



LB 334 Testimony
Marshall A. Hill, Executive Director
March 18, 2013

- The Coordinating Commission administers the Nebraska Opportunity Grant, the state's financial-aid program that supports low-income postsecondary students attending Nebraska colleges and universities. Recipients must be Nebraska residents and low income.
- In 2011-12, the Commission awarded \$14.7 million to 14,239 students attending Nebraska colleges and universities. The average award was \$1,031.
- The Opportunity Grant is funded through a combination of lottery funds (\$8.3 million) and state appropriations (\$6.4 million). The Opportunity Grant has received no increase in state general funds appropriations since 2007. The only increase has come from the lottery portion of funding. The lottery funding stream is inherently unpredictable, as it relies on variable lottery revenue.
- Even with an overall increase in funding during the past 10 years, we can still support only 24 percent of Nebraska students who qualify for Opportunity Grant funding. Nebraska ranks 33rd in the country in the amount of need-based financial aid per full-time equivalent undergraduate student.
- An increase in state appropriations for the Nebraska Opportunity Grant, as proposed in this bill, would help ensure that more of our neediest students receive the financial support necessary for them to pursue postsecondary education.