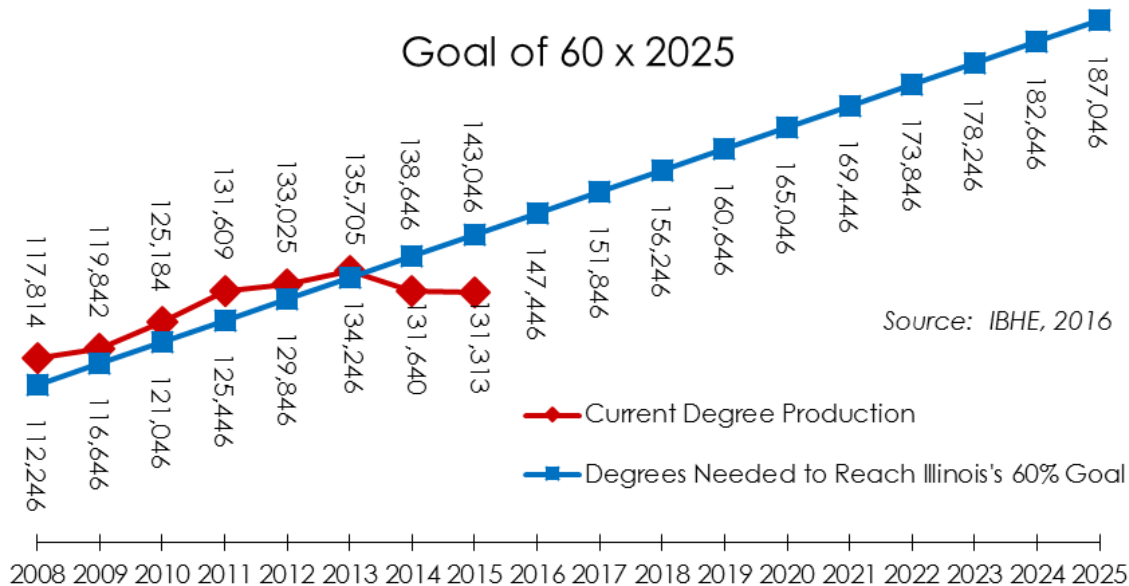


## Applegate's Update

### Keeping Our Eye on the Goal



The **Illinois Board of Higher Education** continues to track the number of credentials awarded in Illinois each year to measure progress towards reaching the goal of having 60% of the adult population holding a degree or certificate of value by the year 2025. Although total degree and certificate production has largely remained unchanged (roughly 131,000 certificates and degrees) in 2015 relative to 2014, there was some variation by sector. The community college sector was the only sector to demonstrate significant growth in degree/certificate production in 2015. Meanwhile, activity in the private for-profit sector has substantially decreased while degree production at public universities and private not-for-profit institutions has slightly declined. Most importantly, even as degree production in Illinois remained relatively flat in 2015, it continued to drop below the production level required to meet the 60% by 2025 goal. [Click here for the full IBHE DataPoint.](#)

## 60 x 2025

The **Illinois Student Assistance Commission** (ISAC) has announced the names of the **2017-18 Illinois State Scholars**. This year's recipients join the ranks of other exceptional Illinois high school students honored with this prestigious designation. First introduced in 1958, Illinois State Scholars are recognized for their superior academic achievement. State Scholars rank in approximately the top ten percent of high school seniors from 765 high schools across the state. A list of [current Illinois State Scholars](#) can also be found on ISAC's website.

"I applaud all of the 2017-18 state scholars for their hard work and outstanding academic performance," said **Eric Zarnikow**, ISAC executive director. "Students have a lot to contend with as they move through high school—from increased testing to extracurricular activities to highly competitive college admissions. Kudos to these students and also to the teachers, parents, coaches and other mentors who contributed to their success and helped them navigate a path towards college and career success."

Since the abrupt closure of **ITT Technical** Institutes in early September, the **Illinois Department of Financial & Professional Regulation** (IDFPR) and **IBHE** have collaborated on a solution to create an opportunity for the ITT Nursing program graduates to take the **National Council Licensure Examination** (NCLEX). Until now, ITT nursing graduates' degree completion efforts were placed on hold because of a transcript error that cannot be officially amended due to the closure. Through the partnership between the two State agencies a decision was made in mid-November that ITT students who completed all nursing coursework but whose transcript does not indicate program completion will be individually reviewed by IDFPR to determine if the education will be accepted based upon completion of the required nursing coursework. If the transcript is accepted, students will be eligible to take the NCLEX exam and apply for licensure.

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**Advance Illinois** released on November 30 its fifth edition of [The State We're In](#) for 2016-2017, that provides outcome data to answer a fundamental question: Is the state's education system on track to achieve the goal for 2025? For the first time, the report includes interim targets to meet marketplace demands and achieve the goal of 60% of Illinoisans with a postsecondary degree or credential by 2025. One key finding: the state must improve more in the next ten years than it has done in the past ten years if Illinois is to achieve "60 by 25."

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On Nov. 15, the **U.S. Department of Education** joined five additional federal agencies – the **Department of Agriculture** (USDA), the **Department of Health and Human Services** (HHS), **Department of Housing and Urban Development** (HUD), **Department of Labor** (DOL), and **Department of the Treasury** (Treasury) – in [announcing a joint commitment](#) to align federal supports and program delivery to promote college access and completion. These efforts will help break down critical barriers many Americans face in accessing the knowledge and skills needed to get a well-paying job, support their families, and contribute to the community. Through the following critical actions, the new guidance will support the growing number of colleges and universities in their efforts to expand college opportunity:

- USDA has issued guidance describing how to properly determine food stamp income eligibility for students, including [guidance on potential exemptions](#) from student work requirements for those attending an institution of higher education through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T) program;
- ED has issued [guidance on supporting unaccompanied homeless youth](#) through FAFSA completion, and [guidance on what defines an Ability to Benefit \(ATB\) program](#) for students pursuing a postsecondary education without a high school degree;
- HHS has [published a memo](#) on how Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs can support recipients' postsecondary completion through career pathways opportunities, and shares best practices at community colleges. HHS also describes [resources available](#) to help college students find and afford high-quality child care;
- HUD has updated [guidance to clarify](#) which students aged 18-24 qualify for Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers and Project-Based Rental Assistance, and [published a guidebook](#) to assist schools design and implement efforts to address economic insecurity on campuses, and provide grants to public housing authorities to support families through college and financial aid processes;
- DOL has issued an [Unemployment Insurance Program Letter](#) that encourages policies and strategies that support Unemployment Insurance beneficiaries seeking postsecondary education and training, and describes the financial aid available; and
- Treasury is updating stakeholders including institutions of higher education on [opportunities to improve postsecondary students' financial literacy](#) and well-being, including [efforts to help eligible families claim](#) the American Opportunity Tax Credit and Lifetime Learning Credit.

## Increasing Adult Degree Completion



The **Illinois Education Research Council** (IERC) has released its latest report: [Innovations for High Quality, Aligned Early Childhood Educator Preparation \(IERC 2016-3\)](#). This study explores the innovations that two- and four-year higher education partners implemented to build capacity for the early childhood workforce in Illinois and create a more aligned system of credentials and degrees. This study also examines the barriers and catalysts in this work. **IBHE** has partnered with the **Illinois Community College Board** and other agencies and stakeholders to support partnerships among two and four year colleges to build seamless pathways for early childhood educators to obtain credentials and degrees. This study highlights promising practices from these institutional partnerships which are instructive for anyone interested in issues of workforce development, credentialing, degree completion, and pathways.

## Advocacy for Quality Higher Education

The [Military Prior Learning Assessment \(MPLA\) Task Force](#) has released [its report](#) recommending best practices and policies to effectively recognize military training and experiences for academic credit for veterans and military personnel pursuing postsecondary credentials and degrees. Created by [P.A. 99-395](#), the task force met starting in February, 2016, and examined state and national MPLA activities and models, and is recommending that a working group made up of public and private colleges and universities, military service organizations, and the higher education state agencies – **IBHE, ICCB, and ISAC** – continue to work together to implement the recommendations statewide.

The **Illinois Senate** and **House** legislative calendars for the **100th General Assembly** have been announced. The session begins on January 11 with Inauguration. Of note, the Governor's State of the State Address is set to be delivered on January 25 and the Governor's Budget address is scheduled for February 15th. Both chambers are scheduled to meet on January 9 and 10 in lame-duck session.

## People in the News

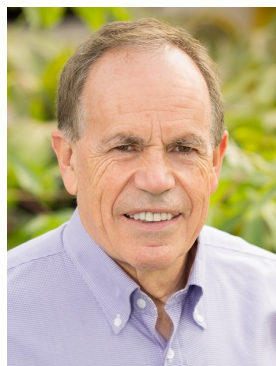
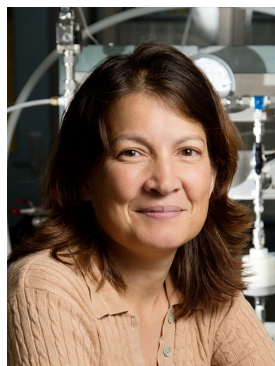


**Concordia University Chicago** has appointed [Dr. Robert Wilhite as dean of the College of Graduate Studies](#). Wilhite, a professor of educational leadership, has been a member of Concordia-Chicago's faculty since 2007 and is the past chair of the Department of Leadership. He teaches classes focused on instructional leadership, supervision, school improvement, school change processes, ethics and legal issues for school districts. He is a member of the **Illinois State Board of Education Licensure Board** peer review panels for principal and superintendent preparation programs. Prior to his tenure at CUC, Wilhite served on the faculty at **Loyola University Chicago, Governors State University** and **St. Xavier University**. He has also served as an elementary, middle school and high school principal at various schools in the Chicago area. Wilhite earned his Bachelor of Arts in Humanities from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. He earned a Master of Education in Reading and Learning Disabilities as well as a Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction from Loyola University Chicago.



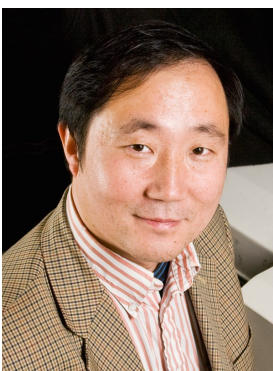
**Southern Illinois University System President Randy Dunn** is among the members of the [Illinois Bicentennial Commission](#) to lead the planning for Illinois' 200th birthday celebration in December 2018, appointed by **Governor Bruce Rauner**.

[Eight University of Illinois researchers](#) have been named to the **Thomson Reuters/Clarivate Analytics Highly Cited Researchers** list for 2016. The list identifies scientists “whose research has had significant global impact within their respective fields of study.” The highly cited Illinois researchers this year are: crop sciences and plant biology professor **Lisa Ainsworth**, civil and environmental engineering professor **Tami Bond**, crop sciences and plant biology professor **Stephen P. Long**, chemistry professor **Yi Lu**, chemistry professor **Catherine Murphy**, plant biology professor **Donald Ort**, and psychology



professor **Brent Roberts**. Former U of I materials science and engineering professor **John Rogers**, now at Northwestern University, also is on the list. Rogers maintains an affiliation with the **College of Engineering and with the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology** at the U of I.

*(Top L to R: Ainsworth, Bond, and Long; bottom L to R: Lu, Murphy, Ort, Roberts, and Rogers.)*



## In Case You Missed It

A few articles and reports worth the read:

[Association of Governing Boards](#): Governors State University President Elaine Maimon: Helping students finish what they start, November/December 2016.

[Edwardsville Intelligencer](#): Science education enhanced by program, November 18, 2016.

[Quad-City Times](#): Illinois community colleges look to awarding bachelor's degrees in nursing, November 23, 2016.

[Chicago Tribune](#): Illinois' higher education board to send \$17M to Chicago State, WIU, EIU, November 23, 2016.

[NASPAS Quarterly](#): Stories from the front: The closing of ITT Tech, December 1, 2016.

[State Journal-Register](#): State employee's friends, coworkers rally after stroke, December 5, 2016.

[WUIS 91.9/NPR Illinois](#): Education Desk: Sales lag for Illinois' prepaid tuition plan, December 6, 2016.



**and Best Wishes for a Wonderful New Year!**

**IBHE**

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