

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Submitted for: Information.

Summary: This Legislative Report is an update to the Board on proposed legislative initiatives submitted to the Governor's Office on behalf of the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

Action Requested: None.

**STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

This Legislative Report is an update to the Board on proposed legislative initiatives submitted to the Governor's Office on behalf of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE).

Truth in Tuition Change

[Recent studies](#) have shown that the current Truth in Tuition law in Illinois is artificially inflating tuition to incoming freshmen and pricing higher education in Illinois out of competition. Illinois is the only state that has **guaranteed** tuition to all in-state residents at public four-year institutions. Oklahoma and Texas have laws requiring institutions **offer** students the option of a guaranteed rate.

IBHE would like to introduce legislation to change Illinois' current mandate to make it optional, similar to Oklahoma and Texas. We believe this will initiate a conversation with the public universities to see if they would support this type of change or if they would prefer an opt-in for each university. Meaning the university can decide whether or not to participate in the guaranteed tuition program versus allowing the students/parents to opt-in to the program. During our recent fall budget meetings with the universities, another option was mentioned. The third option would be tying the guaranteed tuition to a minimum number of credit hours (ex: 24 or 30 per year). This would help ensure the student stays on the pathway to graduation.

Follow up information regarding additional states with guaranteed tuition policies: In addition to Oklahoma and Texas, four other states have enacted legislation on this topic, Colorado, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Ohio.

- *Colorado requires each state-supported institution of higher education to **offer** a fixed tuition rate to any student who is willing to enter into a contract with the institutions for the fixed rate. In effect since 2004.*
- *Minnesota **encourages** governing boards to create a program that guarantees a stable tuition for up to four academic years at state colleges and universities. In effect since 2011.*
- *North Carolina **guarantees** a fixed tuition to any resident freshman or transfer undergraduate student who is admitted any constituent institution of the University of North Carolina for four or five years dependent upon the degree. In effect since 2016.*
- *Ohio **permits** the board of trustees of a state university to establish an undergraduate tuition guarantee program for four years. In effect since 2013.*

Diversifying Higher Education Faculty in Illinois Act Change (110 ILCS 930/3)

IBHE is looking to reduce the number of members on the Program Board from 21 to 11. During the budget impasse, the program received no funding thereby negating a need to meet. Since the Fiscal Year 2018 budget included funding for the program, the Board has had to be reconstituted. However, with 21 members, attaining a quorum is proving difficult. Therefore, IBHE is requesting to reduce the membership to 11.

Grant Language Changes

IBHE is looking to change some language regarding grants that we administer.

- **110 ILCS 48/** - With the budget impasse, some of the grantees that IBHE previously awarded grants to ceased operations. Therefore, when the budget was passed for Fiscal Year 2018, with some funding provided for Fiscal Year 2017, finding recipients for the grants under current restrictions has proven difficult. IBHE wishes to fulfill the intent of the General Assembly when the grants were created, but make it easier to grant awards. An example that we are looking at is widening the scope of the Grow Your Own program grants. There are only two existing entities for the grant money and the proposals that each have submitted are far short of the appropriated amount. Further, this program has been under General Assembly scrutiny for a number of years due to a lack of positive outcomes for the investment. To help provide some direction as to how this program should go in the future, IBHE is looking into awarding some planning grants. We have also begun meeting with interested parties to get their support in order to present a united front moving forward.
- **110 ILCS 205/9.28** – The Graduation incentive grant program has not been funded for a number of years, but IBHE still receives audit findings for not submitting a budgetary recommendation. Therefore, we would like to remove subsection (d), which states: The Board of Higher Education shall annually submit to the Governor and the General Assembly a budgetary recommendation for grants under this Section and shall notify applicants for grant assistance that the award of grants under this Section is contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds.

Fees for Administering Grants

IBHE would like to look into the possibility of keeping a small portion of appropriations to help offset the costs of administering certain grants. Other state agencies have this ability and we would like to pursue it. Specifically for the following funds, we believe changing the “to supplement support” language would allow us this flexibility:

- **Academic Quality Assurance Fund.** “All fees collected for the administration and enforcement of this Act must be deposited into this Fund. All money in the fund must be used, subject to appropriation, by the Board ~~to supplement support for the ordinary and contingent expenses of the Board~~ for the administration and enforcement of this Act and must not be used for any other purpose.” **Academic Degree Act (110 ILCS 1010/10.10)**

- **Private College Academic Quality Assurance Fund.** “All fees collected for the administration and enforcement of this Act must be deposited into this Fund. All money in the fund must be used, subject to appropriation, by the Board ~~to supplement support~~ for the ordinary and contingent expenses of the Board for the administration and enforcement of this Act and must not be used for any other purpose.” **Private College Act (110 ILCS 1005/14.10)**
- **Business and Vocational Schools Quality Assurance Fund.** “All fees collected for the administration and enforcement of this Act must be deposited into this Fund. All money in the fund must be used, subject to appropriation, by the Board ~~to supplement support~~ for the ordinary and contingent expenses of the Board for the administration and enforcement of this Act and must not be used for any other purpose.” **Private Business and Vocational Schools Act of 2012 (105 ILCS 426/80)**
- **Distance Learning Fund.** “All fees collected for the administration and enforcement of this Act must be deposited into this Fund. All money in the fund must be used, subject to appropriation, by the Board ~~to supplement support~~ for the ordinary and contingent expenses of the Board for the administration and enforcement of this Act and must not be used for any other purpose.” **Higher Education Distance Learning Act (110 ILCS 145/40)**

Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree at Community Colleges

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is working cooperatively with the community college presidents to re-introduce legislation that would allow community colleges to confer bachelor degrees in nursing. This creates an obvious conflict with the four-year institutions in the State that currently offer such a degree. IBHE has been and will continue to work with the public universities, as well as the private schools, to encourage action that is in the best interest of the students and not the entities involved.

Senator Manar amended Senate Bill 888 with the following allowances. Senate Amendment #1 amends the Public Community College Act to allow a board of trustees of a community college district to establish and offer a baccalaureate-level nursing education program and confer a bachelor of science degree in nursing upon the meeting of specified conditions. It requires approval of both the Illinois Community College Board and Board of Higher Education and limits the number of programs that may be approved to 20 until August 31, 2022. The amendment also requires the Illinois Community College Board to conduct a statewide evaluation of nursing programs established under the provisions and report on the results of the evaluation by July 1, 2022.

IBHE shared its strong opposition to the amendment during its initial committee hearing in the Senate. The proposed legislation allows community colleges to propose establishing new academic programs for bachelor's degrees in nursing and bringing them forward to ICCB and IBHE for program approval. This would establish a new mission for community colleges: providing baccalaureate level college degrees. Currently four year colleges and universities, both public and private, offer this degree already. There is also a steady increase in the number of strong and effective partnerships between Illinois community colleges and four year colleges in dual enrollment programs from associates in nursing and RN degrees at community colleges into bachelors of nursing degrees at four year colleges (2 + 2 programs). Given the extreme

budgetary limits on operations at public colleges and universities, starting unnecessary or duplicative bachelors of nursing degrees is not only unnecessary but also untimely.

Follow up information regarding BSN's at community colleges: In 2009, Illinois adopted an alternative approach that favors collaboration between two- and four-year institutions. Senate Bill 1883 required the Board of Higher Education to implement a Collaborative Baccalaureate Degree Development Grant Program “to help deliver upper-division courses and bachelor’s degree programs offered by bachelor’s degree-granting colleges and universities at a location geographically convenient to student populations currently being served by existing public community colleges.” This law never received grant funding, however, community colleges and public and private colleges and universities have proceeded since then in establishing partnerships for seamless pathways from associate’s degrees to bachelor’s degrees in many disciplines, including the health field and nursing programs.

Please click on these links for a thorough overview of the history of baccalaureate degree offerings at the community college level across the country:
<http://www.aascu.org/policy/publications/policymatters/2010/communitycollegebaccalaureate.pdf>
<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED556034.pdf>

There were three other amendments filed, but all failed to be adopted. ICCB has indicated to IBHE that it intends to run this legislation again next spring.

House Bill 4103/Senate Bill 2234

Senator Rose and Representative Brady have introduced legislation which will significantly change IBHE mission. The bills change IBHE from having an oversight role to one of administration. This change would require significant changes to our current operational structure as well as fiscal resources. The bill does not provide any additional appropriations, nor are the provisions subject to such appropriations. IBHE will have an analysis finalized on the Illinois Legislative Tracking System very soon.