

STATE OF NEW YORK

1046

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 9, 2023

Introduced by Sens. COONEY, BROUK, GOUNARDES, RIVERA -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Higher Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to establishing the Charles L. Reason fellowship for the purpose of increasing faculty diversity in higher education in New York

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Article 130 of title 7 of the education law is renumbered
2 article 129-C and a new section 6457 is added to read as follows:

3 § 6457. Charles L. Reason fellowship. 1. General requirements. The
4 commissioner shall award grants to degree-granting institutions in New
5 York or to consortia of such institutions to be used for the purpose of
6 increasing access by minority or disadvantaged students to academic
7 programs that have been registered by the commissioner and that prepare
8 students from underrepresented minority groups to earn terminal academic
9 degrees and become higher education faculty members. Students who
10 complete the undergraduate fellowship and enroll in a program as
11 described in subdivision three of this section shall be eligible for
12 loan forgiveness payments to further assist their careers as faculty
13 members.

14 2. Charles L. Reason fellowship. (a) (i) Undergraduate fellowship
15 moneys may be used for tutoring, counseling, faculty mentorship
16 expenses, supplemental financial assistance, program administration
17 including staff, summer research or similar academic opportunities for
18 participating fellows, student travel expenses for academic conferences,
19 and other activities which the commissioner may deem appropriate. To be
20 eligible for Charles L. Reason undergraduate fellowship program
21 support, a student must be a resident of New York, or meet the require-
22 ments of subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, and must be from a minori-
23 ty group historically underrepresented in academic faculty in New York,

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 and must demonstrate interest in and a potential to attain a Ph.D. or
2 other terminal academic degree and teach at the collegiate level if
3 provided special services. Eligible students must be in good academic
4 standing, enrolled full time in an approved, undergraduate level program
5 of study, as defined by the regents.

6 (ii) An applicant who is not a legal resident of New York state, but
7 who is a United States citizen, a permanent lawful resident, an individ-
8 ual who is granted U or T non-immigrant status pursuant to the Victims
9 of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, a person granted
10 temporary protected status pursuant to the Federal Immigration Act of
11 1990, an individual of a class of refugees paroled by the attorney
12 general of the United States under his or her parole authority pertain-
13 ing to the admission of aliens to the United States, or an applicant
14 without lawful immigration status, shall be eligible for an award at the
15 undergraduate level of study provided that the student:

16 (1) attended a registered New York state high school for two or more
17 years, graduated from a registered New York state high school and
18 applied for attendance at the institution of higher education for the
19 undergraduate study for which an award is sought within five years of
20 receiving a New York state high school diploma; or

21 (2) attended an approved New York state program for a state high
22 school equivalency diploma, received a state high school equivalency
23 diploma and applied for attendance at the institution of higher educa-
24 tion for the undergraduate study for which an award is sought within
25 five years of receiving a state high school equivalency diploma; or

26 (3) is otherwise eligible for the payment of tuition and fees at a
27 rate no greater than that imposed for resident students of the state
28 university of New York, the city university of New York or community
29 colleges as prescribed in subparagraph eight of paragraph h of subdivi-
30 sion two of section three hundred fifty-five of this chapter or para-
31 graph (a) of subdivision seven of section sixty-two hundred six of this
32 title. Provided, further, that a student without lawful immigration
33 status shall also be required to file an affidavit with such institution
34 of higher education stating that the student has filed an application to
35 legalize his or her immigration status, or will file such an application
36 as soon as he or she is eligible to do so; and

37 (4) has completed at least one year of post-secondary education at a
38 college or university chartered by the regents within the state of New
39 York and remains in good standing with that institution.

40 (b) Applications for funding shall be submitted by eligible insti-
41 tutions to the department in accordance with requirements established by
42 the commissioner. Priority consideration shall be given to institutions
43 which demonstrate an ability to graduate students who enter post-bacca-
44 laureate programs at a high level. Grants shall be awarded based on
45 criteria established by the commissioner.

46 3. Loan forgiveness. (a) Moneys shall be made available, subject to
47 appropriations, for purposes of student loan forgiveness in accordance
48 with the provisions of this section to students who:

49 (i) successfully completed the undergraduate Charles L. Reason fellow-
50 ship as described in subdivision two of this section;

51 (ii) have graduated from a baccalaureate program at a college or
52 university chartered by the regents;

53 (iii) within four years of achieving their baccalaureate degree,
54 enrolls in a Ph.D. or similar terminal academic degree program regis-
55 tered with the department at a college or university chartered by the
56 regents that is not a program granting the credential of juris doctor,

1 medical doctor, or other degree leading to a licensed profession as
2 described in title eight of this chapter; and

3 (iv) is a resident of New York, or meet the requirements of subpara-
4 graph (ii) of paragraph (a) of subdivision two of this section.

5 (b) Funding awarded pursuant to this subdivision shall not exceed the
6 total qualifying outstanding debt of a Charles L. Reason Fellowship
7 participating student from student loans to cover tuition and other
8 educational expenses, made by or guaranteed by the federal or state
9 government, or made by a lending or educational institution approved
10 under title IV of the federal higher education act. Loan repayment
11 awards shall be used solely to repay such debt.

12 (c) Applications for loan forgiveness shall be made by eligible
13 students in accordance with requirements established by the commissioner
14 and the president of the higher education services corporation. Grants
15 shall be awarded based on criteria established by the commissioner and
16 the president of the higher education services committee based on the
17 availability of funds appropriated for that purpose.

18 (d) A student receiving funds pursuant to this subdivision shall be
19 eligible for a loan repayment award to be determined by the commissioner
20 over a four year period provided however that no student shall receive
21 more than ten thousand dollars in loan forgiveness payments per year or
22 more than forty thousand dollars in loan forgiveness payments under this
23 subdivision in their lifetime.

24 (e) In the event that a student no longer meets the qualifications for
25 loan forgiveness as defined in this subdivision, any scheduled or forth-
26 coming payments to that student will be suspended until they certify to
27 the department, in a method determined by the department, that they meet
28 such qualifications.

29 4. Reporting requirements. Institutions participating in the Charles
30 L. Reason fellowship shall submit to the commissioner such reports or
31 other information as the commissioner shall require. The commissioner
32 shall prepare for the governor, the temporary president of the senate,
33 the speaker of the assembly, the respective minority leaders in both the
34 senate and assembly, and the board of regents an annual report of the
35 activities of institutions which receive state funds pursuant to this
36 section concerning, but not limited to, the effectiveness of the
37 programs, the numbers of students served, and future plans.

38 5. Rules and regulations. The commissioner shall promulgate rules and
39 regulations to implement this section.

40 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.