico accredited by  
4 the [~~north central association of colleges and secondary~~  
5 ~~schools~~] higher learning commission;

6 E. "graduate [~~and professional~~] field" means [~~any~~]  
7 a program of study intended to result in a master's or doctoral  
8 degree, excluding [~~the degree in medicine~~] a doctor of medicine  
9 and nursing degrees other than a doctor of nursing practice;  
10 and

11 F. "groups underrepresented in graduate education"  
12 means women, minorities, persons with a visual impairment or  
13 other physical disability and other groups [~~who~~] that have  
14 traditionally been underrepresented in the specific area of  
15 graduate study or profession for which the scholarship is  
16 awarded."

17 SECTION 2. Section 21-21G-5 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1988,  
18 Chapter 111, Section 5, as amended) is amended to read:

19 "21-21G-5. CONDITIONS FOR FIRST-YEAR ELIGIBILITY.--  
20 Priority [~~will~~] shall be given to [~~New Mexico students from~~  
21 ~~those groups with the most severe underrepresentation and~~]  
22 students who are New Mexico residents with the greatest  
23 financial need and students from groups underrepresented in  
24 graduate education. A scholarship may be awarded to [~~an~~  
25 ~~individual~~] a New Mexico resident who:

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1           A. ~~[is a citizen of the United States or who has a~~  
2 ~~permanent resident visa]~~ has earned a bachelor's degree and  
3 maintained a grade point average of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0  
4 scale or who holds a paid position supporting faculty teaching  
5 or research activities;

6           B. has met the admission requirements, ~~[and]~~ is  
7 accepted for enrollment ~~[as a full-time student in an~~  
8 ~~underrepresented]~~ and enrolls in at least six credit hours in a  
9 graduate [or professional] field of study [as determined by the  
10 institution];

11           C. has complied with all the rules ~~[and~~  
12 ~~regulations]~~ adopted by the ~~[commission]~~ department for award  
13 of the scholarship and the provisions regarding the  
14 administration of ~~[state]~~ the graduate [scholarships adopted  
15 pursuant to the Graduate Scholarship Act] scholarship program;  
16 and

17           ~~[D. agrees to serve in an unpaid internship or~~  
18 ~~assistantship at the eligible institution, a government agency~~  
19 ~~or private industry approved by his major department for ten~~  
20 ~~hours per week during the academic year]~~

21           D. agrees to serve the eligible institution during  
22 the academic year in an internship or assistantship at the  
23 eligible institution, a government agency or a private industry  
24 approved by the student's academic department."

25           SECTION 3. Section 21-21G-6 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1988,

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1 Chapter 111, Section 6, as amended) is amended to read:

2 "21-21G-6. CONDITIONS FOR CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY.--

3 A. Except as provided in Subsection B of this  
4 section, a scholarship may be reawarded to a student who:

5 ~~[A.]~~ (1) has been an award recipient of a New  
6 Mexico graduate scholarship the previous year;

7 ~~[B.]~~ (2) maintains a grade point average of  
8 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale and remains in good academic  
9 standing as determined by the institution;

10 ~~[C.]~~ (3) is enrolled ~~[as a full-time graduate~~  
11 ~~student as determined by the institution;~~

12 ~~D. is pursuing the second year of a master's degree~~  
13 ~~or the second or third year of a doctoral degree; and~~

14 ~~E. agrees to serve in an unpaid internship or~~  
15 ~~assistantship at the eligible institution, a government agency~~  
16 ~~or private industry approved by his major department for ten~~  
17 ~~hours per week during the academic year]~~ in at least six credit  
18 hours in a graduate field of study; and

19 (4) agrees to serve the eligible institution  
20 during the academic year in an internship or assistantship at  
21 the eligible institution, a government agency or a private  
22 industry approved by the student's academic department.

23 B. A graduate scholarship may be granted until the  
24 award recipient either receives a terminal degree or has  
25 qualified and received eight semesters of scholarship,

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1 whichever occurs first."

2 SECTION 4. Section 21-21G-7 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1988,  
3 Chapter 111, Section 7, as amended) is amended to read:

4 "21-21G-7. AMOUNT OF SCHOLARSHIPS.--Scholarship [~~awards~~  
5 ~~shall be for seven thousand two hundred dollars (\$7,200) per~~  
6 ~~year to be disbursed in equal installments over the period of~~  
7 ~~an academic year] award amounts shall not exceed one hundred  
8 percent of tuition and fees for the graduate program at the  
9 eligible institution for the academic year; provided that the  
10 department shall fund only one semester at a time and shall not  
11 fund the second semester of the academic year if the student  
12 does not enroll for that semester or does not maintain  
13 eligibility."~~

14 SECTION 5. Section 21-21G-10 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1988,  
15 Chapter 111, Section 10, as amended) is amended to read:

16 "21-21G-10. TERMINATION OF SCHOLARSHIPS.--A scholarship  
17 is terminated upon the occurrence of:

18 A. withdrawal from the eligible institution by the  
19 award recipient or failure to reenroll for consecutive academic  
20 years or [~~failure to be a full-time graduate student; or~~] the  
21 second semester of an academic year;

22 B. failure to maintain the required grade point  
23 average and other qualifications for the scholarship; or

24 [B.] C. substantial noncompliance by the award  
25 recipient with the Graduate Scholarship Act or the rules

1 [regulations] or procedures promulgated by the [commission]  
2 department."

3 SECTION 6. APPROPRIATION.--Five million dollars  
4 (\$5,000,000) is appropriated from the general fund to the  
5 higher education department for expenditure in fiscal year 2025  
6 to fund the Graduate Scholarship Act. Any unexpended or  
7 unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2025  
8 shall revert to the general fund.

9 SECTION 7. EFFECTIVE DATE.--The effective date of the  
10 provisions of this act is July 1, 2024.