

Illinois Higher Ed
The Friday Memo

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[Public Agenda gets new address](#)

Check out www.illinois.org for new features, accountability reports

The *Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success* has a new home with several new features and links to new accountability reports. The new website – illinois.org – is part of a larger communications effort to raise awareness of the *Public Agenda* as the state's guiding blueprint for addressing issues of educational attainment, affordability, workforce preparation, and economic development. The new site includes links to videos that highlight challenges ahead for Illinois in meeting workforce needs of the future, research and studies relating to *Public Agenda* issues, news articles, speeches and presentations, and legislative activities. It also has links to Facebook and Twitter to follow IBHE activities at the Statehouse and on campuses as implementation of the *Public Agenda* proceeds.

[2010 Accountability Report for Public Agenda unveiled](#)

At its December meeting in Chicago this week, the Board of Higher Education reviewed the first Accountability Report, noting progress, and sometimes lack of progress, on important measures of implementing Goal 1 of the *Illinois Public Agenda*. Goal 1 concerns education attainment, eliminating the achievement gap, and increasing adult participation in higher education. Reports on other Public Agenda goals will be forthcoming. Among the findings, the report revealed increases in the proportion of adults with college credentials, no change in the gap between whites and minorities in high school graduation, and a worsening gap in college graduation between whites and racial/ethnic minorities.

[IBHE agrees to set up task force to study MAP Cap proposal](#)

After much, and sometimes heated, debate, the Board of Higher Education voted 13-2 to create a “blue ribbon” task force to study the controversial proposal for selling “human capital investment bonds” to raise funds for Monetary Award Program (MAP) grants for community college students. The suggestion, proposed by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, is opposed by the Illinois Community College Board and Illinois Community College Trustees Association. IBHE Chairwoman Carrie J. Hightman noted she was aware of the community college system opposition and the controversy the idea created in the finance commission. “I also know there are two sides to the issue, and it is because there appears to be no common ground that I believe a thorough, objective study of the proposal is needed.” The task force, which will be appointed by the Chairwoman, is to report by the Board's February meeting.

[A look at certificate programs' contribution to increasing postsecondary completion rates](#)

Complete College America released a new report on the potential for certificate programs, especially those at least a year in duration, to provide opportunities to more students to acquire postsecondary education. The report, *Certificates Count: An Analysis of Sub-baccalaureate Certificates* calls attention to the significant value of certificate programs – practical and often underutilized credentials that can provide graduates with an appealing combination of rapid postsecondary achievement and portable skills and knowledge. Certificates can position graduates for immediate workforce success, while establishing solid foundations for future academic achievement. For these reasons, *Certificates Count*, advocates for a national goal to double the number of long-term certificates produced within the next five years, and then double that number again over the subsequent

UPCOMING

January
3-11 96th General Assembly
Session Days

12 Inauguration Day
97th General Assembly begins

five years.

Earning a certificate has "real economic value," said Stan Jones, president of Complete College America, a nonprofit group which works with an alliance of states, including Illinois, to increase the number of college graduates to keep pace with workforce needs. "In some cases, they have more value than associate degrees and even some bachelor's degrees." About 750,000 certificates were awarded in 2007-8, the most recent year for which data are available. A little more than half of all certificates are awarded by public institutions, mostly community colleges. About four in 10 are granted by for-profit institutions.

[18 nurse educators receive fellowships to reward them for staying in the teaching profession](#)

At the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) meeting on December 7, 18 nurse educators from 17 Illinois public and private higher education institutions training nurses were awarded \$10,000 fellowships to supplement their salaries, and fund additional professional development to encourage them to continue to teach. These fellowships mark the fifth year of the Illinois Nurse Educator Fellowship program. In the last four years, 63 fellowships have been awarded and a recent survey found that this has been a good investment. The Illinois Center for Nursing learned that 97 percent (61 of the 63) are still employed in Illinois as a nurse educator or as an educator/administrator. Because the demand for practicing nurses is so high, the frequency of outside offers for nurse educators to leave teaching and go into clinical practices has increased. The fellowship has helped teaching institutions to recognize their well-qualified nursing professors as well as retain them to continue to train much needed nurses. This grant program is tied to Goal 3 of the *Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success*, increasing the number of high-quality postsecondary credentials to meet the demands of Illinois' economy.

[Commission prepares plan for eliminating poverty; discuss education solutions](#)

The Illinois Commission on the Elimination of Poverty has released *Building a Pathway to Dignity and Hope: A Plan to Cut Extreme Poverty in Half by 2015 in Illinois*. The commission, which began meeting in the fall of 2009, developed the plan in accordance with its charge to comprehensively address poverty in Illinois in accordance with international human rights standards. The plan's recommendations include establishing a statewide transitional jobs program, making the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program more accessible and better connected to workforce strategies, and expanding the scholarships available to students in poverty so they can attend community college.

The five education recommendations are: increasing scholarships to low-income community college students, creating dedicated workforce development staff at each community college, directing the Illinois Community College Board and Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to prioritize services to individuals living in poverty, assisting low-skilled immigrants at community colleges, trade schools and other organizations by tying English instruction to training programs, and increasing funds for adult education and ESL programs.

[Off the MAP – eligible students missing out on need-based MAP grants](#)



People in the News

University of St. Francis professor [Maria Connolly](#), PhD, CNE, APN/CNS, FCCM, ANEF, was a recipient of the 2010 Sage Award at the 13th Annual Power of Nursing Leadership Event. The Sage Award is given to nurses who have made a significant impact on the lives and careers of others through their actions as role models, facilitators and mentors.

After serving Illinois State University for 35 years, the last five as vice president for Student Affairs, [Steve Adams](#) has announced he will retire June 1, 2011. President Al Bowman said a national search for the next vice president of Student Affairs will begin immediately. "The name Steve Adams has been synonymous with excellence at Illinois State for more than 30 years," Bowman said. "We will miss his leadership tremendously, but I know I will continue to rely on his wisdom and advice as he remains a close member of the University family." Adams, who has also served for 35 years as the "Voice of the Redbirds," announcing football and men's basketball games, will continue those duties for Redbird Athletics.



[Tamara Lewis](#), **Governors State University**, is a senior from Chicago majoring in social work, earning a 3.8 GPA. She is a member of the Phi Alpha Honor Society, for students studying social work, and Alpha Sigma Lamda, the National Adult Learners Honors Society.



[Edward Bridge](#), **Western Illinois University**, is from Quincy, Illinois and has maintained academic perfection in his information systems major, with an option in information technology systems and a minor in computer science. He is the Centennial Honors College Scholar, the Academic Honors Convocation Student Speaker, the Information Systems Departmental Scholar and an Honors Scholar.



[Kelsy Holloway](#), **Dominican University**, is from Cape Girardeau, Missouri and will graduate in May 2011, with a degree in early childhood education and will be a certified teacher. She has been a four-year member of the Dominican women's soccer team and was named a Scholar Athlete for the 2009-2010 academic year.

Editor's note: In the upcoming issues of *The Friday Memo*, the Illinois Student Laureates from Illinois' colleges and universities will be featured in "People in the News." The award recognizes outstanding academic achievement, campus leadership and extracurricular activities among Illinois college and university seniors.

Campus News

[Carol of the Year series concludes with 'We Wish You a Merry Christmas'](#)

The announcement of the 2010 Carol of the Year is tinged with sadness. The planned end of [the 25-year series](#) arrives with the news that the creator of the series, William Studwell, did not live to see the project through to its final coda. Studwell, who worked for 30 years as a library cataloger at Northern Illinois University, died Aug. 2, succumbing to lymphoma. The day before his death, at age 74, he dictated a letter to his daughter, Laura, of Aurora, providing the noteworthy details pertaining to his 2010 Carol of the Year, "We Wish You a Merry Christmas."

Admiration of Studwell's work likely would have been limited to a small circle of carol devotees had he not invented the Carol of the Year series. Starting in 1986, with "Carol of the Bells," Studwell honored one carol each year, selecting a well-known Christmas song that was celebrating a significant anniversary of its publication. "Collectively, no other group of songs appears to have as much influence on Western civilization as do Christmas carols, especially in light of the relatively small number of significant carols that exist. Carols are not limited by age, education, life-style, beliefs, nationality or taste," he wrote. "For about one month of each year they strongly envelop all sectors of predominantly Christian nations, and even non-Christian areas are not exempt from their presence. A little song like 'We Wish You a Merry Christmas,' therefore, can have an effect surpassing its intrinsic merits because of its continuing membership in the highly influential club of carols."

[U of I awarded National Science Foundation grant to mentor Latino students](#)

Latino faculty at the University of Illinois College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) are taking the lead to mentor the next generation of Latino scientists through a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant. "We are fortunate to be selected as part of the Undergraduate Research and Mentoring program of NSF. Illinois has one of the fastest-growing Latino populations, and this population is highly underrepresented in science and research," said Gustavo Caetano-Anollés, co-principal investigator and professor in the Department of Crop Sciences. The \$662,836 NSF grant award will be used to establish a U of I program focused on mentoring Latino undergraduate students titled "New Biology Fellows."

[Peace Corps fellows program wins national excellence award](#)

For many people living and working in rural Illinois, the Western Illinois University Peace Corps Fellows Program (PCF) in Community Development has provided meaningful and positive change in their communities. Since 1994, the program -- in collaboration with the community members and organizations it serves, as well as the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs (IIRA) at WIU -- has been facilitating measurable results in community and economic development for rural citizens, government and community organizations across the state. Last month, the University Economic Development Association (UEDA) recognized the WIU Peace Corps Fellows Program with the Award of Excellence in Community Development.

News from Higher Education

[Suburbs watch DREAM Act progress](#) (Daily Herald)

A measure that would help millions of children raised illegally in the suburbs and around the country become citizens cleared a major hurdle in the House of Representatives, but faces an even bigger one in the Senate.

[Higher Ed Commission recommends performance-based funding](#) (Daily Herald)

Those charged with evaluating higher education budgeting practices in Illinois say the state is endangering the

quality, reach and effectiveness of its colleges and universities and therefore endangering its citizens.

[Top test scores from Shanghai stun educators](#) (The New York Times)

With China's debut in international standardized testing, students in Shanghai have surprised experts by outscoring their counterparts in dozens of other countries, in reading as well as in math and science, according to the results of a respected exam.

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