

Illinois Higher Ed
The Friday Memo

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[K-12 Education Reform: Implications and Opportunities for Public Colleges and Universities](#)

An American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) policy brief describes how the confluence of major K-12 education reform efforts has significant implications and offers tremendous opportunities for the nation's public colleges and universities to boost high school graduates' success in higher education and beyond.

[120 community colleges are chosen to compete for \\$1-million prize](#)

The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program has announced a \$1 million prize to recognize community colleges with outstanding academic and workforce outcomes. The institute hopes the top colleges will serve as models and laboratories for identifying practices that can elevate community college education nationwide. The prize will recognize exceptional results in student completion rates and workforce success. The Aspen Institute picked the eligible institutions from a pool of 1,200. The Illinois colleges are: Southeastern Illinois College, Rend Lake College, Lake Land College, Illinois Eastern Community Colleges-Olney Central College, and Illinois Eastern Community Colleges-Lincoln Trail College.

[ISAC FAFSA Challenge](#)

Completing a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as early as possible is the first step for students and families to obtain postsecondary education financial assistance. The Illinois Student Assistance Commission will update weekly the number of FAFSAs filed by Illinois high school students, keeping track of the increasing numbers to reach the Goal for 2011-12 college year of 800,000 applications. To date, **484,102** applications have been filed, over halfway to the Goal.

UPCOMING	
MAY	
2	The Legislative Education Caucus, 413 Stratton, 7:00 pm, hosted by Higher Education Legislative Coalition
4	<u>Community College Lobby Day</u> House Higher Education Committee, C-1 Stratton Bldg, 3:00 p.m. Senate Higher Education Committee, 409 Capitol, 4:30 p.m.
5	House Appropriations-Higher Education Committee, 118 Capitol, 8:00 a.m.



Research Council

[Register Now: Focus on Illinois Education Research Symposium](#)

The Illinois education research community will gather June 7-8 at the Doubletree Hotel in Bloomington to hear from a panel about progress on various initiatives undertaken by the Illinois P-20 Council. Several experts and renowned speakers will discuss such topics as increasing college completion, college access and finance issues, and using “value-added assessment” to enhance teacher preparation.

[New federal report highlights importance of Hispanic success in education to nation’s economy](#)

According to a new report from the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, “Winning the Future: Improving Education for the Latino Community,” Hispanic success in education and in the labor market is of both immediate and long-term importance to America’s economy.

[People in the News](#)

Elgin Community College student [Kristy Pfaffinger](#) of Hampshire is one of 50 students nationwide selected as a Coca-Cola Community College Academic Team Bronze Scholar. The honor includes a \$1,000 stipend from the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation and a medallion.

University of St. Francis sophomore, [Beatriz Martinez](#), of Joliet, is the recipient of the Dr. Juan Andrade, Jr. Scholarship for Young Hispanic Leaders. The award, given by the United States Hispanic Leadership Institute (USHLI), is annually given to qualified college students who demonstrate their desire to be leaders within the Hispanic community.

University of Illinois at Chicago learning sciences researcher [Susan R. Goldman](#) has been elected to membership in the National Academy of Education. Goldman, co-director of the UIC Learning Sciences Research Institute and distinguished professor of liberal arts and sciences, psychology and education, is among 11 scholars to join the group of about 200 who have earned academy membership based on their contributions to educational research and policy development.

[Lincoln Academy of Illinois’ Student Laureates honored](#)



[Linda Winkelman](#), **Lake Forest College**, is a senior from Park City, Utah, and is majoring in Politics and Sociology & Anthropology.



[Angela Ng](#), **Illinois Institute of Technology**, is a senior from Rockford, Illinois, and is majoring in Civil Engineering.



[Samantha Knopp](#), Trinity International University, is a senior from Medford, Wisconsin, and is majoring in Biology and Pre-Medicine.

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

[Governor Quinn announces new Performing Arts Center at Western Illinois University](#)

Governor Pat Quinn joined state and school officials for a ceremonial groundbreaking on the \$67.8 million Performing Arts Center at Western Illinois University (WIU) in Macomb on April 26. This is one of the largest university construction projects in the Governor's Illinois Jobs Now! capital program, and construction work is expected to create approximately 400 jobs. The state's investment will help WIU leverage a significant private donation to support the center's operation.

[Downstate Illinois Innocence Project at UIS celebrates 10th anniversary](#)

The Downstate Illinois Innocence Project at the University of Illinois Springfield will celebrate its 10 year anniversary on May 16. Four individuals will receive this year's Defenders of the Innocent Awards: U.S. Senator Richard Durbin for his support for the growth and development of the project's work on behalf of the innocent; former state police crime scene investigator Alva Busch for his work exonerating Belleville resident Keith Harris; true crime author Diane Fanning, whose book about a Texas serial killer helped exonerate Julie Rea Harper of Lawrenceville; and former state police investigation Commander Michale Callahan (author of *Too Politically Sensitive*) whose efforts to re-investigate a Paris, Ill., double murder case helped exonerate Herb Whitlock. Keith Harris, Julie Rea, and Herb Whitlock will each be attending to present the awards.

[North Central College among first in state to seek gold under new Sustainability Compact](#)

North Central College is pledging to achieve the state's highest recognition for energy-saving and environmentally friendly initiatives by being among the first institutions of higher education in Illinois to seek gold status under a new Sustainability Compact. College President Harold R. Wilde signed the compact April 18, saying the pledge is a fitting part of North Central's yearlong celebration of its Sesquicentennial.

[SIUC Researcher wins \\$100,000 Gates Foundation grant](#)

James W. Blackburn, professor of mechanical engineering and energy processes in the College of Engineering at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, is getting a \$100,000 Grand Challenges Explorations grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The money will go toward developing a potentially life-saving sanitation system that will use only naturally occurring biochemical processes and wind power to operate.

News from Higher Education

[Increasing share of adults have college degrees, Census Bureau finds](#) (Chronicle of Higher Education)

New data from the U.S. Census Bureau confirm a couple of widely speculated trends in higher education: The percentage of adults with postsecondary degrees is higher than ever, and women are obtaining those degrees at higher rates than men are.

[Completion agenda for baby boomers](#) (Inside Higher Ed)

A group of nine community colleges is turning to some decidedly nontraditional students to help advance President Obama's goal for the United States to have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020: baby boomers looking to return or remain in the workplace.

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