

## Applegate's Update

### Myth Busting in Higher Education

Recent polling reported this week in the *New York Times* asked the public to guess the unemployment rate for four year college graduates ages 25-34 compared to those without a four-year degree. Initial respondents providing open ended responses put the rate for college graduates at 20-30%; half believing it was higher than for non-graduates. Believing their poll must be flawed given the wildly incorrect responses the pollsters conducted two subsequent polls providing respondents the rate of unemployment for high school graduates (7.4%) and in one gave them multiple choice options from which to choose. The results were consistent and astonishing. However, given the amount of misinformation in the public domain about educational outcomes, they are not surprising. The more structured Google survey average estimate of unemployment rate was 9.2%. NYT reader's average was 6.5%. Consistently, more than half of respondents believed the unemployment rate was higher for college graduates than for those without a degree and higher even than for high school graduates. The correct answer by the way is 2.4%.

The 2.4% unemployment rate for college graduates is consistent with studies by Georgetown University and others showing (a) that the economy never lost jobs for four year college graduates even during the worst years of the Great Recession and there are several million more jobs available to these graduates today than there were even in the best days before the recession; and (b) that 97% of the 2.9 million good jobs (salaries greater than \$50K with benefits) created since 2010 (44% of all jobs created) went to college graduates. The latter findings bust another common myth: that good jobs are not there. Untrue, almost half of the jobs created since 2010 are good jobs. The Association of American Colleges and University (AAC&U) tracked humanities and social science four-year college graduates specifically showing a significant employment and earnings bump for that group that grows over time.

So why did so many people in these polls get it so wrong? Perhaps it is because the unusual anecdote trumps reality in the public mind: the man bites dog example. We hear about the college graduate working at a coffee shop and that drives our perception more than big picture data. Maybe it is because to realize that the talent demands of this economy demand a college credential forces hard policy decisions about what we fund and difficult individual decisions about what we must do. It is easier to cynically say something doesn't matter than to say it does and do the hard work to achieve what really matters. Of course we can (and in part should) blame the media which have eviscerated their education desks and, as in so many areas, tell us what produces clicks on a story rather than what informs us and helps us make good decisions. Whatever the case, as the authors note, "the more emotional narrative" of debt ridden unemployed college graduates has overtaken the real story.

Why is this important? Because these misconceptions are dangerous. They encourage parents, young people, and even adults in the workforce to forego college. They encourage states to disinvest in higher education. The result of these pernicious myths is many more people struggling economically with little chance for anything approaching a middle class life style and more states with stagnant per capita incomes, stubborn unemployment rates, and difficulty in attracting or retaining

employers who provide good jobs. In 2014-2015 54% of all the jobs advertised in Illinois required a bachelor's degree to even apply. Only about 20% of our workforce has one. What will these employers do if they cannot fill their talent needs?

Several years ago in another state where college aspirations were limited to too few I led design of a major state-wide campaign themed "Go Higher Kentucky, Education Pays." It was emulated in several other states across the region. I believe it contributed to Kentucky leading the nation in the first decade of this century in increases in college attainment. If these recent polls are to be believed it may be necessary to launch something similar again and nationally to cut through the noise that threatens to lead middle and low income citizens considering higher education for themselves or their children to make very bad decisions that threaten their futures.

As we anticipate action on state funding for higher education, it is important that the return on investment for Illinois citizens and Illinois' economic prosperity be the story line and the message about why getting a college education is a wise path forward.

## 60 x 2025



[Lewis and Clark Community College](#) will break ground on a new workforce building on the Godfrey campus later this year, thanks to a nearly \$3.25 million gift from the estate of local resident **Ed Weber**. College **President Dale Chapman** says the center will allow the college to expand its workforce programming and will provide

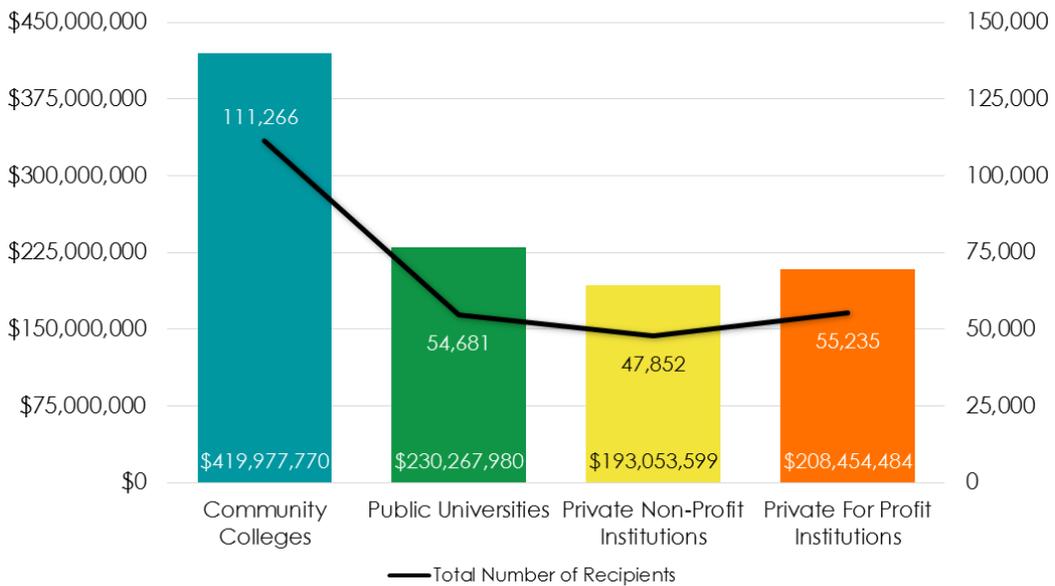
space for one of its largest workforce programs, welding technology. Since 2011, the program has produced 171 graduates with a certificate of completion in welding principles, 17 with a Certificate of Proficiency in welding technology and nine with an associate degree in applied arts in welding technology. Welding Program Coordinator **Travis Jumper** said the new center will allow the college to become an "Accredited Testing Facility" for the American Welding Society, which will permit the college to graduate students with nationally recognized welding certifications and to work with businesses throughout the St. Louis metro area to certify their employees. *(Rendering courtesy of AAIC, Inc.)*

## Increasing Affordability

**IBHE** Has issued its [Fiscal Year 2015 Tuition and Fee Waiver Report](#). The agency is required annually to compile information concerning tuition and fee waiver programs provided by the public universities in Illinois. Waivers are typically awarded at the undergraduate level to students with special talents or special financial needs. Graduate waivers typically are awarded to students serving as teaching or research assistants. In Fiscal Year 2015, public universities issued a total of 45,309 waivers to students at a value of \$465.7 million. In Fiscal Year 2014, public universities issued waivers at a value of \$451.7 million. Graduate student waivers account for the majority of waivers granted at Illinois public universities, with most of these being graduate teaching/research assistants. The complete report is available on the [IBHE website](#).

Recently released data from the **National Center for Education Statistics** (NCES) shows how **Pell Grant** funds were distributed in Illinois by sector, via student enrollment. The snapshot covers academic year 2013-14, when just over \$1.05 billion in Pell Grants were awarded to students who enrolled at postsecondary institutions in Illinois. Of this total, Illinois community colleges received the most (over \$419 million), followed by public universities (over \$230 million), private for-profit institutions (over \$208 million), and private not-for-profit institutions (over \$193 million). These funds were distributed to over 111,000 students who attended community colleges, over 55,000 who attended for-profit institutions, over 54,000 who attended public universities, and over 47,000 who attended private, not-for-profit institutions.

**2014 Pell Grant Distribution by Sector**



## Upcoming Events

The fourteenth **Illinois Education Research Council (IERC)** [Focus on Illinois Education Research Symposium](#) will be held on Thursday and Friday, September 29-30, 2016, at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Bloomington, IL. IERC invites proposals for paper or poster presentations. For poster presentations, works in progress are welcome as well as completed studies. This unique forum provides education practitioners, policy makers, and researchers the opportunity to learn from one another about education research from early childhood through higher education and the workforce and engage in rich dialogue. For more information visit the [IERC Symposium website](#). Proposals should be submitted to IERC **Research Associate [Jennifer Barnhart](#)** by June 17.



**ILLINOIS  
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The **National Network of State Teachers of the Year (NNSTOY) 2016 National Conference**, *Teachers Leading: Bridging Theory and Practice*, will take place on July 11-14 in Chicago. More information is available at [NNSTOY.org](http://NNSTOY.org).

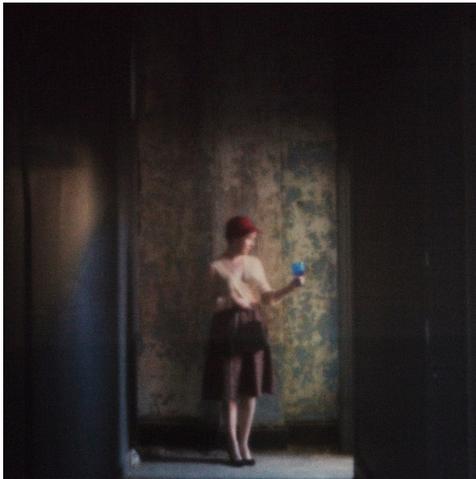
## People in the News

**Southern Illinois University** President **Randy Dunn** has named **Randall G. Pembroke, Ph.D.**, as the ninth chancellor in **Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's** history. The selection is pending formal **SIU Board of Trustees** approval, and Pembroke will officially assume his duties in early August. Pembroke has served as the vice president for academic affairs at Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas since January 2011. He has been the chief academic officer at Washburn working with faculty, staff, students and administrators from the College of Arts and Sciences, Schools of Applied Studies, Business, Law, and Nursing, the Washburn Institute of Technology, Mabee Library/Student Success Center and Academic Outreach. Pembroke earned an associate's degree from Lewis and Clark Community College before achieving both a bachelor's and master's in music education/piano performance from SIUE in 1978 and '80, respectively. He earned a doctorate in music education from Florida State University in 1984.



## IBHE Student Art Exhibition

**Katherine C. Clayton, Lincoln Christian University**



**The Blue Cup**



**She Waits**



**Trinity**



**Winter**

## Student Laureates

In each issue of *The Bulletin*, we will feature student laureates recognized by the Lincoln Academy of Illinois.

North Park University



**Carmen Velazquez-Alvarez**  
Hanford, CA

*Major: Conflict Transformation  
Studies*

Northeastern Illinois University



**Emily Fioramonti**  
Chicago, IL

*Major: Biology*

Northern Illinois University



**Kiranjit Gill**  
Palatine, IL

*Major: Political Science  
Minor: Business Innovation &  
Entrepreneurship*

## In Case You Missed It

A few articles and reports worth the read:

[Education Commission of the States/National Center for Higher Education](#)

[Management Systems](#): State policy leadership for the future, a special report, May 16, 2016.

[Chronicle of Higher Education](#): Illinois still hasn't passed a budget. Here's what that means for its public universities, June 2, 2016.

[New York Times](#): Higher education in Illinois is dying, June 3, 2016.

[WCIS-ABC](#): Educators say stop gap funding isn't enough for higher education, June 6, 2016.

[State Journal-Register](#): 44% of Southeast grads will be first-generation college students, June 6, 2016.

[WJBC-AM](#): Budget stalemate hits ISU program, June 7, 2016.

[WCIA-CBS](#): EIU predicts 5 – 10 years to recover, June 7, 2016.

[Chicago Tribune](#): Western Illinois University prepares to cut degree programs, June 7, 2016.

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