

MEETING #344
OREGON STUDENT ASSISTANCE COMMISSION
Pioneer Pacific College
27375 SW Parkway Avenue
Health Career Institute Building Room 101
Wilsonville, OR
Friday, February 17, 2006

COMMISSIONERS

Dean Wendle, Chair
Bridget Burns, Vice Chair
Jen Baldwin
Terry Edvalson
Tony McCown
Cap Sharples
Bob Weil

STAFF

Dennis Johnson, Executive Director
Peggy Cooksey, Executive Assistant
Alan Contreras, ODA Administrator
Vicki Merkel, Grants and Scholarships Director
Susan Taylor, Public Programs Portfolio Manager

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE

David Hallett, President, Pioneer Pacific College
Don Moutos, Vice President Academic Affairs, Pioneer Pacific College
Bill McGee, Department of Administrative Services (DAS)
Julie Suchanek, Oregon Community Colleges Association (OCCA)
Morgan Cowling, Oregon Student Association (OSA)
Gary Andeen, Oregon Independent Colleges Association (OICA)
Scott Ekblad, Oregon Office of Rural Health
Sarah Piper, ASPIRE Program Manager
Caddy McKeown, ASPIRE Southern Region Supervisor

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Wendle called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m. Introductions were made around the room. Commissioners then approved meeting minutes of meeting #343. Bob Weil moved for approval, Jen Baldwin seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

ADMINISTRATIVE RULE HEARINGS

Troops to Teachers—OAR 575-080-000

Chair Wendle opened the rule hearing at 9:35 a.m.

Proposed rule changes to establish the Oregon Troops to Teachers program within the Oregon Student Assistance Commission.

Ms. Merkel presented the rule:

HB 3504, enacted by the 2005 Legislative Assembly, established the Oregon Troops to Teachers program within the Oregon Student Assistance Commission. The program shall pay resident tuition costs of veterans attending an Oregon postsecondary

institution, provided they agree to teach in a high poverty area for three years or teach the subject of mathematics, science or special education for four years. The Commission proposes a set of rules for purpose of implementation and administration of the program. \$165,000 has been appropriated for awards. No monies were appropriated for administration.

OSAC contacted Superintendent Castillo and the Federal Troops to Teachers Program Coordinator from the Oregon Department of Education, the Department of Higher Education, and the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs. The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs suggested two changes with which we agree and have included in Draft 5 of the rule.

The rule was then reviewed line per line.

Ms. Baldwin asked for the definition of high poverty as referenced in the rule. Ms. Merkel replied that there are federal guidelines for that. Mr. Edvalson and Chair Wendle advised that the Oregon Economic Development Department provides a website with information that may be useful for this.

Mr. Edvalson questioned the inclusion of community college in the definitions of public postsecondary institutions. Ms. Merkel advised that in writing the rule we were trying to meet the original intent of the legislature and the donor, in this case the State of Oregon. As such, we made a priority for those students who are closer to the end of their education and most likely to meet the criteria of the program. This means we are focusing on fifth-year students and juniors and seniors.

Mr. Edvalson asked if we would be misleading people by including the community college reference. Mr. Johnson replied that the words "community college" are part of the statute so we must include them. In addition, as the program is implemented, if it turns out that there isn't enough interest from students more advanced in their programs, it will allow us to be flexible. Perhaps we would be able to then include students finishing their Associates Degrees who intend to continue their education and go into teaching.

Mr. Edvalson questioned addressing need. Many school districts are in high poverty areas and need teachers but aren't able to hire them because of budget cuts. Aren't we making it appear there are actually going to be jobs available? Chair Wendle said that jobs teaching mathematics, science or special education are available in school districts all over, not just those schools in high poverty areas.

Ms. Merkel said that the purpose of the rule as written defines who can apply. Ms. Taylor advised that although it defines who can apply, the application process would further define who would be awarded.

Chair Wendle brought up Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)-would the student need to show that in math, science or special education courses?

Mr. Johnson said that since the rule is aimed at fifth-year students, those students should naturally have shown SAP. In most cases, they wouldn't be accepted into teacher certification programs if they didn't.

Chair Wendle asked for public testimony. No verbal testimony was presented.

Written testimony was provided from **Valerie Conley**, Administrator, Veterans' Services Division, and Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs Written testimony re. Oregon Student Assistance Commission, Oregon Troops to Teachers, Division 80:

575-080-0020 - Priority in Awarding

Line 70 and 71: I recommend that the words "in the following rank order" be deleted.

Line 72: I recommend that the term "length of military service" be deleted. I don't believe that length of service should be factored in as this agency (ODVA) considers all veterans to be equal regardless of length of service or established rank. The most important (military) criteria is that they served their country honorably or under honorable conditions. Length of military service should have no bearing in the qualifications for the Troops to Teachers program as someone who served for only a few short months may be better qualified academically than someone who had served 20 years. I believe that the record of academic achievement should be the first consideration and the financial need secondary if you are going to rank them.

Line 99: I recommend that the term "active duty" be deleted as National Guard and Reserve personnel who completed their 6 year obligations and are eligible for this program and they may have never been activated under Title 10 so would not meet that criteria.

No other written testimony was presented.

The public hearing was closed.

Discussion was opened.

Mr. Weil asked why only Public Institutions were included as eligible schools.

Mr. Andeen replied that when the statute was being worked on in the legislature, the dollar amount of the program was such a small amount that it was decided not to pursue allowing private institutions be included.

Mr. Wendle questioned lines 16 and 17 of the rule, regarding the words active duty being included in the Definitions, but deleted from Conditions of Award. Mr. Johnson said that it was an oversight. We were re-drafting to include the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs request that active duty be removed from the Conditions of Award section and simply didn't see the other reference in the Definitions section.

Mr. Wendle then described situations where members of the National Guard Reserves might sign up for duty, attend for only a couple of months, then cease to attend. They receive an "Administrative Discharge." Would they slip through the cracks and be eligible for funds under the program?

Ms. Merkel suggested that the selection committee should be made up of professionals who understand the details. By having someone from the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Oregon Department of Education Troops to Teachers Committee, and someone from an OUS teaching program (hopefully someone from Western Oregon University), that they would have the expertise to understand nuances of this program that would allow the best choices to be made.

Ms. Baldwin asked if there are ways to get an Administrative Discharge other than just not showing up. Mr. Wendle said that there are multiple ways to receive this type of discharge. Ms. Baldwin asked if maybe we should change the criteria to include type of discharge. Mr. Wendle said that injured service people could receive this type of discharge.

Mr. Contreras said that this sounds like we need more information from the Veterans' Affairs Administration. Ms. Merkel said no it would require contacting the Oregon Attorney General's Office as the legislation is specific.

Mr. Edvalson said that under the Conditions of Award section of the rule, it states that discharge documents must be submitted. Value judgments may be made with this as part of the rule and that should cover the problem.

The discussion was closed.

Chair Wendle called for a move to adopt the rule.

Mr. Weil moved for adoption. Mr. Edvalson seconded. The rule was adopted by unanimous vote.

Rural Health 575-071-000

Chair Wendle opened the rule hearing.

Proposed rule change to Rural Health Service Program OAR 575-071, which modifies the criteria for participation as defined in Senate Bill 404.

Ms. Taylor presented the rule:

SB 404 adds program participation criteria to include:

- Pharmacists
- Rural hospitals as defined in ORS 442.470 and rural health clinics in addition to designated unmet need areas in Oregon.
- Pharmacies that are located in a medically underserved rural community in Oregon or a federally designated professional shortage area and that are not part of a group of six or more pharmacies under common ownership.

OSAC contacted the Office of Rural Health at OHSU. One suggested change with which OSAC staff agrees has been included in the draft of the rule.

Ms. Taylor went through the rule to point out where changes were made to either clean up verbiage or add pharmacists, rural hospitals and rural clinics, and pharmacies to the rule. Ms. Taylor also pointed out language added directly from HB 442.470 in the Terms of Agreement section of the rule.

Mr. Weil stated that employment verification is not in the rule. Ms. Taylor replied that the language that binds participants is in the actual agreement signed by OSAC and the participant. Qualifying service documentation is submitted each year and is third party verified. Ms. Baldwin pointed out that the Application and Selection section of the rules spells out that applicants selected for participation in this program shall sign an agreement with the Commission, which sets forth the terms that the applicant must meet in order to qualify for benefits under this program.

Mr. Weil started a discussion regarding chain pharmacies being excluded. Ms. Merkel said that we have been trying to work under what appears to be the intent of the legislature when the statute was passed. The idea may have been to give incentive for individual pharmacies to remain in business.

Mr. Edvalson asked who would help us select the recipient pharmacists? Ms. Taylor answered that the selection committee is made up of a physician, a physician assistant, a nurse practitioner, a pharmacist, and a representative from the Office of Rural Health at Oregon Health and Science University. Ms. Merkel commented that she recently sat in on the 2005 selection process, and reported she found the committee members to be very dedicated to the intent of the rule.

Chair Wendle called for public testimony.

Scott Ekblad, Director of the Office of Rural Health at Oregon Health Sciences University, testified before the Commission.

Mr. Ekblad began by saying that he appreciated the opportunity to address the Commission and that he is very aware that it takes a disproportionate amount of work for the OSAC staff to implement the Rural Health Program and that only professional, skilled, polite, and helpful assistance has been received from Susan Taylor and other OSAC staff.

Mr. Ekblad addressed the question regarding the limitation of pharmacies to only those with less than six pharmacies under common ownership. Mr. Ekblad said that the Pharmacy Board's original intent was to help independent pharmacies recruit new pharmacists when current pharmacists retired. Corporate pharmacies have more resources for recruitment of staff.

Mr. Edvalson asked how we can weed-out contract pharmacists.

Mr. Ekblad said that unfortunately there wasn't enough guidance in the original bill to address every question and that was one reason he was testifying. The minimum participation requirement for a pharmacist is three years and qualifying employment must be verified, so that addresses one of the factors.

Mr. Ekblad suggested a change to the OSAC Administrative Rule. He said he believes the Legislature assumed that that rural hospitals and rural health clinics were all in medically underserved areas; however, that isn't necessarily the case. It is possible for a rural health clinic to be located in an area that that is not medically underserved. There has already been a scenario where a provider is being offered employment by a qualifying rural hospital, but the practitioner would work in a satellite clinic in a community that is not medically underserved, and the clinic is not a designated rural health clinic. A rural health clinic is a federally certified rural health clinic for purposes of Medicare reimbursement. Mr. Ekblad remarked that he and OSAC staff decided the best way to clarify this point is to provide some guidance to the selection committee.

Mr. Ekblad proposed a change on page three of the rule, under Selection Criteria, that the rule be amended to add item 1(c) between lines 91 and 92, after item 1(b). Item 1(c) would state: "have an employment agreement to practice on site in a qualifying rural hospital, rural health clinic, or medically underserved community."

This change gives the selection committee a way to prioritize when making decisions between applicants.

Mr. Edvalson proposed a hypothetical situation where a practitioner helped in a group of medically underserved communities outside of their base community, but did so primarily through dispensing, telephone calls, faxes, etc., rather than on-site. Would that qualify? Mr. Ekblad said only if they were putting together 32 hours of work in the medically underserved communities by traveling on-site to those areas.

Mr. Weil asked if the legislature had appropriated any more money for this program or, if more funding was expected. Mr. Ekblad said that no more money had been appropriated in the last session, and that the program is woefully under funded.

Mr. Wendle closed the public comment period.

No more discussion was forthcoming.

Mr. Wendle called for a motion.

Mr. Edvalson moved that 575-071-000 be passed as amended including the proposal from Mr. Ekblad. Mr. Sharples seconded the motion. The rule was passed as amended by unanimous vote.

Office of Degree Authorization OAR 583-050-011

Chair Wendle opened the rule hearing, and advised that this was a non-voting hearing.

Mr. Contreras presented the rule. Mr. Contreras said that in Section 11 (b) of the rule, it is written such that the word approval is not included in the rule. This is a minor correction to an error that was made last fall when the rules were made. When the rule was originally drafted, it was written to say that a degree mill is an entity that doesn't have approval to issue a degree. We wrote the rule the way we all thought about it, which is that state approved schools may use the disclaimer. Unfortunately, as the statute is written the word approval doesn't appear. This wouldn't appear to be a big issue, except that it came up recently with a case involving the state of Mississippi.

Mississippi wasn't able to tell whether a school was approved or not. We can't use the word "approval" because it's not in the statute. As written, the statute states that it just has to be a school to operate legally. In many states, a religious-exempt school may be operating legally without being formally approved because the word "approval" isn't used in that state. The Department of Justice is debating as to exactly what language should be used, and at the March Commission meeting there should be something ready for a vote. There is no request for a vote today.

Mr. Edvalson asked for more clarification about legally operating school.

Mr. Contreras said that in other states, a school might be legally operating, which doesn't necessarily mean licensed, without being approved. They are able to operate legally because they have a statutory (legislative) exemption.

Mr. Wendle called for public testimony. None given.

The hearing was closed.

With the closure of the third hearing, all hearings for the day finished at 10:42 a.m.

OREGON OPPORTUNITY GRANT AWARD MINOR ADJUSTMENTS

Mr. Johnson presented a table that showed very minor adjustments to Opportunity Grant awards at Independent Institutions. The purpose of the adjustments is to be able to divide the amounts by two or three, depending on if the schools are on a term or semester system. Our system can't divide the grant awards equally without the adjustments. Nine schools are affected, and the adjustment amounts are rounded up rather than reduced.

Mr. McCown moved for approval, Mr. Edvalson seconded the motion.

Prior to the vote, Chair Wendle stated that we should think about the differences in increases from year to year between public and private institutions. The differences over the years can be substantial.

Mr. Johnson said that a weighted average of all non-tuition costs are used to come up with a budget figure for each institution. Each school submits their cost information. Perhaps we need to have a more standardized process.

Mr. Edvalson said that this gets into a larger discussion in where we are going with our legislative request. Chair Wendle said that we should be financing more than 11 percent of the cost of attendance.

The two-tier system was discussed. Vice-Chair Burns asked if the two-tier system means a public tier and private tier, or a two-year community college tier versus a four-year tier. Mr. Edvalson stated that the tiers are public versus private.

Chair Wendle called for the vote. The adjustments were approved by unanimous vote.

Chair Wendle called for a break in the meeting at 10:55 a.m. The meeting was resumed at 11:10 a.m.

DAVID HALLETT, PIONEER PACIFIC COLLEGE

David Hallett, President of Pioneer Pacific College, and Don Moutos, Vice President of Academic Affairs joined the meeting at this time. Mr. Hallett gave a talk regarding Pioneer Pacific College. Pioneer Pacific College has a tradition in trade-school education, but has evolved to become a degree-granting institution, and is nationally accredited. Associate and Bachelors Degrees are both granted. Pioneer Pacific College's student population has many non-traditional students who may not have been comfortable in a regionally accredited institution (community college, public or private university), but who excel at Pioneer. Students receive individual attention in small classes and receive hands-on technical skills so that they are ready to enter the job market. Pioneer Pacific College offers courses in the areas of healthcare, business, paralegal, criminal justice, and information technology.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Wendle advised that he had nothing to report this meeting and that we would move on to the Executive Director's Report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Johnson passed out his written report and discussed highlights.

Applications for Early Bird Scholarships are on pace with last year's record. We expect to process around 6,500 total scholarship applications, and around 2,500 will qualify for Early Bird Scholarship consideration. We expect to award about 23 \$500 Early Bird Scholarships this year.

Opportunity Grant data was included in the written report. There has been a major increase in the number of eligible students due to lifting the deadline. We have just sent out the winter term disbursements for quarter schools and spring disbursements for semester schools will be disbursed within a couple of weeks.

The Access and Affordability Work Group is still meeting and continuing its task of evaluating possible funding models for Oregon's student financial aid programs.

The agency's information technology needs are under consideration. The antiquated AS 400 mainframe computer should be retired and data should be migrated to a new platform as soon as possible. We think we have identified software that will provide the benefits we need, and that if current projections hold, we should be able to do this within the existing budget. We are working with a DAS expert to evaluate the next steps in the process.

The OFAX program is working well and will likely expand soon to include more Oregon institutions and very possibly universities in Oklahoma. The Oregon Consortium for Nursing Education will be meeting with us later in the month to explore expanded usage for their member institutions.

With the assistance of Alan Contreras, we have updated our media list and are in a much better position to respond to both inquiries from the media and produce our own press releases.

Vicki Merkel, Susan Degen, Sarah Piper, and Mr. Johnson attended and presented at the annual Oregon Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (OASFAA). Financial aid directors were particularly pleased with and full of praise for recent improvements to the Opportunity Grant disbursement system.

Financial aid administrators have expressed general agreement with the concept of reporting Opportunity Grant disbursements and changes every 30 days, beginning next award year. This will parallel the regular Progress Reports they already submit for the Pell Grant program.

OSAC staff has begun working on legislative concepts for the next session. We will present more substantial concepts at the next meeting, but discussions so far are centering on: Opportunity Grant refinements, special programs and changes to language to improve program administration and service to constituencies, a matching grant program that would serve as an incentive for individuals to set up new scholarship programs, permanent funding for ASPIRE, and more permanent and predictable funding for ODA.

Mr. Johnson also included in the handouts an article entitled "More Students Not Applying for Aid."

After Mr. Johnson's report, questions were asked. Mr. Andeen asked if eligible applications for the OOG are up because we are awarding more students. Mr. Johnson said it's mainly because of removal of the deadlines for community college and OSU students.

Mr. Andeen asked about the total grants for the administrative side of ASPIRE. Ms. Merkel answered that there are about \$400,000 not including AmeriCorps. However, we may lose grants from The Ford Family Foundation, as they have given a three-year grant. The grants from AmeriCorps are in the competitive process and there is no guarantee it will be received again. The Oregon Community Foundation may not continue to provide grant funds.

Mr. Andeen said that it might be a good idea for The Ford Family Foundation to put a challenge grant to the legislature to match funds.

Ms. Merkel said that we are brainstorming. AmeriCorps won't be with us forever. We use AmeriCorps members to be on-site program developers, but what the schools need are community volunteers. If the state were to issue a challenge grant to the schools to provide funds if the state provided funds, it would help.

Mr. Weil asked if any more thought was given to a tax credit program.

Chair Wendle said that the legislature is very negative on tax credits. The Employer-Sponsored Scholarship program is currently under utilized perhaps because people don't now about it.

Mr. Edvalson said that there should be a work session related to the budget before the next regular Commission meeting.

Discussion was held within the group and it was decided to meet again at 10 am on March 10th, possibly at George Fox College Portland campus if available.

ODA DIRECTOR REPORT

Mr. Contreras gave his monthly report. Heald College notified ODA on 01/27/06 that it might close its Portland branch due to three consecutive years of enrollment drops. It has ceased accepting new students and we have heard that many of its students are in the process of transfer. They are teaching out current students. Student records will go to one of the California campuses of Heald.

An entity in Ashland called Beloved Community Seminary had been warned last year to cease offering master's degree. They complied at the time, but we have recently discovered that they have started doing it again. They have no accreditation and seem to be a pipeline for an unaccredited entity in California. We sent a cease-and-desist letter and if they do not comply, we will begin enforcement proceedings against them.

Associates in Biblical Studies, Calvary Chapel School of Ministry in Corvallis, a religious exempt school, was approved on 01/27/06.

The Medford degree validation case is close to resolution, with the user agreeing to abide by the law.

Mr. Contreras said he will work on legislative concepts as soon as possible.

APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TRANSACTIONS

Chair Wendle advised that after reviewing the section of the Oregon Accounting Manual (OAM) regarding Establishing Review and Approval Authority, that he would suggest that Alan Contreras be delegated to sign off on travel expense reimbursement claims, Small Purchase Order Transaction System (SPOTS) card purchases and other transactions as outlined in the OAM. He further suggested that the Vice Chair of the Commission review those transactions on a quarterly basis.

Mr. Edvalson suggested that the Vice Chair then report to the Commission after the quarterly reviews of the transactions.

Mr. Weil asked if the Commission should set a dollar amount. It was explained that most transactions involving money are for in-state travel—mileage reimbursement, or other small purchases on the SPOTS card and would not be large dollar amount transactions.

After discussion as to whether it was necessary to make a motion and clarification that it is already put forth in the by-laws that at least a semi-annual review must take place, Chair Wendle made the appointment that Alan Contreras sign off on these transactions, and that Vice Chair Burns review them quarterly and report to the Commission.

PRE-VIEW OF E-BOARD HEARINGS: JOBS PLUS BUDGET NOTE

Mr. Johnson advised that one budget note we will need to bring before the E-Board will concern JOBS Plus. OSAC and DHS will be reporting to the E-Board in April. The crux includes some minor changes to the JOBS Plus statutory language. The statute currently states that after a participant works for 30-days, the participating employer begins paying one dollar into the participant's Individual Education Account (IEA) for each hour worked in addition to paying the participant's wage. The money is centrally held by DHS until the participant completes and returns the IEA Notification Letter to DHS. DHS then transfers the participant's funds to OSAC and the account is activated.

Historical statistics reveal that only 17 percent of JOBS Plus participants and 30 percent of funds have been activated. Once the money is transferred to OSAC and the IEA is activated, more than 70 percent of those funds are utilized. Overall, however, IEA funds are underutilized.

In 2001, OSAC revised the Administrative Rule to expand the definition of an immediate family member and added books and required supplies to the list of items covered by IEA fund payments. Although these changes increased utilization of the activated IEA funds held by OSAC, they had minimal affect on the 17 percent rate of participation. It has been difficult for DHS to keep track of potentially eligible participants.

Beginning January 2006, all individuals leaving JOBS Plus will receive an IEA letter from DHS in addition to the letter currently sent. Reminder letters will be sent in three-month increments to remind participants that they have IEAs that they may use to pay educational expenses. OSAC will send reminder letters to all participants with current accounts that have a remaining balance of unutilized funds.

The statutory change we are going to jointly propose with DHS is to open up a scholarship account. If participants do not activate their IEA accounts within two years after leaving JOBS Plus, DHS will transfer the funds into a scholarship fund at OSAC. Participants who activate their IEA within the two-year period will have three years to utilize the IEA funds. If activated funds are not used within three years, the money will be transferred by OSAC into the scholarship account.

The purpose of the scholarship account is to increase participation and utilization and to specifically offer scholarship assistance to former JOBS Plus program participants. .

Mr. Edvalson asked if paying for an application fee is an acceptable use of IEA funds. Ms. Taylor replied that current statutory language allows for payment of all educational fees.

Ms. Suchanek asked who would have authority over the scholarship account, to which Mr. Johnson responded that OSAC would administer that portion of the program as well.

CHAFEE PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Ms. Taylor presented the Chafee Program highlight. She provided two charts. The first showed how Chafee students leverage other financial aid. Other aid may include federal Pell Grant, SEOG, and Workstudy. Chafee students may also qualify for the Oregon Opportunity Grant, and other OSAC scholarship awards including the Former Foster Youth and the DHS/Children, Adults and Family Scholarships.

Since the 2003-04 school year, Chafee awards have increased from 17 to 120 in the 2005-06 school year, totaling 223 since it's inception. Twenty-two of this year's Chafee Award recipients are also receiving other OSAC scholarship awards.

Mr. Weil asked for a definition of the Chafee Scholarship.

Ms. Taylor responded that the Chafee Education and Training Scholarship is for foster youth who are or were in foster care for at least 180 days after their 14th birthday. Recipients may receive funding through either a voucher from DHS or a scholarship from OSAC. The scholarship cap is \$5,000 per year.

The recipients must show financial need and go through the normal scholarship application process. They have to present a copy of their financial aid award letter from the school. As long as the student applies prior to the age of 21, they can continue to receive awards until the age of 23.

Ms. Burns asked who sets the age guidelines.

Ms. Taylor replied that the federal government does.

Ms. Burns asked why students must be in foster care after the age of 14.

Ms. Taylor explained that she was not sure why the federal guidelines require the youth to be in foster care after the age of 14 to qualify. She offered her personal opinion that the guideline may intend to target the group of youth who are struggling to finish high school and transition to college.

Mr. Edvalson related a situation in which he has been helping a student who is a former foster youth attempting to obtain Chafee funds and other financial aid. He has worked with her caseworker and the Independent Living Program (ILP). The real issue here is that we aren't utilizing the full amount of money available. One reason is that the financial aid offices of the schools don't communicate with the business offices. In this particular case, the student signed forms authorization the release of information that would allow Mr. Edvalson and various people trying to help her to receive information regarding her financial aid package. None of the authorized people have received her financial aid information from the financial aid office.

Ms. Merkel said that one of our first steps should be "front-loading" the program to schools so that they are aware the program is there to help former foster youth.

Mr. Edvalson said he had recently met with caseworkers that didn't even know about the Chafee scholarships. Ms. Merkel said that the ILP program has a contract with ASPIRE so they are aware of the Chafee scholarships. Mr. Edvalson said it is the other caseworkers that need education.

Mr. Johnson said that as it is now, the Chafee is like a topping off award. We want to try to make it a front end award rather than using it to pay off loans taken out because all other aid including loans were awarded first.

Mr. McCown asked why was the Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG) distribution total for 2005-2006 lower than the previous year even though there are 17 more recipients.

Ms. Taylor said that she thinks it may be in part because a Chafee scholarship recipient may enroll late in the academic year and, therefore, may not receive a full Oregon Opportunity Grant. Also, to qualify for a Chafee award, the student need only enroll for six credit hours; whereas they must be enroll full time (12 credits) to receive the OOG. Mr. Edvalson said that Chafee students are often slow to get into the pipeline.

Mr. Sharples asked if it was a requirement to be in the ILP program to participate. Ms. Taylor said that they have to have worked a certain number of hours or have participation in community service projects. Mr. Sharples said that in Coos County, if students participate in the ILP program they are actually brought to the financial aid office and shouldn't be slipping through the cracks.

Ms. Taylor said that youth from all different realms receive Chafee. Those who never finished high school, those who got their GED, those who have been adopted no longer have a caseworker, and youth in the ILP program.

Ms. Merkel offered to have the state ILP program coordinator come to a future meeting. Chair Wendle felt that would be a good idea, maybe we could start that meeting 30 minutes earlier.

Ms. Taylor went over the other chart that shows Chafee awards by college segment in and out of state for 2005-06. The majority of students attend in-state schools (78 percent), and the total number of awards to in-state schools was 110 for 2005-2006.

Ms. Taylor then read two letters received from Chafee recipients that expressed both thanks for the award and told of how without it the students wouldn't have been able to achieve their educational goals.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Cooksey asked for suggestions as to where the Commission would like to meet in April. Roseburg was suggested, at The Ford Family Foundation, if possible, or else at Umpqua Community College.

Mr. Andeen said that letters from Chafee recipients should be distributed to the legislature.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dean Wendle, Chair

Dennis R. Johnson, Executive Director

Bridget Burns, Vice-Chair

Bob Weil, Commissioner

Cap Sharples, Commissioner

Jen Baldwin, Commissioner

Terry Edvalson, Commissioner

Tony McCown, Commissioner