

# HOUSE RESEARCH

## Bill Summary

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**Authors:** Nornes

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**Analyst:** Article 1: Sean Williams (sean.williams@house.mn)

Articles 2-4: Matt Gehring (matt.gehring@house.mn)

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### Article 1: Office of Higher Education

#### Overview

Article 1 contains policy changes related to programs administered by the Office of Higher Education (OHE), including the State Grant Program, Teacher Shortage Loan Forgiveness Program, and the MnSCU Occupational Scholarship Pilot Program. The article contains language that is based on House Files 3237 (Nornes), 3275 (Nornes), and 2576 (E. Murphy).

#### Section

**1 Management of programs.** Permits the OHE to retain up to 5 percent of an appropriation to a program or pass-through grant if the appropriation does not specify an amount for administrative costs. This permission would only apply to programs or grants established on or after January 1, 2016.

Appropriates funds retained under this section to the OHE for administering and monitoring programs.

This language is based on H.F. 3237 (Nornes).

**2 Receipt of donations; money; grants.** Permits the commissioner of higher education to accept donations, grants, bequests, and other funds. Funds received under this provision must be used to carry out the office's responsibilities, as specified in section 136A.01. Funds received under the provision are deposited in a special revenue account, appropriated to the commissioner for the purposes for which they were granted, and are available until expended.

This language is based on H.F. 3237 (Nornes).

## Section

- 3 Surplus Appropriation.** Repeals OHE’s authority to increase the tuition and fee maximums for the state grant program if the program has surplus appropriations in the second year of the biennium. This authority was granted as part of the 2015 higher education omnibus bill. OHE would retain the authority to increase the living and miscellaneous expense allowance if the grant program has surplus appropriations.
- 4 Eligible Students.** The Child Care Grant Program provides financial assistance to resident postsecondary students to reduce the costs of child care. Under current law, the program is only open to undergraduate students without a baccalaureate degree who have not completed eight full-time semesters. Section 4 would permit graduate students to participate in the child care grant program, provided that they have been enrolled for fewer than eight semesters in a graduate or professional degree program.
- This language is based on H.F. 3275 (Nornes).
- 5 Application for loan forgiveness.** Removes language requiring an individual to reapply for the Teacher Shortage Loan Forgiveness for five consecutive school years—this language has been clarified and moved in section 6 of the bill. Clarifies that an applicant may receive a loan forgiveness award if the applicant works in a licensure field or economic development region experiencing a teacher shortage.
- This language is based on H.F. 3237 (Nornes).
- 6 Amount of loan forgiveness.** Stipulates that an applicant may not receive more than five teacher shortage loan forgiveness awards.
- This language is based on H.F. 3237 (Nornes).
- 7 Disbursement.** Under the teacher shortage loan forgiveness program, an award recipient must provide proof to the commissioner that he or she applied the award to his or her student loan balance. Current law requires the recipient to provide proof within 60 days of *receiving* an award; the bill would change this to within 60 days of the *disbursement* of the award.
- This language is based on H.F. 3237 (Nornes).
- 8 Promotion of federal loan forgiveness programs.** Requires OHE to develop informational materials to promote public awareness of existing loan forgiveness programs, and publish the materials on its website.

**Subd. 1. Definitions.** Defines “federal loan forgiveness program,” “public service loan forgiveness program,” and “public service organization.”

**Subd. 2. Promotion of loan forgiveness programs.** Requires OHE to develop and distribute informational materials to increase public awareness of federal loan forgiveness programs.

At a minimum, the commissioner must develop:

- (1) a one-page letter to individuals who may be eligible for the public service loan forgiveness program, and briefly describes how to participate;
- (2) a detailed fact sheet about the program; and
- (3) answers to frequently asked questions about the program.

## Section

Permits OHE to distribute a document published by a federal agency in place of publishing its own document.

**Subd. 3. Publication of informational materials.** Requires the OHE to publish the informational materials developed under subdivision 2 on its website.

This language is based on H.F. 2576 (E. Murphy), with technical changes.

- 9 Disclosure of eligibility for student loan forgiveness.** Requires nonprofit and public employers to disclose to their employees that they may be eligible for the public service loan forgiveness program.

**Subd. 1. Definitions.** Defines “employer” as a public service organization as defined in the public service loan forgiveness program, but excluding federal and tribal organizations.

Defines “employment certification form” as a form used by the U.S. Department of Education to certify an individual’s employment at a public service organization.

Defines “federal public service loan forgiveness program” as public service loan forgiveness program administered by the U.S. Department of Education.

**Subd. 2. Disclosure of eligibility for student loan forgiveness.** (a) Requires employers to provide their employees with information about their potential eligibility for the federal public service loan forgiveness program. On January 1, 2017, and annually thereafter, employers must provide their employees with the informational materials developed by OHE under section 1 of the bill.

(b) Requires employers to provide the informational materials developed by OHE to their employees within two weeks of a new employee’s first day of employment.

(c) Requires an employer whose employee requests the employer certification form to provide the form to the employee.

This language is based on H.F. 2576 (E. Murphy), with technical changes.

- 10 Reporting.** Removes language requiring OHE to annually report data about the MnSCU Occupational Scholarship Pilot to the legislature. Requires the commissioner to instead report the data to the legislature in January 2017 and January 2018. The program is a pilot program for which the appropriation in fiscal year 2019 is \$0. Under current law, OHE would be required to report about the program even if it no longer exists.

This language is based on H.F. 3237 (Nornes).

## Section

### **Article 2: High School Testing; College Readiness and Remediation**

#### Overview

This article requires the chancellor of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), in consultation with the commissioner of education, to identify the appropriate minimum scores on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments for high school math, reading, and writing that indicate a student is prepared for postsecondary coursework.

State colleges and universities would be prohibited from requiring a student to complete remedial coursework if the student has earned the minimum college-ready score on the MCA as identified by the chancellor. In 2015, a similar law was enacted related to college-ready ACT scores.

The language in the article is based on H.F. 2586 (Bennett).

- 1 Statewide testing.** Requires the MnSCU chancellor, in consultation with the commissioner of education, to identify appropriate college-ready scores on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments for high school math, reading, and writing.
- 2 MCA college-ready score.** Prohibits MnSCU from requiring a student to take a remedial, non-credit course if the student has achieved an identified college-ready score on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment in that subject area.

### **Article 3: MnSCU Program for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

#### Overview

This article require MnSCU to develop a plan for offering a program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities at up to four campuses. The program would provide an inclusive, two-year full-time residential college experience for participants, and would lead to an appropriate academic credential upon completion.

This article also extends eligibility for state financial aid programs to participants in postsecondary programs for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The language in this article is based on H.F. 2896 (Daniels), with modifications.

- 1 Satisfactory academic progress.** Provides a modified standard of “satisfactory academic progress” for students with an intellectual disability enrolled in certain postsecondary transition programs.

## Section

The effect of this change is to extend eligibility for state financial aid programs—including the state grant—to participants in the MnSCU pilot program established in section 2, and to participants in similar programs at other postsecondary institutions in Minnesota.

- 2 MnSCU program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities; plan required.** Requires MnSCU to develop a plan for offering a program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The program developed must provide an inclusive, two-year full-time residential college experience for participants, and must lead to an appropriate academic credential upon completion.

**Subd. 1.** Requires the plan to be developed.

**Subd. 2.** Establishes an advisory group, to be chaired by the House committee on Higher Education Policy and Finance, to make recommendations to MnSCU on developing the program plans. Several stakeholder groups are represented on the advisory group.

**Subd. 3.** Requires an assumption that the program would be offered at up to four college or university campuses, prioritizing a campus' ability to offer a robust program using existing facilities and resources, and a goal to provide the program in diverse regions of the state.

**Subd. 4.** Provides standards for enrollment and admission of participants in the program. The enrollment goal for each program must be ten incoming students per year.

**Subd. 5.** Establishes the required curriculum and activities of the program. The program must include core academic courses, as well as opportunities for participants to engage fully in campus life.

**Subd. 6.** Requires MnSCU to submit a report to the legislature describing plans for the program no later than January 15, 2017. The report must include strategies for recruitment of applicants and strategies to address anticipated needs that cannot be met using existing resources. It also must summarize the recommendations of the advisory group, and describe how the group's recommendations were incorporated into the final plan.

## **Article 4: Fetal Tissue Research**

### **Overview**

This article requests that the legislative auditor conduct a comprehensive review of research practices at the University of Minnesota that involve the use of fetal tissue.

The language in this article is based on H.F. 3130 (Dean, M.), with modifications.

- 1 University of Minnesota fetal tissue research; legislative auditor review.** Outlines the substantive components of the requested review.

The review would determine (1) the amount of research conducted; (2) the total cost (including sources of funding) for the research; and (3) whether the research complies with applicable federal and state laws, as well as Board of Regent policies, related to the acquisition, sale, handling, and disposition of human tissues.

**Section**

The review would also consider whether the policies adopted by the Board of Regents include provisions to ensure that fetal tissue is used in research only when necessary, and that the research activities are conducted in an ethical manner.

The review is requested to be complete no later than 60 days after final enactment of this bill.