

Act 267 of the 1989 Regular Session.

Act 267

HB1146

By: Representatives Stephens and McGinnis

"AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO COLLECT AND REPORT RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES FOR STUDENTS ENROLLED AT STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES; TO INCLUDE RATES FOR STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATE IN INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Accurate information about the retention and graduation rates of students at state-supported colleges and universities is needed in order for the State Board of Higher Education, institutional boards of trustees, the General Assembly, and institutional faculty members and administrators to make informed decisions related to the coordination, governance, financing, and academic policies of higher education in Arkansas. Special attention to the retention and graduation rates of students who participate in intercollegiate athletics is needed because the percentage of student athletes who graduate is lower than for students who do not participate in athletics at many institutions throughout the nation.

SECTION 2. (a) The Arkansas Department of Higher Education shall in consultation with the colleges and universities, recommend a system for the collection of information as to the retention and graduation rates of students at state-supported colleges and universities to the State Board of Higher Education, the Governor, the Joint Interim Committee on Education of the Arkansas General Assembly, and the colleges and universities by May 31, 1990.

(b) Subject to an adequate appropriation for the personnel and equipment necessary to implement the system recommended under subsection (a), the Arkansas Department of Higher Education shall collect the information described in said subsection and report its findings to the State Board of Higher Education, the Governor, the Joint Interim Committee on Education of the Arkansas General Assembly, and the colleges and universities by December 15 of each year, beginning in 1993.

(c) In addition to retention and graduation rates for all students, the report shall also include the retention and graduation rates of all students who participate in intercollegiate athletics. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (b), beginning in the fall semester of 1989, colleges and universities shall commence the collection of information as to the retention and graduation rates of all students who participate in intercollegiate athletics and shall report this information to the Department of Higher Education by October 15 of each year beginning in 1990, on forms required by national athletic associations such as the N.C.A.A. academic reporting forms or, on forms to be developed by the Department in consultation with the colleges and universities for those schools in national associations not having comparable standardized reporting forms. The N.C.A.A. and the N.A.I.A. academic reporting forms shall be sufficient to meet this requirement.

(d) Except as provided in subsection (c), officials of state colleges and universities shall provide to the Department of Higher Education by October 15 of each year, beginning in 1993, the information requested by the Department.

(e) The State Board of Higher Education is hereby authorized to promulgate rules and regulations consistent with the intent and purpose of this act.

SECTION 3. All provisions of this act of a general and permanent nature are amendatory to the Arkansas Code of 1987 Annotated and the Arkansas Code Revision Commission shall incorporate the same in the Code.

SECTION 4. All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this act are hereby repealed.

SECTION 5. EMERGENCY. It is hereby found and determined by the General Assembly that current guidelines regarding the developing and reporting of accurate information in relation to the retention and graduation rates of students and student athletes attending state-supported institutions of higher education are inconsistent and inadequate and informed decisions regarding coordination, governance, financing, and academic policies of higher education would be significantly aided by the adoption of the provisions of this Act. Therefore, an emergency is hereby declared to exist and this Act being necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval.

APPROVED: March 1, 1989

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