

Illinois Higher Ed
The Friday Memo

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[President Obama calls for increased educational attainment](#)

Every American should have at least one year of college, President Obama declared this week in his address to a joint session of Congress as he highlighted education as one of three areas (along with energy and health care) "absolutely critical to our economic future."



"In a global economy, where the most valuable skill you can sell is your knowledge, a good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity — it is a pre-requisite. Right now, three-quarters of the fastest-growing occupations require more than a high school diploma, and yet just over half of our citizens have that level of education.

"It's our responsibility as lawmakers and educators to make this system work. But, it's the responsibility of every citizen to participate in it. And so tonight, I ask every American to commit to at least one year or more of higher education or career training."

[Secretary Duncan outlines budget focus on college access and affordability](#)

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan this week highlighted provisions of the Department of Education's proposed FY 2010 budget that would dramatically expand student financial aid while making it simpler, more reliable, and more efficient. "We need to invest in our economic future and enable our kids to compete in today's global environment. America's students and workers need a higher level of education and training," Duncan said.

UPCOMING

March

4 **[Senate Higher Education Committee](#)**
[2:30 pm](#)

[House Higher Education Committee](#)
[4:00 pm](#)

5 **[House Appropriations Committee-Higher Ed](#)**
[8:30 am](#)

18 Legislative Reception of the Higher Education Legislative Coalition, Illinois State Museum, Springfield

April

7 IBHE Board Meeting, Springfield

22 Lobby Day, Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities

[Higher Education is not a luxury](#)



Rep. Mike Boland, new Chairperson for House Higher Education Committee (photo by Russ Nagel)

“I would call myself “pro-education” from preschool through graduate school, both public and private education.” Rep. Mike Boland responded when asked by *Friday Memo* what had attracted him to accept the chairmanship of the House Higher Education Committee. “Education has a great role to play in making a difference in a person’s life.”

[Read the interview in its entirety.](#)

[House passes 21st Century Scholars program; Senate sets hearing](#)

The House this week passed HB 150, the 21st Century Scholars program, which is an early intervention effort to get low-income middle school students to take a rigorous high school curriculum in exchange for guaranteed financial aid when they get to college. The bill, sponsored by Rep. David Miller, is modeled after a successful [Indiana program](#) that improves student readiness for college. Stan Jones, the Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education, is scheduled to testify next Wednesday, March 4, before the [Senate Higher Education Committee](#) on SB 37, sponsored by Sen. Ed Maloney, which is identical to the bill that passed the House.

[Longitudinal data system bill introduced](#)

Sen. Heather Steans has introduced SB 1828 requiring the State Board of Education, the Illinois Community College Board, and the Board of Higher Education to jointly establish and maintain a longitudinal data system. The system, which was a prime recommendation of *The Illinois Public Agenda for College and*

Career Success, would give policymakers access to information about student success and mobility to better inform policy and budget decisions. The measure is also a top [priority](#) of [Advance Illinois](#), a new education advocacy organization.

[Treasurer's Office offers Excellence in Agriculture Scholarship Program](#)

State Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias has announced the availability of applications for the 2009-2010 Excellence in Agriculture Scholarship Program. Ten \$2,500 scholarships will be awarded to Illinois high school seniors who plan to pursue a college degree and career in agriculture or an agriculture-related field. Scholarship recipients are selected by a panel of Illinois agriculture agency representatives.

[Campus News](#)

[WIU receives \\$1 million for Quad Cities engineering program](#)

The Western Illinois University-Quad Cities campus has received \$1 million in contributions from the John Deere Foundation and The Moline Foundation for the University's new engineering program that will begin this fall. The donations -- \$500,000 from each foundation -- will support lease space and equipment.

[Former Soviet leader to promote Eureka College's new Ronald Reagan Society](#)

Mikhail Gorbachev, the former Soviet leader who worked with U.S. President Ronald Reagan to end Communist rule in Eastern Europe and secure relations with the West through disarmament pacts, will visit Reagan's alma mater. Gorbachev will help Eureka College promote its new Ronald W. Reagan Society designed to carry forward the Reagan legacy at the school. Gorbachev's March 27 visit will include a town hall-style meeting with the campus community. Gorbachev also will deliver the keynote address at the college's second annual Ronald Reagan Day dinner at the Peoria Civic Center ballroom.

[DePaul becoming a major destination for transfer students as an affordable alternate route to four-year degree](#)

As a growing number of students are searching for a more affordable path to obtaining a baccalaureate degree, many more are now starting at a community college and then transferring to a four-year institution. DePaul University, which has long been Illinois' top private school destination for transfer students, is further stepping up its efforts to ease the transfer process to accommodate this growing trend by introducing new online tools and enhancing outreach strategies. Fall 2008 figures show a nearly 17 percent jump in the number of students transferring to DePaul from community colleges.

[CLC freezes next year's tuition](#)

Despite rising operating costs, the College of Lake County board of trustees has voted to hold the line on tuition and fees for the next academic year.

[Judson gets gold LEED rating for energy efficiency](#)

Judson University in Elgin Wednesday received a gold LEED rating for the Harm A. Weber Academic Center, its recently built, energy efficient learning center.

[Brazilian-Swiss man gives UI \\$14 million for Brazilian studies](#)

The University of Illinois recently received \$14 million to establish a Brazilian studies institute on campus.

[DACC exploring partnership with schools for 'middle college'](#)

Danville Area Community College and most Vermilion County schools are partnering to launch a new "middle college" program to help more students earn their high school diploma.

[MORE CAMPUS NEWS](#)

[News from Higher Education](#)

[Obama aims high for higher education](#)

(USA TODAY)

Here's what's perhaps most unusual about President Obama's big budget proposals for higher education: That he's thinking about higher education at all.

[Big U.S. role in lending to students](#)

(The New York Times)

The federal government has quietly increased its support of the student loan market to such a degree that the real question may be whether there is a role left for private lenders at all.

[Experts wonder how education goals will be met](#)

(The Wall Street Journal)

President Barack Obama laid out new national goals Tuesday aimed at boosting high school and college graduation rates, but left education experts wondering on how he intends to reach his targets, and how much he is prepared to spend on them.

[College for All](#)

(Inside Higher Ed)

President Obama issued a powerful challenge to his own administration and to individual citizens Tuesday night, calling on every American to "commit" to attending at least one year of college so that the country can reclaim its mantle as the best educated nation

in the world.

[The big test before college? The financial aid form](#)

(The New York Times)

Most everyone agrees that something is very wrong with the six-page federal form for families seeking help with college costs.

[MORE NEWS FROM HIGHER EDUCATION](#)

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