

COLLEGE: Recipients required to pay \$50 per term as a co-payment

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Zollman said the college has already created a section with information about Oregon Promise on its website. She said the new grant could help many students.

"If students are thinking about coming to Blue Mountain Community College, the Oregon Promise might be a way to help pay for that," she said. "Not everyone will qualify, but it is an opportunity for those who are eligible to receive some additional dollars to go to college."

The students must first complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and accept any federal and state grants available, such as the Pell Grant and Oregon Opportunity Grant. These grants do not have to be paid back, and students are not required to take out student loans that may also be available to qualify for the Oregon Promise grant.

Students cannot have already completed more than 90 college credit hours and must enroll in courses required for an associate degree, a program in career and technical education or one-year curriculum for students transferring to another college.

If a student receives an Oregon Promise grant, he or she is required to pay \$50 per term as a co-payment. If federal and state grants already cover the full cost of tuition, however, a student can actually receive \$1,000 each year to use for other college expenses, such as transportation, books and room and board.

As long as students maintain a cumulative college GPA of at least 2.5, make satisfactory academic progress, complete a FAFSA each year and enroll at least half time each term for at least three terms per school year, they remain eligible for the Oregon Promise grant after their first year.

Oregon Promise applications must be completed by March 1, but White-Zollman recommended students finish them early because the funding

could potentially run out. The applications are available at oregonpromise.org. She said, however, the required FAFSA for the 2016-17 school year cannot be completed until Jan. 1, 2016.

At a College Nights event in Umatilla Wednesday, BMCC's Student Financial Assistance Director Yadira Gonzalez said people should not wait until after they have filed their taxes to complete the FAFSA because grant funding, such as the Oregon Opportunity Grant, often runs out in February. She also said in a recent year 821,000 people eligible to complete the FAFSA failed to do so, missing out on about \$3 billion in free grant funding to attend college.

White-Zollman said the college is anticipating an increase in FAFSA applications and enrollment but is not sure what the first year will bring.

"We're only the second state in the country to really implement something like this," she said. "Tennessee implemented a similar program last year. They saw a very large increase in FAFSA applications. The preliminary reports are showing that all community colleges in Tennessee saw a 6 percent enrollment increase."

In addition to the free grant money, students may also be eligible to apply for a wide variety of scholarships. At the College Nights event, Umatilla High School Counselor Dee Lorence said oregonstudentaid.gov allows students to apply for many scholarships at one site. She also recommended fastweb.com, collegeboard.com, scholarships.com and careerinfonet.org. Lorence also said students should check with their counselors before applying to a college or taking an SAT or ACT test, because they may qualify for fee waivers.

White-Zollman said students or families who have questions about Oregon Promise can contact the college financial aid office, 541-278-5759 or finaid@bluecc.edu.

OBAMA: Ended with words of praise for Schimmel and the panel

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played alongside her older sister, Shoni, averaged 7.3 points, 3.8 assists and 3.4 rebounds per game despite her height of five-foot-six.

"Jude can really ball," he said. "She and her sister have made all of Indian Country really proud."

The panel engaged the president in an array of serious topics during the session — stereotyping and racism in schools, equal opportunity to succeed in college, nurturing Native culture, deplorable housing and living conditions on some reservations, childhood obesity and diabetes and suicide.

Obama explored ideas and encouraged the panel members throughout the session and praised their determination.

"Courage is in your blood," he told them.

Near the end of the ques-



AP Photo/Evan Vucci

Audience members reach out to shake hands with President Barack Obama during the 2015 White House Tribal Nations Conference, on Thursday in Washington.

tion-and-answer period, Schimmel read an online query to the president. What is he doing "to make sure the next administration pays attention to Native voices?"

Obama grinned. "I'm really trying to make sure (the next pres-

ident) is a Democrat," he said.

When the topic of suicide arose, the tone grew somber. Obama asked the panel for observations and recommendations. One panel member said four of her friends had killed themselves. Another shared

that talking about suicide is taboo in Indian Country, especially among elders, which makes it difficult for youth to be open about feelings of despair and depression.

"A lot of Native Americans are scared to speak about it," Schimmel told Obama. "We need to let them know that isn't the answer."

The session wasn't all sober and serious. The president, in a relaxed mood, injected moments of humor.

"Congress doesn't always agree with me," he said, at one point. "I don't know if you've noticed."

Obama ended with words of praise for Schimmel and the panel.

"You guys inspire me," he said.

Contact Kathy Aney at kaney@eastoregonian.com or call 541-966-0810

OFFICER: Still searching for full-time police chief

Continued from 1A

Thompson makes \$3,679 a month after the city council in July raised pay for police. He also is under a probationary period, which means the city could fire him without cause.

Pilot Rock's other officer, Daniel Badal, has to complete the state's public safety academy and earn his police certification. Without that, there is little he can do to respond to calls for service.

Pendleton police, then, is sending Cpl. Ryan M. Lehnert to work in Pilot Rock for 40 hours a week per a written agreement. Carnes also said the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office is lending a police presence to city streets.

"They have all been

awesome about answering calls," she said. "That's been so very helpful."

And Pilot Rock continues to search for a full-time police chief, which it has lacked since February. The last candidate accepted the job in September, only to die days later from cancer. Carnes said the city is interviewing a new candidate who looks promising. Pilot Rock is offering to pay its top cop \$5,000-\$5,750 a month, depending on experience.

Carnes said the police situation has been frustrating and she would not be surprised if some folks are thinking it might be time for the city to again contract with a larger agency for the work.

For now, though, Pilot Rock is keeping it in house.

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