

Federal Basic Grant funds may dry up

WASHINGTON (AP) — The government's largest student aid program has run out of money and, unless Congress comes up with extra funds, more than 1.2 million needy college students will lose an average of \$160 they had counted on receiving this year.

"The situation is very serious," said Peter Voigt, who heads the Basic Educational Opportunity Grants (BEOG) program in the U.S. Office of Education.

The tight-money economy and unusually large higher-education enrollment increases last fall combined to produce an unprecedented demand on grant funds this

year, he said. The program had surpluses the previous two years.

If Congress fails to allow the program to draw an advance of \$160 million on next year's appropriation, or to pass a supplemental appropriation, he said, "We will have to ask institutions to reduce every award by 20 per cent which would, of course, cause chaos."

That would cut the average grant during the 1975-76 school year from about \$800 to \$640. Grants can go up to a maximum of \$1,400 for the neediest students.

Voigt said the program had only \$820 million to spend on grants this year, but he

expects demands to approach \$1 billion.

Applications were being received at the rate of 40,000 a week last October and November and still are coming in at the rate of 15,000 to 20,000 a week, he said. Applications for the current school year will be accepted until March 15.

Applications are now available for the next school year when, for the first time, grants will be available for freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors in most post-secondary institutions.

During the first year of the program, grants were made to about 170,000 freshmen and about \$60 million of the \$110 mil-

lion appropriated was unspent. The second year, when both freshmen and sophomores were eligible, a total of 574,000 grants was made but about \$182 million out of \$529 million was unspent.

At the present time, Voigt said, about 800 colleges and post-secondary schools have not received grants for their students and will receive only 33 per cent of their requested amounts. Without more money, he said, all 5,500 institutions will have to cut all grants 20 per cent.

"I certainly don't think the administration considers that to be a viable option," he said.

Cuts threaten grant program

By JOYCE DeMONNIN
Of the Emerald

The Basic Educational Opportunity Grant (BEOG) fund has gone in the red and unless more funds can be appropriated, University students may have their grant reduced by 20 per cent or more during spring term, according to Carol Richards, assistant director of financial aid.

The University acts as a distributor for the BEOG, but the student's eligibility rating and the actual funds come from the federal government, Richards explained.

However, the individual schools are expected to submit an estimated need for BEOG funds for each fiscal year, she said.

This fall, the financial aid office had an expected need of \$411,950 for BEOG funds. But according to Richards, a \$369,494 additional amount was requested from the federal Office of Education (OE) to cover the amount of money needed for eligible students this year.

"We were always told not to over-estimate our need (for BEOG funds). The OE assured us (the financial aid office) that all we had to do was notify them of the extra need and they would pay us for it," Richards said.

When the financial aid office notified the OE of the need for additional funds, Richards claimed, assurances were given that those funds would be made available.

Richards said the financial aid office has not been notified of any cutbacks but said that if there are no funds, she did not see how the grants could be disbursed.

"I'm not surprised that the BEOG funds are out if every school doubled the number of recipients eligible over their prediction," Richards said.

She attributes the miscalculations to the larger number of students who are now eligible for the grants and to the larger number of people who are aware about the BEOG program.

Richards said that next year the BEOG will be available to all undergraduates which will further strain the request for funds.

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