

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Overview

This bill makes changes to the tuition reciprocity program requiring additional information on the program and regular program evaluation be provided to the legislature, reauthorization of the program every five years, monitoring the employment, migration and other characteristics of program participants, and updating interstate agreements to supply additional information, provide for equivalent tuition surcharges, and develop enhanced formulas for interstate payments.

The tuition reciprocity program, administered by the Higher Education Services Office (HESO), allows postsecondary students who reside in Minnesota, Wisconsin, South Dakota, and North Dakota to attend public higher education institutions in the other states at less than the nonresident tuition rate. More limited exchanges occur with Iowa and Manitoba. The changes in this bill are based on the recommendations by the Legislative Auditor in the *Higher Education Tuition Reciprocity* report; www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/Ped/2003/pe0308.htm

Section

- 1 Higher Education Services Office; data sharing.** Adds a new cross reference in the Data Practices law for data sharing in the tuition reciprocity program. See section 5.
- 2 Authorization.** Expands the requirements for documents that implement the reciprocity program by:

Section

- requiring all administrative documents and annual memoranda to conform to all relevant state laws; and
- requiring program agreements and memoranda to require states to provide information on the graduation status and field of study of students enrolled under the program if the student's state of residence requests the information.

- 3 Reporting.** Requires HESO to submit an annual reciprocity report to the higher education committees of the legislature with copies of the annual implementing memoranda and worksheets with calculations of interstate payments under the agreements.
- 4 Reauthorization.** Requires the reciprocity program to be reauthorized by the legislature every five years beginning in 2005. Provides a sunset of the reciprocity program two years after the legislature fails to reauthorize it. After the sunset date, participating reciprocity students may complete four years of study but new students may not enroll in the reciprocity program.

Requires HESO to submit a report on the reciprocity program to the legislature in the year that the program is considered for reauthorization, beginning in 2005, that includes:

- an evaluation of the program goals;
- an assessment of how the program achieves the goals; and
- an assessment of the importance of the program to Minnesota's public higher education.

- 5 Data sharing; employment and earnings of reciprocity participants.** Directs HESO to develop methods, including matching social security and wage data, to monitor the Minnesota employment of students who participate in the reciprocity program. State agencies are directed to cooperate in this evaluation. Directs HESO to inform students that social security numbers may be used only to evaluate their Minnesota employment. Requires HESO to include summary information on the report submitted under section 4. The summary information must include graduates by institution, degrees granted by year, Minnesota employment of reciprocity students, and total earnings of graduates.
- 6 Higher Education Services Office.** Authorizes the commissioner of revenue to provide income information to HESO to monitor employment and earnings of tuition reciprocity participants.
- 7 Tuition reciprocity; University of Minnesota surcharge.** Requires HESO, in cooperation with the University of Minnesota, to negotiate an equivalent surcharge for all Wisconsin students attending a University of Minnesota campus. The surcharge may be a percentage of the difference in resident tuition at comparable institutions.

Section

Under the current reciprocity agreements, Wisconsin students attending the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities campus pay a surcharge of 25 percent of the difference between resident tuition at University of Wisconsin, Madison and the tuition at the Twin Cities campus.

8 Interstate tuition reciprocity payments.

Subd. 1. South Dakota. Requires HESO and the South Dakota Board of Regents to establish a method for calculating interstate payments consistent with Minnesota and South Dakota law. HESO must also negotiate for payment of any past obligation under the reciprocity agreement and report to the legislature by January 5, 2005, on negotiations for payment and requirements for reimbursement.

Subd. 2. North Dakota. Requires HESO to negotiate an interstate reimbursement method for the tuition reciprocity program that include relative measures of instructional costs and tuition levels in both Minnesota and North Dakota.