

News

from the Illinois Board of Higher Education

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BUDGET CRISIS AT CENTER STAGE FOR IBHE

National expert to address Board as it considers fiscal 2011 budget recommendations

SPRINGFIELD – Amid a backdrop of mounting state debt, cash flow crises, and faculty furloughs in this fiscal year, the Illinois Board of Higher Education will turn its attention to recommendations for state spending for colleges and universities in fiscal 2011.

Board members will act on the \$2.2 billion higher education budget for FY11 at their meeting January 26th at Chicago State University. The meeting begins at 1 p.m., a departure from past practice.

To provide Board members with a national perspective on budget issues, Paul Lingenfelter, president of the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) organization. Lingenfelter is a widely recognized expert on higher education finance, and has written extensively and provided congressional testimony on the subject.

“We are fortunate to have someone as knowledgeable and respected as Paul Lingenfelter to join us for a discussion of the critical decisions and difficult choices facing not just the higher education community but the entire State of Illinois,” Carrie J. Hightman, IBHE Chairwoman, said. “We are well aware of the severe fiscal conditions and the unprecedented challenges facing our leaders. At the same time, we also know from the *Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success* that the economic exigencies confronting the state make investment in higher education both urgent and prudent.”

Hightman noted that the *Illinois Public Agenda* – with the emphasis on increasing educational attainment, preparing workers for the jobs of the modern economy, and linking university research and innovation to economic development – represents the best guide for legislators in determining how best to allocate scarce resources and what the payoffs could be for efforts to increase revenues.

Lingenfelter, who once worked for the Board of Higher Education, heads an organization that links higher education leaders in all 50 states. He will provide an analysis of recent trends in

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both postsecondary enrollments and state support for higher education. And he will discuss the imperative for states to foster greater effectiveness throughout the education pipeline to increase educational attainment.

“We are at a critical juncture for the State of Illinois and its colleges and universities,” Chairwoman Hightman noted. “We are eager to work with members of the General Assembly and the Administration to construct a budget that meets the needs of current students and invests in the future of Illinois. The time has passed when higher education institutions can scrape by hand-to-mouth. As the *Illinois Public Agenda* clearly demonstrates, the time has come for the state to recognize the pivotal role higher education has in building a strong Illinois economy. It is perilous economic times that most demand foresight and leadership to ensure the citizens of Illinois are prepared to compete in the workforce of today and tomorrow.”

In addition to action on the budget, Board members will consider allocation of \$760,000 in grants to expand capacity and the number of nursing graduates at three schools of nursing under the Nursing School Grant Program, and \$83,800 in improvement grants to two institutions.

The Board also will act on a recommendation to allocate \$1.23 million in cooperative work-study grants. The grants will support 51 projects for academically related work experiences for an estimated 1,400 students at 677 businesses and not-for-profit organizations.

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