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AGENDA
STATEWIDE PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

Wednesday, April 24, 2024

10:25 a.m.

Claiborne Building, 1st Floor
Louisiana Purchase Room
1201 North Third Street
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Consent Agenda
 - A. Approval of Final Rulemaking – Reinstates COVID-19 as an objective circumstance for which a student may request an exception.
 - B. TOPS Exceptions – TOPS provision that requires students to remain continuously enrolled and to earn the annual credit hours required during the academic year.
 - C. TOPS Home Study Exceptions – TOPS provision that requires a student to begin a home study program no later than the conclusion of the tenth grade.
- IV. Other Business
- V. Adjournment

Committee Members: Wilbert D. Pryor, Chair; Christian C. Creed, Vice Chair; Misti S. Cordell; Robert W. Levy; Felix R. Weill; Samuel T. Gil (*Student Member*)

Agenda Item III.A.

Consent Agenda: Approval of Final Rulemaking (Reinstates COVID-19 as an objective circumstance for which a student may request an exception)

Publication of final rule to reinstate COVID-19 as an objective circumstance for which a student may request an exception.

Background:

At its September 20, 2023, meeting, the Board of Regents authorized publication of a Notice of Intent to effect the below-described rule changes. The Notice of Intent was published in the *Louisiana Register* on October 20, 2023.

No comments have been received.

This rulemaking provides an objective circumstance under which students may receive an exception for the 2023-2024 academic year based on COVID-19 if one of the following applies:

- The student has been diagnosed with COVID-19;
- A member of the student's family with whom he resides has been diagnosed with COVID-19;
- The student was exposed to COVID-19 and must adhere to quarantine protocols for COVID-19; or
- The student lives with a family member or provides care to a family member who is considered to be at high risk for complications due to COVID-19.

Students will be required to provide appropriate documentation that pertains to each circumstance in order to have their exception request approved.

LOSFA Advisory Board Recommendation

The LOSFA Advisory Board recommends that the Board of Regents authorize publication of the final rule.

Agenda Item III.B.

Consent Agenda: TOPS Exceptions

Requests for exception to the TOPS provisions that require students to remain continuously enrolled and to earn the annual credit hours required during the academic year.

Background:

Sections 705.A.6 and 7 of the TOPS administrative rules require TOPS recipients to continue to enroll in the fall and spring semesters of each academic year, to remain enrolled throughout the semester, and to earn the annual credit hours required by the end of the academic year. Section 2103.E authorizes the governing body to grant an exception to these requirements when the student/recipient has exceptional circumstances that are beyond their immediate control and that necessitate full or partial withdrawal from or non-enrollment in an eligible postsecondary institution.

Eight requests for exception to the TOPS requirements were reviewed and approved by the LOSFA Advisory Board at its meeting on April 17, 2024. The students have presented facts and circumstances that the students believe justify the granting of an exception as an exceptional circumstance.

Two of the students whose requests were approved could not begin their Doctor of Physical Therapy program due to the program not gaining candidacy status by the deadline for the students to begin postgraduate studies. The postsecondary institution has notified LOSFA that there are other students in this situation, and they are compiling a list of those students. The LOSFA Advisory Board has recommended that staff be given the authority to approve exception requests for the other students in this situation once the list is received from the postsecondary institution.

LOSFA Advisory Board Recommendation

The LOSFA Advisory Board recommends approval of TOPS requests for exception as presented, including the authority to approve exceptions for students who were unable to begin postgraduate studies on time due to the lack of candidacy status of the program until after the deadline had passed.

Agenda Item III.C.

Consent Agenda: TOPS Home Study Exceptions

Requests for exception to the TOPS provision that requires a student to begin a home study program no later than the conclusion of the tenth grade.

The TOPS statute requires that a student begin a home study program no later than the conclusion of the tenth-grade year. Act 95 of the 2021 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature implemented a provision which allows the administering agency to grant exceptions to this requirement when a student provides documentation that the transfer to a home study program later than the statutorily provided time frame was beyond the student's control.

One request for an exception to the deadline to begin a home study program was reviewed and approved by the LOSFA Advisory Board at its meeting on April 17, 2024. The student has presented facts and documentation that the student believes justify the granting of an exception as an exceptional circumstance.

LOSFA Advisory Board Recommendation

The LOSFA Advisory Board recommends approval of the request for exception to the deadline to begin a home study program no later than the conclusion of the tenth-grade year.