

Illinois Higher Ed
The Friday Memo

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[President Obama announces plan for college affordability and completion](#)

Speaking at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor campus this morning, President Obama focused on ways to limit rising college costs to ensure America's students and workers can obtain the education and training needed for a prepared workforce. Much of the plan requires Congressional action. The proposals described in the White House fact sheet include:

“Reforming student aid to promote affordability and value: To keep tuition from spiraling too high and drive greater value, the President will propose reforms to federal campus-based aid programs to shift aid away from colleges that fail to keep net tuition down, and toward those colleges and universities that do their fair share to keep tuition affordable, provide good value, and serve needy students well. These changes in federal aid to campuses will **leverage \$10 billion annually** to keep tuition down.

Creating a Race to the Top for college affordability and completion: The president will create incentives for states and colleges to keep costs under control through a **\$1billion investment in a new challenge** to states to spur higher education reform focused on affordability and improved outcomes across state colleges and universities. The Race to the Top: College Affordability and Completion will reward states who are willing to drive systemic change in their higher education policies and practices, while doing more to contain their tuition and make it easier for students to earn a college degree.

A first in the World competition to model innovation and quality on college campuses: The president will **invest \$55 million** in a new First in the World competition, to support the public and private colleges and non-profit organizations as they work to develop and test the next breakthrough strategy that will boost higher education attainment and student outcomes. The new program will also help scale-up those innovative and effective practices that have been proven to boost productivity and enhance teaching and learning on college campuses.

Better data for families to choose the right college for them: The president will call for a **College Scorecard** for all degree-granting institutions, designed to provide the essential information about college costs, graduation rates, and potential earnings, all in an easy-to-read format that will help students and families choose a college that is well suited to their needs, priced affordably and consistent with their career and educational goals.

Federal support to tackle college costs: The president has already made the biggest investments in student aid since the G.I Bill through increases to the Pell grant, and by shoring up the direct loan and income-based repayment programs. In his State on the Union Address, the President called on Congress to: **keep interest rates low** for 7.4 million student loan borrowers to reduce future debt, **make the American Opportunity Tax Credit permanent**, and **double the number of work-study jobs over the next 5 years** to better assist college students who are working their way through school.”

UPCOMING	
January	
27	ICCB Board Meeting, Harry L. Crisp II Community College Center, Springfield
	ISAC Commission Meeting, Loyola University, Water Tower Campus, Chicago
31	General Assembly Spring Session begins
February	
1	Governor's State of the State
4	IBHE Student Advisory Committee, Joliet Junior College
7	IBHE Board Meeting, Kendall College, Chicago
March	
12-13	ICBHE Conference , Statehouse Inn, Springfield
23.....	ILACHE Conference , DePaul University, Chicago

[Governor Quinn proposes raising Illinois' dropout age to 18](#)

Governor Pat Quinn announced his support for raising the minimum attendance age of students in Illinois schools to age 18. As part of his ongoing commitment to reform education in Illinois, Governor Quinn will propose legislation to the General Assembly during the annual State of the State address next week to achieve this goal this year. The proposal answers President Barack Obama's State of the Union call for states to encourage students to complete their high school education by age 18.

["First Generation" film receiving awards](#)

"First Generation," a feature documentary and a recipient of funds from the Lumina Foundation, is receiving prestigious film awards around the country. The film tells the story of four high school students - an inner city athlete, a small town waitress, a Samoan warrior dancer, and the daughter of migrant field workers - who set out to break the cycle of poverty and bring hope to their families and communities by pursuing a college education.

[Call for Proposals and Papers](#)

The tenth Focus on Illinois Education Research Symposium will be held on June 11-12, 2012, at the Holiday Inn Conference Center in Tinley Park, IL. The event, sponsored by the Illinois Education Research Council, is calling for proposals for presentation or for the poster session. Submissions that use data from other states to inform Illinois education policy are encouraged. This unique forum provides education practitioners, policy makers and researchers with the opportunity to learn from one another about research that is being done on Illinois education from pre-school through higher education.

[People in the News.](#)



Eastern Illinois University junior [Anne Rozek](#), will be competing for \$100,000 on the "Jeopardy! College Championship" on February 2. She is one of 15 students from throughout the nation chosen for the game show.

The American Council on Education (ACE) recently selected Waubonsee Community College President [Dr. Christine Sobek](#) to serve on its Commission on Inclusion. Dr. Sobek's three-year term will begin on April 1.

[Dr. K. Thomas Robbins](#), professor of otolaryngology at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine and director of Simmons Cancer Institute, has been named the first recipient of the new Simmons Cancer Institute Endowed Chair of Excellence in Oncology at SIU School of Medicine in Springfield.

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



Katelyn G. Rowen, *Eureka College*, is a senior from Moline, Illinois, majoring in Business Administration.



Darwin Gordon, *Governors State University*, is a senior from Chicago, Illinois, majoring in Social Work.



Joshua D. Cranston, *Greenville College*, is a senior from Seattle, Washington, majoring in Philosophy and History.

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.

[News from Higher Education](#)

[Prepaid tuition plan won't be shut, state commission decides](#) (Crain's Chicago Business)

The College Illinois prepaid tuition program, which was closed to new investors last year after questions emerged about its financial status and unorthodox investments, won't be shut down permanently.

[Funding In IOUs](#) (Inside Higher Ed)

Some students and employees at Illinois public colleges and universities might count themselves lucky. Compared to public universities in other states that have seen their state appropriations cut more than 10 percent for each of the past three years, Illinois institutions have had small reductions.

[Increased Illinois higher education funding goes to pensions](#) (FOX Illinois)

Illinois' 12 percent increase in higher education spending this year isn't going to benefit students. Instead, the additional funding for fiscal 2012 is going into the State Universities Retirement System, or SURS, to address its underfunded pension program.

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