

## Applegate's Update

### IBHE Working to Make College Affordable in Illinois

When Illinois adopted the *Public Agenda for College and Career Success* as its 10 year strategic master plan for higher education in 2009, one of its four goals was to provide affordable college for Illinois residents. In 2014, half way through the strategic plan period, the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) used the affordability measures contained in that plan to assess how Illinois was progressing. The results of that analysis were presented at my first meeting as Executive Director. The results were troubling to say the least. Illinois' public two- and four-year colleges over those first five years of the plan had become **less affordable faster** for middle and low income families than almost any other state. Our affordability rankings for two- and four-year colleges dropped significantly. Community colleges' and universities' tuition and fees were taking ever bigger bites of middle and low family incomes. Certainly the decline was in part due to the decline of state investment in higher education. [A recent study](#) by DEMOS, a public policy organization, showed that nationally for public four-year colleges eighty percent of tuition increases were directly attributable to state disinvestment. However, the IBHE also knew more needed to be done to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our higher education system to contain costs for students. The IBHE focus is on **BOTH** increased state investment AND increased system productivity.

So, while redoubling its efforts to advocate for state support, the IBHE targeted system improvements through the creation of a special "affordability" action team made up of Board members and experts. That team recently released a set of recommendations that are aimed at restoring an affordable college experience for low income and middle class people in Illinois. The IBHE as an agency already has launched multiple efforts to implement those recommendations.

The first recommendation is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the business and academic sides of the system. IBHE is currently conducting a comprehensive study of the cost of public universities in Illinois compared to the cost of peer institutions around the country. It is examining what has been driving costs in the system over the last ten years (e.g., instructional needs, student supports, research, administration, and facilities maintenance). These findings will provide the basis for the launch of a "higher education efficiency and effectiveness" initiative in cooperation with the National Governors Association and the Governor's office to find ways to contain costs while improving student outcomes.

As part of this work the IBHE also is examining excessive regulatory demands and unfunded mandates placed on institutions over the years that add to costs for all students. Recommendations for policy changes to provide reasonable regulatory/mandate relief will be developed to enable public universities and colleges to focus resources on students.

The second recommendation suggests strategies to better communicate college options and financing opportunities to students and families. This work will enable

students to better match with colleges that meet their needs in an affordable way, reduce loan burdens, and better ensure low income students especially are able to access all of the financial supports for which they qualify.

The third recommendation of the affordability team is to expand the current work that IBHE is supporting to provide students with clear, efficient pathways to degrees with better student data and stronger completion advising to keep students on those paths. Across the country the implementation of these interventions, identified as ["game changers" by Complete College America](#), have dramatically improved students' on time completion without excess costly credits and eliminated success gaps for underrepresented and low income students.

The fourth recommendation calls on Illinois' policy makers to revisit the "Truth in Tuition" law passed in 2005. Illinois is the **only** state that requires its public universities to set first year tuition that must remain constant for students through their college career. While understanding the attractiveness of the predictability for students and their families such a policy brings, the team cited recent research that has shown that this policy has contributed to tuition increases during the period this policy was in place in Illinois that are 20 percent greater than in states that do not have this policy. At the least these findings suggest a second look.

Lastly, it is recommended that Illinois look at innovations in other states that have redesigned their financial supports for college students. Illinois' need-based Monetary Award Program (MAP) has long been a national model. However, its ability to support student college completion has declined over the years due to inadequate funding and rising college costs. Illinois needs to restore the buying power of MAP while exploring financial support models that incorporate multiple financial supports for college completion (e.g., the "shared responsibility" model being explored in states like [Minnesota's State Grant](#).)

The IBHE will continue to track college affordability in Illinois and the factors positively or negatively influencing affordability. It is working to implement the recommendations outlined above, double down on what is working, and quit doing what is not working. A college degree is THE ticket to a middle class life in our 21st century economy. We need to ensure that those who need it most can afford it.

## Reducing Gaps for Underserved Students

IBHE recently met with **ICCB** and the **Education Strategy Group**, a national nonprofit focused on most productively engaging the higher education sector in using the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and Assessments to improve college readiness and student college success in states. Illinois has been selected as one of a select number of states to work with ESG more comprehensively to better align high school preparation and college placement in credit bearing courses and increase the consistency and transparency of college readiness standards for students, parents, and high schools in Illinois.

## Upcoming Events

[7th Annual College Town Summit](#) sponsored by the **Illinois Liquor Control Commission** is being held November 18 in dual sites at **Southern Illinois University Carbondale** and **Eastern Illinois University** from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. The events are at the SIU Carbondale Student Center, 2nd Floor, and the EIU Charleston MLK Jr. Memorial Union, 3rd Floor, East Wing. Speakers will address the new happy hour state law, alcohol poisoning immunity law, and college students as hospitality workers serving alcohol, focusing on "town/gown" coordination, outreach, and implementation

## Increasing Affordability

[The Annual Report on Public University Revenues and Expenditures](#) has been released by IBHE. For fiscal year 2015, Illinois public universities reported revenue and expenditures of \$6.9 billion. University income funds (i.e. tuition revenue) represent the largest overall source of revenue for public universities at 27.4 percent, followed by State appropriated funds at 17.5 percent. The largest overall expenditure by function is for instructional programs, which represented \$1.76 billion or 25.3 percent of expenditures from all fund sources. Expenditures from total funds under the executive management category is \$70.8 million, 4.5 percent less than in fiscal year 2014. Summary data on all operating expenses and expenditures is presented, using data submitted to IBHE's Resource Allocation and Management Program (RAMP) information system.

**Need updates and information on MAP? Check out the MAP Matters pages online!** The delay in funding of the **Monetary Award Program** (MAP) as a result of the budget impasse is impacting students and schools across the state. The **Illinois Student Assistance Commission** (ISAC), the agency that operates MAP, has updated its [MAP Matters](#) web pages with the latest information on what's happening with MAP. Whether you are reporting on the program, advocating for more MAP, or looking for information to provide students and families, you can find accurate facts and figures about the program, who gets it, and more at [www.isac.org/mapmatters](http://www.isac.org/mapmatters).

### **College Illinois! 529 Prepaid Tuition Program Launches 2015-16 Enrollment Period**

College Illinois! opened enrollment on November 2 for its 17th year helping Illinois families make college a reality. The 529 prepaid tuition program offers great tax advantages while offering families an affordable way to lock in the future cost of college at today's plan rates, helping to reduce or even eliminate uncertainty about future tuition increases. In addition to using benefits at Illinois colleges and universities within the plan, students can also apply the value of their benefits to private and out-of-state schools.

College Illinois! Program funds are professionally managed by an experienced team and established third-party money managers, and are held in a trust fund at Northern Trust Company, separate from state funds. By law, College Illinois! funds can only be used to pay benefits on behalf of plan beneficiaries and to pay the costs of running the Program. This fall alone, over 10,000 students are using College Illinois! benefits to attend the schools of their choice, including private and out-of-state institutions.

Enrollment is open through May 31, 2016, with extended enrollment for newborns through August 31, 2016. Now is a great time to consider purchasing a plan—take advantage of last year's plan pricing, before prices increase on most plans on January 1. Visit [collegeillinois.org](http://collegeillinois.org) to learn more.



## People in the News

### **Educator and Administrator Preparation Programs – PERA News**

Faculty in educator and administrator preparation programs can link to the latest news and information for school districts implementation of the **Performance Evaluation Reform Act** (PERA). A monthly online newsletter, the "Virtual PERA Coach" is now available [here](#). Additional resources and guidance documents can be found at the [Illinois State Board of Education](#).

**Governor Bruce Rauner** has announced this year's outstanding college students who will be honored by the **Lincoln Academy of Illinois** during the annual Student Laureate Convocation, November 7 at the Old State Capitol in Springfield. "Civic engagement, as exemplified by President Lincoln, is crucial to our democracy and the process of our government," said Governor Rauner. "The young men and women receiving this recognition embody the spirit of President Lincoln through their hard work and dedication to their schools and communities."

The Lincoln Academy's **Abraham Lincoln Civic Engagement Awards** are presented for excellence in curricular and extracurricular activities to seniors from each of the state's four-year, degree-granting colleges and universities, and one student from the community colleges in Illinois. At the Student Laureate Convocation, each student will receive a Student Laureate Medallion, along with a \$1,000 educational grant and a certificate of achievement. This is the 41st year Lincoln Academy has celebrated students' excellence in Illinois.

Student Laureate **Cynthia J. Avila** of the University of Chicago will speak on behalf of all the Laureates. The invocation will be delivered by **Dr. Stanley R. Liberty**, Interim President of Bradley University, and the benediction will be delivered by Eureka College President **J. David Arnold**. IBHE Executive Director **Jim Applegate** will be in attendance.

### Student Laureates

<b>Aubrey Waddick</b> Augustana College	<b>Nathan Kriebel</b> Greenville College	<b>Drake A. Decker</b> Monmouth College	<b>Savannah L. McCord</b> SIUC
<b>Sherry A. Maschmeyer</b> Aurora University	<b>Kavita K. Patel</b> Illinois College	<b>Jeanette Kyle</b> National Louis University	<b>Joshua G. Pritsolas</b> SIUC
<b>Dana V. Cairns</b> Benedictine University	<b>Pooja Agarwal</b> Illinois Institute of Technology	<b>Jack A. Ryan</b> North Central College	<b>Halie A. Wisse</b> Trinity Christian College
<b>Sarah Collman</b> Blackburn College	<b>Maureen R. Christensen</b> Illinois State University	<b>Carmen Velazquez-Alvarez</b> North Park University	<b>Richard J. Davis</b> Trinity International University
<b>Kristin Kreher</b> Bradley University	<b>Nicole M. Jovicevic</b> Illinois Wesleyan University	<b>Emily Fioramonti</b> Northeastern Illinois University	<b>Cynthia J. Avila</b> University of Chicago
<b>Lance T. Cox</b> Columbia College – Chicago	<b>Ethan R. Adams</b> Judson University	<b>Kiranjit Gill</b> Northern Illinois University	<b>Taylor R. Casino</b> UIC
<b>Kayla E. Lohman</b> Concordia University Chicago	<b>Sophia D. Croll</b> Knox College	<b>Chelsea Risinger</b> Olivet Nazarene University	<b>Hannah Cave</b> UIS
<b>Nicole May</b> DePaul University	<b>Benjamin Labaschin</b> Lake Forest College	<b>Shontee M. Pant</b> Principia College	<b>Monica S. Chen</b> UIUC
<b>Cutberto Aguayo</b> Dominican University	<b>Jessica L. Tennant</b> Lewis University	<b>Catherine Richards</b> Quincy University	<b>Laura Muñoz Lopez</b> University of St. Francis
<b>Shirmeen Ahmad</b> Eastern Illinois University	<b>Cody R. Garretson</b> Lincoln College	<b>Matilyn N. Bindl</b> Rock Valley College	<b>Kendall C. Jones</b> VanderCook College of Music
<b>Ghada M. Morrar</b> East-West University	<b>Ashley Rogers</b> Loyola University Chicago	<b>Angela Martinez</b> Rockford University	<b>Hannah F. Drake</b> Western Illinois University
<b>Angil J. Tate</b> Elmhurst College	<b>Shannon M. Young</b> MacMurray College	<b>Lacy N. Reyna</b> Roosevelt University	<b>Kyle L. Mellinger</b> Wheaton College
<b>Michael A. Sain, II</b> Eureka College	<b>Kenneth O'Dell, Jr.</b> McKendree University	<b>Anna E. Goldman</b> St. Xavier University	
<b>Jerry Davis El</b> Governors State University	<b>Alexander H. Koulos</b> Millikin University	<b>Florian Palluci</b> SAIC	

**Illinois College** seeks your votes in a \$10,000 **Arbor Day Foundation** grant contest that



would plant trees in the Jacksonville community. Illinois College is competing in the small-school grant category against Huntingdon College (Montgomery, Alabama) and Hobart and William Smith Colleges (St. Geneva, New York). Illinois College seeks the \$10,000 grant to plant trees in the Vas Homes public housing development in Jacksonville and provide educational activities for the Early Years Program. [Online voting](#) takes place Nov. 9-13.

