

Illinois Higher Ed
The Friday Memo

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September 16, 2011

[Student loan default rate jumps](#)

The U.S. Department of Education announced this week that the Fiscal Year 2009 national student cohort default rate increased to 8.8%, up from the FY 2008 rate of 7%. The rate increased for all sectors: from 6% to 7.2% for public institutions, from 4% to 4.6% for private institutions, and from 11.6% to 15% at for-profit schools. This rate is a snapshot in time, representing the cohort of borrowers whose loan repayments came due between October 1, 2008, and September 30, 2009, and who defaulted before September 30, 2010. Roughly 3.6 million borrowers entered repayment during this time, and 320,000 borrowers went into default.

[State need-based and merit-based grant aid: Structural intersections and recent trends](#)

State need-based and merit-based financial aid grants to students are often discussed in opposition as part of an ongoing debate. However, in many states, these programs exist alongside each other; in addition, state-level grant programs exist that combine need and merit, further complicating the issue. This American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AACU) policy brief explores the three basic types of state financial aid grants, emphasizing intersections, program contexts and core structures. Recent state-level finance trends are also discussed. The paper concludes with observations on recent structural and financial trends in need- and merit-based programs.

[Lumina awards grant to MHEC for regional 'Tuning' project](#)

The Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) has received a \$415,000, two-year grant from Lumina Foundation to work with college and university faculty in Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri to "tune" the academic disciplines of psychology and marketing. Through the "Tuning" process, faculty members create shared understandings of the knowledge and transferable skills students in specific academic disciplines and professional fields must demonstrate upon completing their degrees. The process helps to clarify to students, parents, and policymakers what degree holders know, understand, and are able to do.

[ISAC offers certification series for financial aid professionals](#)

It is critical that professionals who interact with Illinois students during the financial aid and college application processes are knowledgeable about the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) and financial aid.

This year, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) is integrating its professional development opportunities into a formalized annual certification series that gives professionals a detailed understanding of financial aid programs and systems. For the first time, ISAC will be providing participants session-specific knowledge assessments to measure their comprehension of the financial aid content and trusted resources presented. Session participants that successfully pass each knowledge assessment will receive an official certificate of completion from ISAC.

UPCOMING

September

16 ICCB Board Meeting,
Kennedy-King College,
Chicago

ISAC Commission Meeting,
Thompson Center,
Chicago

IBHE Faculty Advisory
Council, Western Illinois
University, Macomb

26 [Illinois Summit on Aging,
Education and Service](#),
Illinois State University,
Normal

28 Performance Funding
Steering Committee,
Governors State
University, University
Park

October

1 IBHE Student Advisory
Committee, Prairie State
College, Chicago Heights

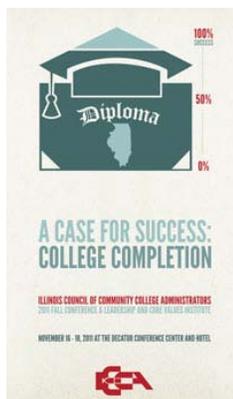
4 IBHE Board Meeting, Harper
College, Palatine

[Survey finds students, workers, and access to college squeezed by ongoing recession](#)

With Pell Grants cut, tuition rising at more than double the rate of inflation, and with state funding for both college budgets and student aid cut or stagnating, students and their families are being squeezed. Also squeezed in the protracted recession are funds for workforce development and lifelong learning that build economic competitiveness. These trends likely mean first, that college access is shrinking overall, and second, postsecondary education is able to meet less and less of marketable skills workers and the economy demands. Thus, our nation's economic competitiveness is imperiled.

[2nd annual online, live accessibility conference](#)

Environments for Humans brings together some of the Web's most notable experts in accessibility for an all-new, one-day only online conference, the Accessibility Summit, being brought to desktops on September 27. IBHE Web Accessibility Consortium members are encouraging college and university faculty, students and staff interested in advancing accessibility of higher education web accessibility to consider participating.



[Registration is now open for the 2011 ICCCA Fall Conference](#)

This year's Illinois Council of Community College Administrators conference will be held November 16th - 18th at the Decatur Conference Center & Hotel in Decatur, IL. Don't miss your opportunity to learn about exciting new programs, projects, and events focused on successful college completion strategies taking place at community colleges throughout Illinois.

[People in the News](#)



Western Illinois University President [Jack Thomas](#) will be invested as WIU's 11th president and will deliver his inaugural address as part of Western's 18th Annual Founders' Day celebration Friday, Sept. 23 in Western Hall on the WIU-Macomb campus. Thomas will also present his inaugural address at 9 a.m. Monday, Sept. 26 at the WIU-Quad Cities 60th Street campus in Moline.

Campus News

Kanter and Pramaggiore Praise Governors State Partnership During Visit

Dr. Martha J. Kanter, Under Secretary of the United States Department of Education, praised Governors State University's Dual Degree Program, a groundbreaking initiative designed to increase graduation rates on both the community college and university level. Kanter, the nation's top-ranking post-secondary education officer, spoke at "Success by Dual Degrees: Meeting the President's 2020 College Completion Goal," a higher education rally hosted by GSU President Elaine P. Maimon on September 9.



"We are going to shine a spotlight on the Dual Degree Program," said Kanter. "This is absolutely the right direction in which to go." She called the Dual Degree Program a model partnership between GSU and regional community colleges that will help first generation college students overcome obstacles that are often found in the challenging higher education environment.

The GSU event was Dr. Kanter's final stop on a 3-day "Education and the Economy" back-to-school bus tour, which included stops in several Midwestern states. "Your Success by Degrees strategy has all the right elements," Kanter said of GSU. "You are offering students educational opportunities that are affordable, doable; and you are helping them to stay on track to finish what they started."

Anne Pramaggiore, President and Chief Operating Officer of ComEd, who also spoke, noted, "Governors State has applied its entrepreneurial mind set and created a platform for learning success."

The Dual Degree Program is a partnership between the university and six area community colleges - Joliet Junior College, Kankakee Community College, Moraine Valley Community College, Prairie State College, South Suburban College, and Triton College.

[North Park University opens high-tech nursing simulation laboratory](#)



North Park University recently opened its state-of-the-art nursing simulation laboratory, enabling students in nursing and other disciplines to practice critical skills in a simulated, safe learning environment. It includes four simulation rooms, two control rooms, and a conference room where students will debrief their class experiences. Video and audio recording of simulations will be routine in the new facility.

Connecting What Matters: Oakton kicks off new strategic planning process

More than 175 Oakton Community College faculty members, staff, and administrators, students, Trustees, and Educational Foundation members gathered on September 9 to kick off the College's new strategic planning process, "Connecting What Matters." Employees spent the afternoon brainstorming about Oakton's future and key elements for success: academic excellence, professional development, student achievement, diversity, connecting with the community, and building community from within. The Strategic Planning Committee will be looking at state and federal

information, funding and expectations as part of the data and information they consider in developing the next plan. The *Illinois Public Agenda* will be among the materials considered.

[AmerCable boosts training at Rend Lake College mining program](#)

AmerCable Incorporated recently hooked Rend Lake College mining technology students up with more than \$10,000 of electrical cable for training. RLC Mining Technology Associate Professor Dave Colombo said his training program will benefit greatly from the cable. He said students will learn how to safely splice it, attach plugs and enter it into a power center and machines. "You can't put a price on an industry that will invest in its own future," said RLC Applied Science and Technology Division Chair Terry Wilkerson.



[Happy Birthday, IMSA!](#)

City of Aurora Mayor Tom Weisner commemorated IMSA's 25th birthday with an official proclamation, naming September 7, 2011 as "Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy Day." "On behalf of the City of Aurora, it is a privilege to express our esteem and best wishes to the IMSA community on its 25th anniversary," Mayor Weisner said. The Mayor proclaimed September 7 as "Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy Day" in the City of Aurora and asked all Aurorans "to celebrate IMSA's many contributions to our community over the past quarter century." Mayor Weisner also presented the IMSA community with an IMSA honorary road sign to be posted on Randall Road.

[News from Higher Education](#)

[College leaders urged to focus on 'near completers'](#) (*Diverse Issues in Higher Education*)

WASHINGTON, D.C. - When it comes to increasing the number of graduates in the United States, college leaders would be wise to invest in re-engaging "near completers"—or those students who would have left college despite only being a few credits shy of a degree.

[U.S. falls in global ranking of young adults who finish college](#) (The Washington Post)

America's global rank in college completion among young adults is slipping, according to a report signaling that the higher education ambitions of other nations are progressing at a swifter pace.

[Growth spurt reverses at local community colleges](#) (Daily Herald)

History shows that community college enrollment skyrockets when the economy tanks.

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