

Introduction

This publication commemorates the twenty-fifth anniversary of Pennsylvania's Act 101 Program, initiated in 1971 by passage of the Higher Education Equal Opportunity Act. The following pages are designed to celebrate the program's rich history and to inform the public of its impact and continuing importance in Pennsylvania.

The "Act 101 Story" is one of educational innovation by creative leaders dedicated to ideals of equal educational opportunity. A brief history traces the progress of the program from its inception in the Pennsylvania legislature, through its implementation at 31 institutions of higher education, to its expansion and impact on the lives of thousands of Pennsylvania residents. A biographical sketch of the Honorable K. Leroy Irvis, the Father of Act 101, presents the remarkable man who introduced the legislation and championed the program for many years. Although retired from the legislature, Mr. Irvis' political perspective provides valued guidance in his candid conversation with Dr. Karl Lewis. Drs. Alonzo Cavin and Karl Lewis, two of the charter program directors, are recognized for their 25 years of commitment to Act 101.

The Act 101 Program extends access to higher education to low income Pennsylvania residents and provides support services to enhance their academic development and success. Each Act 101 Program is unique in that its design addresses both the mission of its host institution and that of the Higher Education Equal Opportunity Act. A brief description of the 76 programs and their graduates and a summary of program services bring the history up to the present.

Studies indicate that Act 101 programs improve the retention and graduation rates of program participants. Assisted by tutoring, counseling, curricular innovation, and cultural enrichment activities, many Act 101 students emerge as campus leaders, graduate with academic distinction, and achieve their career goals.

Above all, the comments of students whose lives were touched by the program capture the essence of the Act 101 Program and most vividly tell the "Act 101 Story." The major themes of this story are: access to higher education, successful transition to college, skill development, a supportive environment in which to excel, and positive life changes.

"I never would have gone to college if it were not for Act 101 recruiting me."

– Kevin Carroll

"Act 101 made the transition from displaced homemaker to honor roll student less overwhelming." – Marge Denno

"[Act 101] gave me the foundation to help me achieve in the corporate world."

– Rafael Fernandez

"Act 101 remembers that a student is more than a number. They take care of the heart as well as the mind." – Patricia Mensch

"[The staff] reinforced my confidence in my abilities, my strength of mind over society's 'isms,' the beauty of my uniqueness, gifts and talents, and desire to reach back and help others in need." – Denise Carter-Onyirimba

The graduates confirm that *Act 101 Works!*

– Louise V. Burroughs, Ed.D.

No. 101
AN ACT

HB 1213

Providing for Commonwealth support for institutions of higher education to furnish learning and special counseling services for undergraduate students whose cultural, economic and educational disadvantages impair their initial ability to pursue successfully higher education opportunities, and making an appropriation.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. Short Title. —This act shall be known and may be cited as the “Higher Education Equal Opportunity Act.”

Section 2. Legislative Findings. —The General Assembly finds and declares that because of financial, home and community environmental conditions, students with substantial potential for success in college and for future leadership in the community are unable to pursue a higher education and attain their full educational capability. In order to combat effectively the forces which prevent these students from pursuing a higher education, a variety of programs and methods must be tried.

This act is designed to provide funds to institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth for the purpose of offering programs to enhance the chances of disadvantaged students to achieve their educational goals.

Section 3. Definitions. —The following words and phrases shall have the following meanings:

(1) “Institutions of higher education” shall mean those post secondary institutions in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania authorized to award degrees.

(2) “Student” shall mean any bona fide resident of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania who has been admitted as a full-time student to an institution of higher education and who is economically disadvantaged in accordance with criteria to be established by the State Board of Education.

Section 4. Higher Education Equal Opportunity Program. —The Secretary of Education may, in conformance with such policies, standards, rules and regulations adopted by the State Board of Education, contract with institutions of higher education for the awarding of higher education equal opportunity program grants. Programs for which such grants may be awarded shall include, but not be limited to; remedial learning services, counseling services

or tutorial services. Funds provided by this act may not be used to pay tuition, room and board or other institutional costs or fees incurred by students.

Section 5. Application for Approval of Grant. —Each institution of higher education requesting a grant to provide a program, as proposed in this act, shall submit an application in such form and at such time as the Secretary of Education may require. An application for a grant shall include a description of the nature and the method by which all funds granted will be used by the applicant institution to contribute to the provision, maintenance or improvement of programs designed to accomplish the goals of this act.

Section 6. Appropriation. —The sum of one million dollars (\$1,000,000), or as much thereof as may be necessary is hereby appropriated to the Department of Education for the purposes and administration of this act: Provided, however, That of the total sum appropriated no more than four percent of that amount may be used for administration of the act: And further provided, That no more than ten per cent of the total sum appropriated shall be granted to any single institution of higher education.

Section 7. Effective date. —This act shall take effect July 1, 1971.

APPROVED —The 31st day of August, A. D. 1971.

MILTON J. SHAPP

The foregoing is a true and correct copy of Act of the General Assembly No. 101.



Secretary of the Commonwealth