Thlopthlocco Tribal Town of Oklahoma

Higher Education Program

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Thlopthlocco Tribal Town Higher Education Program is to encourage and financially assist tribal members to seek higher education. An overall goal is to expand educational opportunities as a means for individual tribal members to reach cultural, economic and social prosperity and to contribute to protecting and advancing the sovereignty and way of life of the Thlopthlocco people.

AUTHORITY

Scholarship assistance shall be budgeted from the Motor Fuels Tax for all In-State students. All higher education funds will be managed separately as the "Thlopthlocco Tribal Town Higher Education Program." The Business Committee authorizes the Social Services Program Manager to fully administer the Higher Education Program.

The award shall not annually exceed the following amounts:

- Undergraduate - $2,000 per academic year
- Graduate/Doctoral - $3,200 per academic year
- Adult Vocational Training (AVT) - $1,600 per academic year

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

- **Time Limits**:
  Undergraduate/Graduate/Doctoral:
  Five (5) semesters for an Associate's degree, five (5) semesters for a Bachelor's degree, six (6) semesters for a Master's degree, and ten (10) semesters for Doctorate/Professional degree.

*Higher Education students that elect to attend classes part time will be allowed double the time allotted for full time students to complete their coursework.
Adult Vocational Training:
Two (2) years for termination of programs and Three (3) years for nursing programs. Limit of (2) certificated programs based upon completion of the 1st program.

- **Completion of Credits to maintain enrollment status**:
  Members receiving awards are required to complete the credits per term for enrollment status they were funded by the Thlopthlocco Tribal Town. This includes full-time, three quarters (3/4) time, half (1/2) time, and less than half time.

- **Enrollment status for undergraduates**:
  Full-time: 12 credits and above, i.e. minimum of 12 credits - $1,000
  Three-quarters (3/4) time: 9-11 credits, i.e. minimum of 9 credits - $800
  Half (1/2) time: 6-8 credits, i.e. minimum of 6 credits - $600
  Less than half time: 1-5 credits - $400. Must complete all credits attempted.

- **Enrollment status for graduate students**:
  Student must provide documentation from their college Financial Aid Office for the definition of full-time, three quarters (3/4) time, half (1/2) time, and less than half-time for their course of study.

- **Enrollment status for Adult Vocational Training students**:
  There is no part-time status under the AVT program. Students must maintain full-time status as determined by their institution.
  (2-4 months $400, 5-7 months $800, 8-10 months $1200, 11 or 13 months $1600)

- **GPA Requirement**:
  The student must complete the semester with a 2.5 GPA or higher for all undergraduate degree and AVT programs or the GPA requirements of the department for the graduate or doctorate level of study.

- **Funding Priority**:
  Those students who meet their GPA and credit hour requirements will receive top priority for future assistance.

- **Academic Degrees**:
  Funding is only for a student's first Associates, first Bachelors, first Masters and first Doctorate/Professional.

- **Vocational Technical Degrees**:
  Funding is for student's Vocational Technical Degree. Student is allowed up to (2) certificated programs based upon the completion of the 1st.

- **Repeat Credits**:
  Credits previously funded cannot be used to fulfill the enrollment status (full-time, ¾ time, ½ time or less than ½ time) for subsequent terms. This could affect the student's level of award in subsequent semesters.

- **Payments**:
  Awards will be issued directly to the student.

- **Check Issuance**:
  Checks will be issued as funds are available.

- **Early Check Release**:
  There will be no early checks released.

- **Funding levels**:
  Undergraduate
  Full-time: $1,000/semester
  ¾ time: $800/semester
  ½ time: $600/semester
  Less than half time: $400/semester

Graduate/Doctoral
Full-time: $1,600/semester
¾ time: $1,200/semester
½ time: $800/semester
Less than half time: $400/semester

APPLICATION

- **Tribal Enrollment**:
  Each applicant must be an enrolled member of the Thlopthlocco Tribal Town and provide a copy of Tribal membership card.

- **Accredited Schools**:
  Each applicant must be accepted for enrollment in an accredited college or university (includes accredited online colleges or universities), vocational training institutions.

- **Submission**:
  Applications will be submitted to the Social Services Department.

- **Deadlines**:
  Fall Semester – August 31st
  Summer Semester – May 31st
  Spring Semester – January 31st

- **Complete Application Requirement**:
  Incomplete applications will not be accepted. As a post-secondary student, you are responsible to ensure that all required documents are on file and completed with the Higher Education Program.

- **Current Term Funding Only**:
  The student must submit the required documents for the current semester they plan to attend an institution of higher learning. Retroactive requests will not be accepted.

- **Student Types**:
  Continuing students are ones who were funded in the previous term and are working on the same degree program. New students are ones starting a new degree program or continuing a degree program after a break in study. Transfer students are ones who have started a degree program, but are changing institutions of study.

- **Required Documents:**
  First time applicants shall submit the following:
  1) Completed program application
  2) Copy of Tribal Citizenship card
  3) Admission letter of Acceptance
  4) Class Schedule
  5) Education Course Plan
  6) Copy of Student Aid Report (FAFSA)
  7) Official High School Transcripts/GED Certificate with Scores or Official College/University Transcripts (if applicable)

  Continuing students submit the following:
  1) Official transcript, must include student name, institution name, semester, grades and credits completed and attempted.
  2) Class schedule for the next semester, must include student name, institution name, number of hours registered, schedule of classes.
  3) Copy of Tuition and Fees.

REPAYMENT

All students receiving Higher Education funds will be required to sign a certification that they will repay Thlopthlocco Tribal Town (reimbursement tracked to the appropriate funding source) the full amount of the award being requested if they do not complete the semester they are funded, i.e. not complete all credits ("dropout"), or they knowingly provide false information to secure funding. Such certification will be binding and may be executed or canceled according to the academic requirements and academic disqualifications. In cases of an "extreme emergency" that affects a student's ability to complete the semester, the student will request emergency leave of absence from his/her school and contact the Department Manager.

PROBATION< DISQUALIFICATION< AND REINSTATEMENT

Students must be aware that they are expected to meet the requirements of "Satisfactory Academic Progress" once they receive tribal funding.

- **Good Standing:**
  Student must meet the following minimum standards:
  1) Completion of required credit hours for which the student was funded. (I.E., if funded for 12 credit hours, the student must have completed 12 credit hours at the end of the semester.)
  2) Maintain a minimum of a 2.5 GPA

- **Restrictions:**
  If a student fails to remain in Good Standing, the following restrictions will be made:

  GPA:
  - The first time a student's grade point average (GPA) falls below requirements, the student will be placed on ACADEMIC PROBATION.
  - The student will be funded for the next term with a letter of Academic Warning sent to the student and placed in the student file.

  Credit Minimum:
  - If the student makes the minimum GPA but is below the credit minimum for their enrollment status, they will be placed on ACADEMIC PROBATION and allowed one (1) semester to complete the credits(s) that dropped them below their enrollment status.
  - Credits previously funded cannot be used to fulfill the enrollment status (full-time, ¾ time, ½ time, less than ½ time) for subsequent terms. *This could affect the student's level of scholarship award in subsequent semesters.*

- **Disqualification:**
  - Students who have been on ACADEMIC PROBATION (for credits or GPA) and fail to meet the minimum requirements the following term will forfeit all Higher Education funding and will be placed on SUSPENSION.

- **Reinstatement:**
  The student will be reconsidered only after they have achieved the minimum qualifications:

Removal from Academic Probation:

1) Complete the credits they have been paid to complete for enrollment status (full-time, ¾ time, ½ time, and less than ½ time).
2) Maintain a minimum of 2.5 GPA semester following disqualification.

Removal from Suspension:

1) A student may have to pay for a semester with his or her own resources in order to complete credits and reach minimum 2.5 GPA.
2) Provide proof of official reinstatement from the college for admission and financial aid.

APPEAL PROCESS

- **Non-appeal issues:**
  Higher Education Staff has determined that the following issues cannot be appealed:
  - Exceeding funding Time Limits.
    Reason: Limited resources for tribal students who have not exceeded time limit.
  - Probation or Suspension of funding due to academic standing, i.e. GPA or credit probation.
    Reason: This is a requirement of the student's school
  - Funding for a 2nd Associates, 2nd Bachelors, 2nd Masters and 2nd Doctorate/Professional.
    Reason: Limited financial resources needed to support 1st degree students.
  - Attendance at a non-accredited school.
    Reason: Need to ensure students are eligible for federal financial aid and that their credits will transfer.
  - Retroactive requests.
    Reason: Limited financial resources and application is required before or during the term one is requesting funding.
  - Credits previously funded.
    Reason: Limited financial resources to fund a student to take same class more than once.

- Academic Probation, Disqualification and Reinstatement.
  Reason: Must first go through the process outlined in Section: Probation, Disqualification and Reinstatement.

The following line of authority is established to adequately address funding denial, appeals and complaints:

- *Funding Denial:*
  1st Step: Write a letter to the Department Manager detailing justification to reconsider denial and change to approval. If denial is due to an incomplete application, the student may provide item(s) needed.
  2nd Step: Department Manager will respond in five (5) business days to set up a personal meeting or phone call to discuss letter and gather more information.
  3rd Step: Department Manager will issue a written determination on appeal within five (5) days of meeting or phone call.
  4th Step: If the denial stands and the student wants to continue the appeal process, the Department Manager will forward all documents, to include the students file, appeal letter, meeting or phone call notes and written determination letter to the Business Committee for review. A meeting will be set up with the student within (5) day from the date of forwarding. At this time, the student can provide any additional documentation as needed.
  5th Step: The Business Committee will issue a final determination on the appeal within ten (10) days of the meeting.
- *Complaints:*
  1st Step: Contact the Department Manager in person, by phone or in writing (email or letter). The manager will work with the student to address the complaint.
  2nd Step: Complaints needing further review or action will be referred by the Department Manager to the Tribal Administrator.

DEGREE INCENTIVES

Incentives for the completion of a degree will be given to each student who has completed their degree programs. The ONLY form of verification acceptable to receive these incentives will be the certified diploma. 6-month time limit to turn in diploma for incentive.

Associates/Vo-Tech:	$500
Undergraduate:	$750
Master's Level	$1000
Ph.D. Level	$1,500

SUPERSEDES

This Thlopthlocco Tribal Town Higher Education Program "Plan of Operation" supersedes any previous policies and resolutions related to the Higher Education program.

Approved by the Business Committee on _____