

**PUBLIC AGENDA FOR
COLLEGE AND CAREER SUCCESS**

Submitted for: Action.

Summary: This item presents the final draft of the public agenda, a product of a yearlong planning process initiated by the Illinois General Assembly and conducted by the Public Agenda Task Force and the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

Action Requested: That the Illinois Board of Higher Education approves the Public Agenda for College and Career Success as the master plan for Illinois higher education.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**PUBLIC AGENDA FOR
COLLEGE AND CAREER SUCCESS**

The **Public Agenda for College and Career Success** is the product of a yearlong planning process initiated by the Illinois General Assembly and conducted by the Public Agenda Task Force and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). The Task Force, appointed by the Governor and chaired by IBHE Chairwoman Carrie J. Hightman, was directed to study the challenges and opportunities facing higher education, the state's workforce needs, demographic trends, and higher education funding and student financial aid. At the Task Force's completion of this study, they were asked to provide recommendations for: statewide goals for higher education, sector and institutional roles and responsibilities, accountability measures, and coordination strategies.

The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), a nonprofit public policy research center based in Boulder, Colorado, provided counsel, research, and technical assistance for the planning process. The Illinois Board of Higher Education has statutory responsibility for higher education master planning in Illinois.

The purpose of the planning initiative was to develop an action agenda, based on quantifiable evidence, to address the urgent education, workforce, social, and economic needs of the State by setting priorities, developing policies, and allocating resources.

The Public Agenda Task Force embraced five principles to guide its deliberations on a master plan for higher education:

- Higher education is a public good, and therefore a public responsibility.
- Priorities, policies, and budgets should align with state goals.
- Institutional and sector missions should be supported while those missions also align with state goals.
- Adequate and equitable P-20 funding, deployed effectively and efficiently, is essential.
- A comprehensive P-20 student information system is vital for sound policymaking and accountability.

Several themes emerged during the process through an NCHEMS study of Illinois' public needs, six Task Force meetings held at independent institutions, regional public forums held at 17 community colleges across the state, four legislative briefings, and six hearings held at public universities:

- There are large disparities in educational attainment by race/ethnicity, disability, and region of Illinois.
- Affordability of a college education is in jeopardy.

- Illinois needs to increase the number of people with college degrees and other postsecondary credentials, particularly in critical needs occupations and in regions outside major metropolitan areas.
- The state should strengthen links between economic development needs and the research and innovation capacity of its higher education institutions.

The Public Agenda was developed through a transparent and collaborative process involving hundreds of stakeholders in the P-20 system, legislators, students, faculty, administrators, and trustees, labor and business groups, state agencies, and civic leaders throughout Illinois. Some 800 individuals participated in various meetings, forums, and hearings. Comments were received about drafts of the Public Agenda via e-mail and a special portal on the IBHE website.

The Task Force agreed that the Public Agenda should consist of four goals:

Goal 1: Increase educational attainment to match best-performing U.S. states and world countries.

Goal 2: Ensure college affordability for students, families, and taxpayers.

Goal 3: Increase number of quality postsecondary credentials to meet the demands of the economy.

Goal 4: Better integrate Illinois' educational, research, and innovation assets to meet economic needs of the state and its regions.

On November 21, 2008, the Task Force unanimously endorsed the **Public Agenda for College and Career Success** for transmittal to the Illinois Board of Higher Education for its approval.

With the addition of sourcing information and other appropriate appendices and final editing, graphic design, and printing, the Public Agenda is submitted for Board approval.

The Public Agenda Task Force recommends the adoption of the following resolution:

*That the Illinois Board of Higher Education hereby approves the **Public Agenda for College and Career Success**, presented in the attached report, as the master plan for Illinois higher education.*