



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

Department of Administration
BUDGET OFFICE
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MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable Marvin L. Abney
Chairman, House Finance Committee

The Honorable William J. Conley, Jr.
Chairman, Senate Finance Committee

From: Thomas A. Mullaney *Thomas A. Mullaney*
Executive Director/State Budget Officer

Date: May 17, 2019

Subject: Amendments to Article 11 of the FY 2020 Appropriations Act
(19-H-5151)

The Governor requests that Article 11 entitled "Relating to Rhode Island Promise" be replaced with the attached version.

This amendment only pertains to section 3 of the article, which establishes increased expectations on the eligible institutions to adopt additional student success practices to support the students receiving the Promise scholarships and requires the Council on Postsecondary Education to adopt and enforce policies consistent with those practices. Amendments were made in consultation with the postsecondary institutions to ensure they will be effectively implemented.

The changes contained in the amended article are as follows:

16-107-10, established in the Governor's FY20 Budget proposal, states the requirements that the eligible postsecondary institutions must meet in order for their students to receive the scholarship at their institution.

Paragraph (a) is amended to require the institutions to report the number of credit hours required to complete each degree with comparisons to similar institutions. Any programs that require more than 40 major-specific credits shall be required to review their program. These changes replace a requirement to reduce institutional performance funding for students who earn excess credits.

Paragraph (b) is amended slightly but still requires each institution to offer courses in intersessions, such as during the summer and winter intersessions, by January 1, 2020.

Paragraph (c) is amended significantly but still requires the institutions to amend their transfer and articulation policies to further strengthen student transfer between institutions.

Paragraph (d) is amended slightly but still requires each institution to adopt and implement a prior learning for credit policy by July 1, 2021.

Paragraph (e) is amended slightly but still requires each institution to complete an academic program prioritization by September 1, 2021.

Paragraph (f) is amended to require the institutions to review their course availability by January 1, 2020.

Paragraph (g) is unchanged and requires the council to approve work plans submitted by the institutions for establishing guided pathways for all students by September 1, 2020.

Paragraph (h) is amended but still requires each institution to have evidence-based placement practices.

Paragraph (i) is amended slightly to require the eligible institutions to participate in providing specific data elements, publish them for transparency, and requires the institutions to submit that data regularly.

If you have any questions regarding these amendments, please feel free to call me at 222-6300.

TAM: 20-Amend-25

cc: Sharon Reynolds Ferland, House Fiscal Advisor
Stephen Whitney, Senate Fiscal Advisor

1 **ARTICLE 11 revised**

2 RELATING TO RHODE ISLAND PROMISE

3 **SECTION 1.** The title of Chapter 16-107 of the General Laws entitled "General Provisions" is
4 hereby amended to read as follows:

5 ~~CHAPTER 16-107~~

6 ~~RHODE ISLAND PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP~~

7 CHAPTER 16-107

8 RHODE ISLAND PROMISE

9
10 **SECTION 2.** Sections 16-107-1, 16-107-2, 16-107-3, 16-107-4, 16-107-5, 16-107-6, 16-107-7,
11 and 16-107-8 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-107 entitled, "Rhode Island Promise" are hereby
12 amended to read as follows:

13 **§ 16-107-1. Short title.**

14 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as "Rhode Island Promise" ~~Scholarship Act."~~

15 **§ 16-107-2. Legislative findings and purpose.**

16 (a) The general assembly finds and declares that:

17 (1) Education is critical for the state's young people to achieve their dreams and develop their
18 talents;

19 (2) The state's economic success depends on a highly educated and skilled workforce, which is
20 made all the more urgent by the impending need for the state to increase its state postsecondary
21 attainment rate to at least seventy percent (70%) by 2025 to keep pace with projections of the percentage
22 of state jobs that will require a postsecondary degree or certificate; and

23 (3) The state's future prosperity depends upon its ability to make educational opportunities
24 beyond high school available for all students, including adults, as part of a free public education.

25 (b) In order to address the findings set forth in subsection (a), ~~the purpose of this chapter is to~~
26 Rhode Island Promise is a promise and commitment on behalf of:

1 (1) The state to promise to support its students' higher education ambitions by making a higher
2 education affordable and part of a free public education for all students;

3 (2) The students to promise to complete a degree in a timely manner and to give back to Rhode
4 Island after graduation; and

5 (3) the state's public postsecondary institutions to promise to accomplish the following:

6 (i) ~~Increase~~ Increase the number of students enrolling in and completing degrees and certificates
7 on time from eligible postsecondary institutions; from the community college of Rhode Island.

8 (ii) Align their postsecondary degrees and certificates with emerging workforce demands;

9 (iii) Adopt policies and practices that support positive outcomes for all student learners;

10 (iv) Reduce and eliminate achievement gaps for students from groups that are underrepresented at
11 the state's public postsecondary institutions, including, but not limited to, students from low-income
12 families; students of underrepresented races and ethnicities; and students who are adults, current or
13 former foster youths, with disabilities, formerly incarcerated, undocumented immigrants, and veterans;
14 and

15 (v) Increase the number of graduates who live, work, or continue their education in Rhode Island
16 after graduation.

17 **§ 16-107-3. Establishment of scholarship program.**

18 Beginning with the high school graduating class of 2017, it is hereby established the Rhode Island
19 promise scholarship program ~~that will end with the high school graduating class of 2020.~~ The general
20 assembly shall annually appropriate the funds necessary to implement the purposes of this chapter.

21 Additional funds beyond the scholarships may be appropriated to support and advance the Rhode Island
22 promise scholarship program. In addition to appropriation by the general assembly, charitable donations
23 may be accepted into the scholarship program.

24 **§ 16-107-4. Definitions.**

25 When used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

26 (1) "Adult Student" means any student who is twenty-five (25) years of age or older by the start

1 of the semester in which he or she is seeking to enroll.

2 (2) "Certificate" means any certificate program with labor market value as defined by the
3 Postsecondary Commissioner.

4 (3) "College-level credit" means credit awarded by a college or university for completion of its
5 own courses or other academic work.

6 (4) "Eligible postsecondary institution" means Rhode Island College or the Community College
7 of Rhode Island;

8 (1) (5) "FAFSA" means the Free Application for Federal Student Aid form;

9 (6) "General Education Coursework" means the educational foundation of knowledge, skills, and
10 attitudes that prepare students for success in their majors and their personal and professional lives after
11 graduation. It includes but is not limited to the required coursework of all degrees developed by each eligible
12 postsecondary institution that is approved by the council on postsecondary education that is intended to
13 ensure that all graduates of a state institution have a balanced core of competencies and knowledge. This
14 does not necessarily include coursework specifically required for one's major.

15 (2) (7) "Mandatory fees and tuition" are the costs that every student is required to pay in order to
16 enroll in classes, and does not include room and board, textbooks, program fees that may exist in some
17 majors, course fees that may exist for some specific courses, meal plans, or travel;

18 (3) (8) "On track to graduate on time" means the standards determined by the ~~community college~~
19 ~~of Rhode Island~~ eligible postsecondary institutions in establishing the expectation of a student to graduate
20 with (i) an associate's degree within two (2) years of enrollment in case of a student attending the
21 Community College of Rhode Island full-time or within four (4) years in the case of adult students
22 attending part-time; or (ii) a bachelor's degree within four (4) years of enrollment in the case of a student
23 attending Rhode Island College, or the prescribed completion time for a student completing a certificate at
24 the eligible postsecondary institution (recognizing that some students, including students who require
25 developmental education, are double majors, or are enrolled in certain professional programs may require
26 an extended time period for degree completion);

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(9) “Receiving Institution” means the eligible postsecondary institution attended by a transfer student after transfer;

~~(5)~~ (10) “Recipient student” means a student attending the community college of Rhode Island who qualifies to receive the Rhode Island promise scholarship pursuant to § 16-107-6 or § 16-107-9;

~~(4)~~ (11) “Scholarship program” means the Rhode Island promise scholarship program that is established pursuant to § 16-107-3;

~~(12)~~ “Sending Institution” means the eligible postsecondary institution attended by a transfer student before transfer;

~~(6)~~ (13) “State” means the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations; and

~~(14)~~ “Transfer student” means any student who attends an eligible postsecondary institution and holds any college-level credit hours for courses or other academic work at a previously attended eligible postsecondary institution.

§ 16-107-5. Administration of scholarship program.

(a) The financial aid office, in conjunction with the office of enrollment management or their respective equivalent offices, at an eligible postsecondary institution ~~community college of Rhode Island,~~ shall administer the scholarship program for state residents seeking associate degrees, bachelor’s degrees, or certificates who meet the eligibility requirements in this chapter.

(b) An award of the scholarship program shall cover up to the cost of two (2) years of tuition and mandatory fees, or in the case of an adult student sixty (60) credit hours of tuition and mandatory fees over a duration of no more than four (4) years, less federal and all other financial aid monies available to the recipient student. None of any grants received by students from the Department of Children, Youth and Families’ Higher Education Opportunity Incentive Grant as established by § 42-72.8 or the College Crusade Scholarship Act as established in § 16-70 shall be considered federal or financial aid for the purposes of this Chapter.

1 (c) The scholarship program is limited to one award per student as required by § 16-107-6(a)(7).

2 A student may continue to receive an award towards a degree following completion of a certificate
3 program, provided that the student remains on track to graduate on time.

4 (d) If a recipient student is eligible to receive employer-sponsored tuition assistance, the eligible
5 postsecondary institution shall enter into an agreement with the recipient student and/or the student's
6 employer stipulating that student's home institution would provide an upfront scholarship award and the
7 student's employer would submit corresponding tuition assistance reimbursements to the student's home
8 institution upon the student's completion of applicable courses, consistent with the agreement and any
9 applicable policy of the student's employer.

10 **§ 16-107-6. Eligibility for scholarship at the Community College of Rhode Island.**

11 (a) Beginning with the students who enroll at the community college of Rhode Island directly after high
12 school in fall of 2017 and adult students who enroll at the community college of Rhode Island in fall of
13 2019 ending with students who enroll at the community college of Rhode Island in the fall of 2020, to be
14 considered for the scholarship, a student:

15 (1) Must qualify for in-state tuition and fees pursuant to the residency policy adopted by the
16 council on postsecondary education, as amended, supplemented, restated, or otherwise modified from
17 time to time ("residency policy"); provided, that, the student must ~~have~~ either:

18 (i) have satisfied the high school graduation/equivalency diploma condition prior to reaching
19 nineteen (19) years of age; provided, further, that in addition to the option of meeting the requirement by
20 receiving a high school equivalency diploma as described in the residency policy, the student can satisfy
21 the condition by receiving other certificates or documents of equivalent nature from the state or its
22 municipalities as recognized by applicable regulations promulgated by the council on elementary and
23 secondary education; or

24 (ii) be qualified as an adult student;

1 (2) ~~Must~~ Other than an adult student, must be admitted to, and must enroll and attend the
2 community college of Rhode Island on a full-time basis by the semester immediately following high
3 school graduation or the semester immediately following receipt of a high school equivalency diploma;

4 (3) Must complete the FAFSA and any required FAFSA verification by the deadline prescribed
5 by the community college of Rhode Island for each year in which the student seeks to receive funding
6 under the scholarship program;

7 (4) Must either:

8 (i) continue to be enrolled on a full-time basis; or

9 (ii) if qualified as an adult student, continue to be enrolled in courses corresponding to at least
10 eighteen (18) credit hours or more on an annual basis.

11 (5) Must maintain an average annual cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or greater, as
12 determined by the community college of Rhode Island;

13 (6) Must remain on track to graduate on time as determined by the community college of Rhode
14 Island;

15 (7) Must not have already received an award under this scholarship program; and

16 (8) Must commit to live, work, or continue their education in Rhode Island after graduation.

17 The community college of Rhode Island shall develop a policy that will secure this commitment from
18 recipient students.

19 (b) Notwithstanding the eligibility requirements under subsection (a) of this section (“specified
20 conditions”):

21 (i) In the case of a recipient student who has an approved medical or personal leave of absence or
22 is unable to satisfy one or more specified conditions because of the student's medical or personal
23 circumstances, the student may continue to receive an award under the scholarship program upon
24 resuming the student's education so long as the student continues to meet all other applicable eligibility
25 requirements; and

1 (ii) In the case of a recipient student who is a member of the national guard or a member of a
2 reserve unit of a branch of the United States military and is unable to satisfy one or more specified
3 conditions because the student is or will be in basic or special military training, or is or will be
4 participating in a deployment of the student's guard or reserve unit, the student may continue to receive an
5 award under the scholarship program upon completion of the student's basic or special military training or
6 deployment.

7 **§ 16-107-7. Reporting and disbursement.**

8 (a) On or before November 10 and May 10 of each fiscal year following fiscal year 2017, the ~~community~~
9 ~~college of Rhode Island~~ eligible postsecondary institutions shall each submit a report to the director of the
10 office of management and budget, the state budget officer, the house fiscal advisor, the senate fiscal
11 advisor, the commissioner of postsecondary education, and the chair of the council on postsecondary
12 education detailing the number of students eligible to participate in the scholarship program, the amount
13 of federal and institutional financial aid anticipated to be received by recipient students, the aggregate
14 tuition and mandatory fee costs attributable to recipient students, and the resulting total cost of the
15 scholarship program to the state. The report shall contain such data for both the current fiscal year and the
16 most up-to-date forecast for the following fiscal year. Data reported shall be subdivided by student-year
17 cohort and shall be accompanied by a written explanation detailing the estimating methodology utilized
18 and any impact(s) the forecasted data may present to institutional capacity, operational costs, and the
19 tuition/fee revenue base of the institution.

20 (b) On or before July 1, 2020, and annually thereafter, all eligible postsecondary institutions ~~the~~
21 ~~community college of Rhode Island~~ and the commissioner of postsecondary education shall submit a
22 report evaluating the program ~~based on the first two cohorts~~ to the governor, speaker of the house, and the
23 president of the senate. This evaluation shall include the following:

24 (1) The number of students who started in each cohort;

25 (2) The number of students in each cohort who have attained a degree or certification in an on-
26 time manner;

1 (3) The number of students in each cohort who have not attained a degree or certification in an
2 on-time manner and an analysis of why that has happened;

3 (4) The number of students in each cohort who began the program but have been unable to
4 continue or complete the program and an analysis of why that has happened;

5 (5) The costs of the program and the costs of continuing the program;

6 (6) Suggestions for ways to increase the success of the program;

7 (7) Recommendations as to modifying, continuing, expanding, curtailing, or discontinuing the
8 program; ~~and~~

9 (8) Any such other recommendations or information as the ~~community college of Rhode Island~~
10 eligible postsecondary institutions and the commissioner of postsecondary education deem appropriate to
11 include in the evaluation; ~~and~~;

12 (9) An update on the implementation of requirements pursuant to § 16-107-10.

13 (c) The office of management and budget, in consultation with the office of the postsecondary
14 commissioner, shall oversee the apportionment and disbursement of all funds appropriated for the purpose
15 of the scholarship program.

16 **§ 16-107-8. Rules and procedures.**

17 The council on postsecondary education is hereby authorized to promulgate rules to effectuate the
18 purposes of this chapter and the ~~community college of Rhode Island~~ eligible postsecondary
19 institutions shall each establish appeal procedures for the award, denial, or revocation of funding
20 under the scholarship program. The rules shall be promulgated in accordance with § 16-59-4.

21 **SECTION 3.** Chapter 16-107 of the General Laws entitled, “Rhode Island Promise Scholarship”
22 is hereby amended by adding thereto the following sections:

23 **§ 16-107-9. Eligibility for scholarship at Rhode Island College.**

24 (a) Beginning with the students who enrolled at Rhode Island College in the Fall of 2017 a
25 student:

1 (1) Must qualify for in-state tuition and fees pursuant to the residency policy adopted by the
2 council on postsecondary education, as amended, supplemented, restated, or otherwise modified from
3 time to time ("residency policy");

4 (2) Must be a currently enrolled full-time student who has declared a major and earned a
5 minimum of 60 credit hours towards an eligible program of study, as determined by Rhode Island
6 College;

7 (3) Must complete the FAFSA and any required FAFSA verification by the deadline prescribed
8 by Rhode Island College for each year in which the student seeks to receive funding under the scholarship
9 program;

10 (4) Must enroll full-time as a freshman as a first-time student and continue to be enrolled on a
11 full-time basis;

12 (5) Must maintain an average annual cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or greater, as
13 determined by Rhode Island College;

14 (6) Must remain on track to graduate on time as determined by Rhode Island College;

15 (7) Must not have already received an award under this scholarship program; and

16 (8) Must commit to live, work, or continue their education in Rhode Island after graduation.

17 Rhode Island College shall develop a policy that will secure this commitment from recipient students.

18 (b) Notwithstanding the eligibility requirements under subsection (a) of this section ("specified
19 conditions"):

20 (i) In the case of a recipient student who has an approved medical or personal leave of absence or
21 is unable to satisfy one or more specified conditions because of the student's medical or personal
22 circumstances, the student may continue to receive an award under the scholarship program upon
23 resuming the student's education so long as the student continues to meet all other applicable eligibility
24 requirements; and

25 (ii) In the case of a recipient student who is a member of the national guard or a member of a
26 reserve unit of a branch of the United States military and is unable to satisfy one or more specified

1 conditions because the student is or will be in basic or special military training, or is or will be
2 participating in a deployment of the student's guard or reserve unit, the student may continue to receive an
3 award under the scholarship program upon completion of the student's basic or special military training or
4 deployment.

5 **§ 16-107-10. Requirements of the Eligible Postsecondary Institutions of Higher Education**
6 **and the Council on Postsecondary Education.**

7 The requirements of the eligible postsecondary institutions and council on postsecondary
8 education shall advance the goals outlined in Section § 16-107-2 and shall include all of the following:

9 (a) ~~The council on postsecondary education shall adopt a policy~~ Each eligible postsecondary
10 institution shall report to the council by January 1, 2020 ~~that reduces an eligible postsecondary~~
11 institution's performance incentive funding pursuant to § 16-106 for every student who begins their
12 course of study or transfers into an eligible postsecondary institution and who completes more than 135
13 credit hours to achieve a bachelor's degree or more than 75 credit hours to complete an associate degree.
14 ~~Exceptions may be made in the policy for programs that require more than 135 credit hours to achieve a~~
15 ~~bachelor's degree or more than 75 credit hours to complete an associate degree. The institution's~~
16 ~~performance incentive funding must be reduced by an amount determined by the council per credit hour~~
17 ~~beyond the thresholds established in the immediately preceding sentence on an annual basis based on the~~
18 ~~immediately prior year's student data the number of credit hours required to complete each degree,~~
19 ~~certificate, or credential offered by each institution. Such report will include a comparison to requirements~~
20 ~~at similar institutions offering the degree, certificate, or credential; relevant requirements of accrediting~~
21 ~~agencies or professional associations; and any other relevant information regarding the appropriate~~
22 ~~number of credits for such degree, certificate, or credential. The Council shall by July 1, 2020, conduct a~~
23 ~~review of each degree, certificate, or credential program that requires students to earn more than 40~~
24 ~~major-specific credits and ensure that students are enabled to earn a degree as expeditiously as possible.~~

25 (b) Each eligible postsecondary institution shall offer credit courses during summer and winter
26 intersessions by January 1, 2020. Summer and winter intersessions shall ~~have the following~~

1 ~~characteristics: include coursework available in at least the most in-demand courses of study that are~~
2 ~~pedagogically appropriate to offer in an abbreviated term, so as to allow students to matriculate more~~
3 ~~easily through their eligible postsecondary institution.~~

4 ~~(1) Enrollment shall be open to all current students of the eligible postsecondary institution.~~

5 ~~(2) Coursework shall be available in at least the most in-demand courses of study so as to allow~~
6 ~~students to matriculate more easily through their eligible postsecondary institution as determined by the~~
7 ~~institution.~~

8 ~~(e) The council on postsecondary education shall revise its Transfer and Articulation policies by~~
9 ~~July 1, 2021 to include the following requirements:~~

10 ~~(c) To assure system alignment behind a unified transfer and articulation policy between the~~
11 ~~eligible postsecondary institutions and to complete the responsibilities required to create one, a permanent~~
12 ~~interinstitutional committee on articulation/transfer shall be established. The Articulation/Transfer~~
13 ~~Committee shall be comprised of three members from each of the eligible postsecondary institutions plus~~
14 ~~a chairperson and a staff person from the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner. The institutional~~
15 ~~representatives shall be appointed by the president of the respective institutions, in accordance with~~
16 ~~procedures to be established by those institutions and are to include the institutional articulation/transfer~~
17 ~~officer and at least one faculty representative. The chairperson shall be appointed by the Commissioner of~~
18 ~~Postsecondary Education. Committee appointments shall be reviewed as necessary by each institutional~~
19 ~~president. The committee shall be responsible to the Postsecondary Commissioner for coordinating the~~
20 ~~following revision of the Transfer and Articulation Policy that includes the following provisions and~~
21 ~~requirements by July 1, 2021:~~

22 ~~(1) All eligible postsecondary institutions shall accept all college-level credit hours earned with a~~
23 ~~passing grade taken at any eligible postsecondary institution by any student to be applied in the same way~~
24 ~~by each eligible postsecondary institution as they would be if they were taken at that institution. All~~
25 ~~eligible postsecondary institutions shall uniformly determine which courses are college-level on the basis~~
26 ~~of whether the courses are not remedial or developmental, whether the courses carry one or more credit~~

1 ~~hours, and whether the credit hours are eligible to be counted toward graduation at the sending institution.~~
2 ~~If any non-remedial course is not determined to be college-level, that institution must improve the course~~
3 ~~to meet the agreed-upon standard and ensure transferability.~~

4 1) The Community College of Rhode Island, in collaboration with eligible four-year institutions,
5 shall determine appropriate courses for transfer pathways that include a minimum of 30-32 credits that
6 fulfill general education requirements at the four-year institutions, with appropriate exceptions made for
7 career and technical programs.

8 ~~(2) Transfer students shall not be required to take additional assessments or evaluations if this is~~
9 ~~not required for home institution students. If assessments or evaluations are required for specific~~
10 ~~programs, then they shall be used at every eligible postsecondary institution in applicable courses.~~

11 (2) There shall be a joint review of courses, conducted by the eligible institutions, that are not
12 already transferable from the Community College of Rhode Island to the eligible four-year institutions.
13 This review shall identify potential improvements to establish course-equivalency at the eligible four-year
14 institutions to ensure that lower-level courses at the Community College are equivalent to similar courses
15 at the four-year institutions or can be made equivalent utilizing similar learning outcomes.

16 The College Catalog and course registration materials for courses at the Community College of
17 Rhode Island shall clearly indicate whether there is an equivalent course at the eligible four-year
18 institutions, and also clearly indicate when a course does articulate to an equivalent course at the eligible
19 four-year institutions.

20 ~~(3) The direction of student transfer from any eligible postsecondary institution to another eligible~~
21 ~~postsecondary institution, from a two-year to a four-year college or university, four-year to a two-year, or~~
22 ~~four-year to four-year, shall not affect the transferability of credit hours.~~

23 (3) Transfer students shall not be required to take additional assessments or evaluations if this is
24 not required for home institution students. If assessments or evaluations are required for specific
25 programs, then they shall be used at every eligible postsecondary institution in applicable courses.

1 Exceptions to this policy shall be granted to programs that demonstrate that transfer students are not
2 adequately prepared for subsequent courses in a sequence taught at their institution.

3 (4) The direction of student transfer from any eligible postsecondary institution to another eligible
4 postsecondary institution, from a two-year to a four-year college or university, four-year to a two-year, or
5 four-year to four-year, shall not affect the transferability of credit hours, except as indicated in section (5).

6 (4) (5) The numerical value of credit hours shall be maintained in a transfer from any eligible
7 postsecondary institution to another eligible postsecondary institution. ~~The receiving institution shall~~
8 ~~grant the same total number of credits as originally assigned by the sending institution.~~ In some cases
9 there may be a difference in the number of credits assigned to the course by each institution. In those
10 cases, where the sending institution assigns more credits to a course than the receiving institution, the
11 course will receive the number of credits assigned by the ~~sending~~ receiving institution with any remaining
12 number of credits assigned as elective credits.

13 (5) (6) Whenever possible, college-level credit earned in a transferable course will be granted
14 without regard to the date when the course was completed. Exceptions may be granted under a process
15 detailed in the council's policy. The expertise of the faculty at the receiving institutions shall be relied
16 upon in determining whether an exception shall be granted.

17 (6) ~~All eligible postsecondary institutions shall establish a common curriculum of general~~
18 ~~education coursework that contains a minimum of [30-32] college-level credits. Students at eligible~~
19 ~~postsecondary institutions who complete the common curriculum of general education coursework shall~~
20 ~~be able to transfer each college-level credit contained within the curriculum from an eligible~~
21 ~~postsecondary institution to another eligible postsecondary institution and have each college-level credit~~
22 ~~from the common curriculum be counted towards the student's degree requirements at any eligible~~
23 ~~postsecondary institution. Students completing the common curriculum of general education coursework~~
24 ~~shall not be required to take any additional lower-division general education courses upon transfer. The~~
25 ~~council on postsecondary education is hereby directed to adopt at least one common curriculum of~~
26 ~~general education coursework described in this section that is available for use by students by the~~

1 beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year. Any lower division courses available at the Community
2 College of Rhode Island must articulate to Rhode Island College and the University of Rhode Island as
3 meeting general education, major prerequisite, or major requirements. Courses developed to meet major
4 requirements for career and technical programs may be exempt from this requirement if an articulated
5 bachelor's degree is not available.

6 (7) All undergraduate courses at each eligible postsecondary institution shall utilize the same
7 course numbering system with equivalent courses offered throughout the institutions. To be assigned a
8 new and unique course number, the proposed course content must be unique and not found in a current or
9 pending course. The council on postsecondary education shall adopt this common course numbering
10 system for use by all eligible postsecondary institutions by July 1, 2021, with the system being
11 implemented by the beginning of the 2021/2022 school year.

12 (8) (7) Each eligible postsecondary institution shall collaborate to develop a unified statewide
13 transfer agreement, aligned with the common curriculum of CCRI general education coursework core
14 established under paragraph (e)(7) in section (c) (1) of this section for each course of study. The
15 departments responsible for the programs at each institution shall develop and propose the transfer
16 agreements. The council on postsecondary education shall be responsible for adopting the agreements.
17 The council eligible institutions shall jointly adopt a unified statewide transfer agreement for at least three
18 major courses of study per year until all courses of study have a unified statewide transfer agreement. The
19 first three unified statewide transfer agreements must be adopted by and reported to the council by
20 January 1, 2020. Each unified statewide transfer agreement developed under this section must:

21 (i) Enable a student to transfer from each eligible postsecondary institution to any other eligible
22 postsecondary institution without the loss of college-level credit within the transfer agreement. or the
23 requirement The student shall not have to retake a course at a public institution that the student has
24 successfully completed at any other eligible postsecondary institution, provided that the grade in each
25 course that is transferred meets the degree requirements established by the unified statewide transfer
26 agreement;

1 (ii) Contain provisions, jointly identified by the eligible postsecondary institutions, that identify
2 the optimal number of college-level credit hours, including credit hours in the major course of study, that
3 the student should have when the student transfers from any eligible postsecondary institution to another
4 eligible postsecondary institution in order for the student to efficiently receive a bachelor's degree; and

5 (iii) Define the classes and completion standards for the optimal number of college-level credit
6 hours identified in paragraph (ii) of this subsection that may be taken at each eligible postsecondary
7 institution;

8 (iv) (iii) Ensure that if a student at any eligible postsecondary institution has completed 60
9 college-level credit hours of coursework in conformity with the transfer agreement and completion
10 standards identified in paragraph (iii) of established in this subsection and transfers to any eligible
11 postsecondary institution, the student will receive junior status in the major course of study at the eligible
12 postsecondary institution and be able to receive a bachelor's degree in the major course of study by
13 completing the additional college-level credits identified in the unified statewide transfer agreement after
14 the transfer, based on the total number of college-level credit hours and standards approved by the
15 accrediting body for the eligible postsecondary institution; and

16 (v) (iv) For unified statewide transfer agreements that specify an optimal number of college-level
17 credit hours for transfer students other than 60-64 credits, ensure that if a student at any eligible
18 postsecondary institution has completed the specified number of college-level credit hours of coursework
19 in conformity with the completion standards identified in this subsection and transfers to another eligible
20 postsecondary institution, the student will receive status at the eligible postsecondary institution based on
21 the number of academic credit hours referenced in the applicable transfer agreement. That student's status
22 shall be that is comparable to the status of students with the same number of college-level credit hours in
23 the major course of study who began their postsecondary studies at the receiving institution, and be able
24 to receive a bachelor's degree in the major course of study by completing the additional college-level
25 credit hours specified in the unified statewide transfer agreement after the transfer based on the total
26 number of college-level credits and standards approved by the accrediting body for the eligible

1 postsecondary institution. No eligible postsecondary institution will be required to accept more than 75
2 transfer credits from any other institution toward any degree, but they are encouraged to accept as many
3 as possible to encourage efficient student completion of a degree.

4 (8) After these initial deadlines have been completed the interinstitutional committee shall
5 continue to meet at least four times annually to complete the following tasks:

6 (i) Review data including transfer rates and assessment reports, any excess credit earned by
7 transfer students, and other information and develop action plans in response to that data and information;

8 (ii) Share communication regarding proposed curriculum changes that will substantially impact
9 existing transfer and/or articulation agreements;

10 (iii) Solicit suggestions from administrators, faculty and students concerning matters of
11 articulation/transfer;

12 (iv) The eligible postsecondary institutions shall provide evidence to the committee of continuous
13 evaluation and review of institutional programs, policies and procedures, and interinstitutional
14 relationships affecting transfer of students;

15 (v) Sharing potential revisions as are needed in institutional programs, policies, and procedures to
16 promote the success and general well-being of the transfer student;

17 (vi) Provide the system-level appeals of transfer decisions.

18 (d) Each eligible postsecondary institution shall submit policies and procedures for students to
19 earn college-level credit hours for prior learning to the council on postsecondary education by July 1,
20 2021. At a minimum, these procedures shall include:

21 (1) A listing of the types of documentation acceptable to the institution and the dates of inclusion
22 for which prior learning is acceptable;

23 (2) Guidelines for student requests for awards of college-level credit hours for prior learning.
24 Institutions must establish a written record of their decisions and the basis for that decision in accepting or
25 declining a Prior Learning Assessment (“PLA”) for academic credit hours. Institutional policies should

1 ensure the transparency of the award or denial of PLA credit hours by providing the applicable criteria to
2 the permanent interinstitutional committee on articulation and transfer;

3 (3) A process for appealing PLA decisions; and

4 (4) A process for assessing every enrolling student ensuring that every enrolling student is aware that they can be
5 assessed for college-level credit hours for prior learning;

6 (5) Credit hours earned through PLA will be transferable in accordance with this chapter.

7 (e) Each eligible postsecondary institution shall complete an Academic Program Prioritization
8 Process approved by the council on postsecondary education by September 1, 2021. This process shall
9 include the following and shall not take more than one year to complete after the process is approved by
10 the Council:

11 (1) An analysis of the postsecondary and workforce needs of the state;

12 (2) An analysis of the career tracks and both starting and mid-careers earnings of graduates of
13 similar programs;

14 (3) An analysis of the programs' contribution to the formation of a well-rounded, well-informed,
15 citizenry capable of critical thought and effective participation in democratic self-government;

16 (4) An analysis of the program's contribution to the state's artistic and cultural vibrancy;

17 (5) An analysis of the program's contribution to social services and the social welfare of residents
18 of the state;

19 (6) An analysis of the program's contribution to students' future life-satisfaction, as measured by
20 available and reliable national and state surveys;

21 (2) (7) Identification of a plan for program expansion, consolidation, and closure based on that
22 analysis;

23 (3) (8) Participation of, but not limited to, faculty, the business community, the arts community,
24 the social services community, the public and non-profit sectors, and the community at large.

1 Nothing in this section shall be interpreted as a requirement that any institution eliminate any of
2 its current programs or reduce faculty staffing. The eligible postsecondary institutions internal Academic
3 Program Review process shall not be abrogated by this section.

4 (f) The council on postsecondary education shall approve a policy by January 1, 2020 conduct a
5 review of course schedules that sets standards for making course offerings at the eligible postsecondary
6 institutions predictable, structured, and more flexible to meet student scheduling needs. to evaluate
7 whether courses are offered in a predictable, structured, and flexible manner that meets the scheduling
8 needs of all student types, including adults. The policy eligible postsecondary institutions shall facilitate
9 opportunities for students to take required courses in a timely manner and for. The policy shall also
10 encourage the institutions to enable students to begin courses outside of the traditional academic
11 schedules in order to improve time to completion. The policy shall further make courses accessible to
12 working students and consistently available outside of regular work hours.

13 (g) Each eligible postsecondary institution shall establish and submit to the council on
14 postsecondary education for approval a work plan to implement with an effective date no later than
15 September 1, 2020 a clearly structured, coherent and guided pathway program available to all entering
16 students for purposes of improving students' outcomes and reducing time to attain degrees. Work plans
17 submitted by all eligible postsecondary institutions shall do the following:

18 (1) Simplify students' choices with Provide default program maps developed by faculty and
19 advisors for all academic and vocational programs that show students a clear pathway to completion
20 within two (2) academic years for an associate degree program and four (4) years for a bachelor's degree
21 program;

22 (2) Ensure student advising and support services are available to help students transitioning from
23 high school, exploring academic fields, choosing a major, and developing a comprehensive academic plan
24 so as to remain on track to graduate on time;

25 (3) Redesign traditional remediation to become an "on-ramp" to a program of study, which helps
26 students explore academic and career options from the beginning of their college experience, to align

1 math and other foundational coursework with a student’s program of study, and to integrate and
2 contextualize instructions to build academic and nonacademic foundation skills throughout the college-
3 level curriculum, particularly in program “gateway” courses;

4 (4) Implement procedures and systems, supported by appropriate technology, to monitor students’
5 progress toward completing their academic plans, to identify students who are at risk of not progressing in
6 a program, and to intervene promptly with advising and other academic supports to help students resume
7 their progress or revise their plans; and

8 (5) Embed academic and nonacademic supports throughout student programs to promote student
9 learning and persistence.

10 (h) Each eligible postsecondary institution shall utilize evidence-based ~~assessment and placement~~
11 practices that incorporate multiple student performance measures to improve outcomes for underprepared
12 students, ~~which measures shall include, but not be limited to, overall grade point averages and grades in~~
13 high school courses.

14 (i) The Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner shall maintain and publish data on the state’s
15 postsecondary system. The eligible postsecondary institutions shall, on a quarterly basis, assist the Office
16 in reporting ~~transmit~~ the following data elements, disaggregated by institution, race/ethnicity,
17 program/major enrollment, enrollment status, and income level, including Pell status, to the Office:

18 (1) Average net cost of attendance;

19 (2) Retention by term or year;

20 (3) Short- and long-term wage effects;

21 (4) Cumulative college-level credit hours attempted and earned;

22 (5) Remedial and gateway course enrollment and completion;

23 (6) Transfer credit(s) earned by students transferring into the institution;

24 (7) Graduation rates;

25 (8) Time and Credits to earning a credential; and

1 (9) Any other data as determined necessary for regular review and analysis by the council on
2 postsecondary education to accomplish the goals articulated in § 16-107-2. This data should be regularly
3 available on the Postsecondary Commissioner’s website for public use.

4 **§ 16-107-11. Eligibility for child care assistance.**

5 (a) Recipient students may qualify for child care assistance administered by the department of
6 human services for appropriate child care pursuant to §40-5.2-20 (b).

7 (b) The department of human services shall promulgate rules, regulations and procedures to
8 facilitate access to child care assistance for recipient students who are eligible pursuant to §40-5.2-20(b)

9 **SECTION 4.** Section 16-56-6 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-56 entitled “Postsecondary
10 Student Financial Assistance” is hereby amended to read as follows:

11 **§ 16-56-6. Need-based grants.**

12 (a) Amount of funds allocated. The commissioner of postsecondary education shall allocate
13 annually the appropriation for need-based scholarships and grants. ~~Of the total amount appropriated for~~
14 ~~need-based scholarship and grants, the lesser of twenty percent (20%) or two million dollars (\$2,000,000)~~
15 ~~shall be distributed to qualified students attending participating, independent, non-profit, higher education~~
16 ~~institutions in Rhode Island. The remainder of funds shall be limited to public higher education~~
17 ~~institutions in Rhode Island. As part of the annual budget submission, the office of postsecondary~~
18 ~~commissioner shall include a plan of how the need-based scholarship and grant funds will be allocated to~~
19 ~~each public institution receiving funds pursuant to this chapter and how the funds will be distributed to~~
20 ~~students attending independent, non-profit institutions.~~

21 (b) Eligibility of individuals. Eligibility for need-based grants and scholarships shall be
22 determined by the office of the postsecondary commissioner.

23 (c) Number and terms of awards. The number of awards to be granted in any one fiscal year shall
24 be contingent upon the funds allocated to this section.

25 **SECTION 5.** This article shall take effect upon passage.