

January 8, 2016

BOARD NAMES COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF THE WORKFORCE

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First meeting will be held January 12 in Springfield

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) today announced creation of a The Higher Education Commission on the Future of the Workforce. It will hold its inaugural meeting January 12, 2016, in Springfield.

The Commission was created under the auspices of House Joint Resolution 52, passed by the General Assembly in the spring 2015. The Commission features broad-based expertise in business, economic development, and higher education in order to review efforts for improved alignment of postsecondary educational programming with regional workforce needs.

The Commission will be chaired by James Applegate, executive director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), and includes:

- Douglas Baker, President, Northern Illinois University
- Representative Kelly Burke, 36th State District of the Illinois House of Representatives
- Senator Jacqueline Collins, 16th State District of the Illinois Senate
- John Comerford, President, Blackburn College
- Edgar Curtis, President and Chief Executive Officer, Memorial Health System
- Bridget Gainer, Vice President of Global Affairs, Aon
- Representative Norine Hammond, 94th State District of the Illinois House of Representatives
- Alice Marie Jacobs, President, Danville Area Community College
- Jason Keller, Economic Development Director, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago
- Senator Karen McConnaughay, 33rd State District of the Illinois Senate
- John Rico, CEO, Rico Enterprises, Inc.

The Commission's purpose is to:

- Analyze workforce needs and educational degree production in each economic development region of the state;
- Identify partnerships to develop certificate and degree programs to address regional workforce needs;

- Examine existing partnerships among higher education sectors to increase degree completion, and explore opportunities to expand collaboration throughout the educational pipeline to address workforce demands;
- Develop strategies for alternative models for degree/credential production such as online learning and competency-based credits;
- Investigate incentives for working adults and those with substantial college credit but no degree to return to college; and
- Explore strategies and practices in other states to incentivize certificate and degree completion.

“I am pleased that these Illinois higher education and business leaders have agreed to serve on this important commission,” Lindsay Anderson, IBHE Chair said. “I’m confident that they will provide us with their best counsel to identify a plan of action so that Illinois’ employers have access to the best educated and trained workforce Illinois’ higher education institutions can provide.”

The Commission’s meeting will be held from 1-4 p.m., January 12, 2016, at the IBHE Offices, Third Floor, 1 N. Old State Capitol Plaza (PNC Bank Building) Springfield, Illinois.

A new website has been created to share forthcoming commission announcements and related information with the public. Visit [WorkforceCommission](#)

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