

News

from the Illinois Board of Higher Education

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November 15, 2007

HIGHER ED LEADERS APPLAUD NEW COMMUNITY COLLEGE READINESS PROGRAM

Pilot project sponsored by Sen. Maloney, Rep. Miller aimed at assisting college readiness

SPRINGFIELD – Higher education leaders have praised Governor Blagojevich’s signing of Senate Bill 858, which creates a new pilot program to promote preparation for college and the workforce and reduce the need for remedial coursework once students enter postsecondary classrooms.

The College and Career Readiness Pilot Program Act was sponsored by Senator Edward Maloney of Chicago and Representative David Miller of Dolton, and signed by the Governor November 5. The program is funded through a \$750,000 appropriation to the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB).

“Readiness for college and careers is one of the most difficult challenges facing students, employers, and postsecondary institutions,” said Carrie J. Hightman, Chairwoman of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). “We are indebted to Governor Blagojevich for approving Senate Bill 858, and to Senator Maloney and Representative Miller for their foresight in sponsoring this important legislation.”

“We know that remediation in college is a large and growing problem,” Senator Maloney said. “I am confident this pilot project will prove a valuable tool in alleviating the need for remedial coursework in college and improve retention and graduation rates.”

Representative Miller noted: “When students enter college lacking the needed skills, they often burn up financial aid resources on classes that provide them no college credit. The college and career readiness program is a cost-efficient way for community colleges to link with their feeder high schools to help students who need additional academic preparation as well as those who are ready for college and may qualify for dual enrollment or other advanced coursework.”

Guy Alongi, ICCB Chairman, said, “The Illinois Community College Board is excited about implementing this new program, which we believe will become a model throughout the

state for helping to ensure that students are ready for the academic rigors of college when they walk through the door.”

The program is designed as a partnership between the community colleges, their feeder high schools, and ACT, which will evaluate freshmen courses at the colleges and, based on scores on the ACT, determine each high school junior’s readiness for coursework at the community colleges.

Teams from the colleges and partner high schools will then formulate a “readiness prescription” to give students the courses and other services, such as tutoring and study skills, that will better prepare them for college.

Students whose test scores indicate they are ready for college work will be encouraged to take dual credit (high school and college) courses or advanced placement to get a jump-start on their postsecondary careers. An evaluation process is built into the program to measure the effectiveness of readiness intervention strategies.

The project also is designed to diagnose gaps in curriculum between what is offered in high school and what is needed in college.

The three-year pilot envisioned in SB 858 calls for expansion to three new community college sites in the second year of the program and the addition of five new sites in year three.

“This program will be instrumental in not only serving many students who need a remedial boost while still in high school, but will complement other efforts targeted at college readiness,” Chairman Alongi said.

“The college and career readiness initiative is a clear statement from the General Assembly and Governor that we must strengthen the link between the P-12 system and higher education to ensure students get what they need, when they need it, and at the appropriate venue to keep them on track for success in college and in the workforce,” Chairwoman Hightman said.

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