



---

**September 10, 2004**

## **Bush calls for year-round Pell Grants**

*By Meghan Lee*

President George W. Bush revealed more details of his proposals for higher education late last week.

Most of the new proposals would increase the amount of federal student aid disbursed each year.

Bush called for the availability of year-round Pell Grants. Currently, the grants are only awarded during the nine-month academic year.

Year-round Pell Grants would increase summer session enrollment, Larry Bloom, manager of the University's undergraduate services, said.

"It would make it easier for students to go to summer school," he said.

Many students do not attend summer school because Pell Grants are not available then, he said. Usually a small amount of students have leftover Pell Grants to use during the summer, he said.

The University disbursed \$14,600,000 in Pell Grants during the fall of 2003 and spring of 2004, he said. However, the University disbursed \$145,000 in Pell Grants in the 2004 summer session because that was all the money that students had remaining, he said.

Rep. Betty McCollum, D-Mann., said the maximum amount of money students can receive from Pell Grants, \$4,050, needs to be increased and is the more important issue right now.

"The bottom line is that Pell awards are not keeping up with tuition costs," she said.

Bush also proposed that federal student aid be accessible to students seeking short-term job training that provides industry-recognized certificates and credentials.

"The old regulations were developed years ago when the workforce did not have to continuously go back to school and be re-skilled," John Bailey, a Bush-Cheney spokesman said.

But now, people in the high-tech industries need to earn certifications in their fields to advance in their careers, he said.

"We're making sure federal regulations don't serve as a barrier to pursuing that," Bailey said.

Bush also wants to eliminate the current 90-10 rule. Under the rule, for-profit higher education institutions must get at least 10 percent of their funding from sources other than the federal government.

"It's a huge disadvantage for higher education institutions that serve low-income students," Bailey said.

The rule was created because "there were big scandals involving for-profit schools that were set up, in essence, to bilk the government," Kris Wright, director of the Office of Student Finance said.

Critics of the proposal fear the fraud and abuse scandals will occur again if the 90-10 rule is eliminated.

For-profit colleges make money and have stock holders, which puts their focus too much on their profits, McCollum said.

"I'm interested in supporting those educational systems that put emphasis on educating students, not reporting to shareholders," she said.

Bush also wants to eliminate a rule that prevents higher education institutions from receiving financial aid if they offer more than 50 percent of their classes online, or if more than 50 percent of their students are distance learners.

"It prevents people from taking advantage of what distance learning has to offer," Bailey said.

Bill Burton, a spokesman for Kerry-Edwards, said he believes Bush's higher education proposals are too little, too late.

"George Bush has been barely nibbling around the edges of higher education since he's been in office," he said.

College tuition in Minnesota has increased more than \$2,000 since Bush has been in office, Burton said.

"George Bush has done nothing meaningful to bring down the costs," he said. "Students at the 'U' and colleges all over the country deserve a president who understands that's a problem."

---

© Copyright 2004 The Minnesota Daily