

Illinois Higher Ed
The Friday Memo

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House and Senate Appropriations Committees begin receiving testimony on higher education proposed budgets for fiscal year 2014



Photo by Russ Kimmons, House Republican Staff Photographer

President Glenn Poshard (center) joined by Southern Illinois University's Dr. Duane Stucky and Paula Keith before the House Higher Education Appropriations Committee

March in Springfield includes the march of witnesses from Illinois' higher education institutions to discuss their budget requests for the next year before the House and Senate Appropriations Committees meeting at the Capitol. On March 14, Eastern Illinois University and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission presented their requests. On March 21, representatives from the University of Illinois, Governors State University, Illinois State University, and Southern Illinois University, along with the Illinois Community College Board, Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), and Grow Your Own program representatives had the opportunity to be heard by either the Senate Appropriations II Committee or Appropriations-Higher Education Committee, or both. The remaining public universities, the Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities, and other organizations concerned with state higher education funding also will be heard in the upcoming weeks.

Referring Illinois lawmakers to the [Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success](#), the State's master plan for higher education introducing his testimony, SIU President Dr. Glenn Poshard shared charts from the report, documenting the important responsibility his public university and other higher education institutions have to seek to eliminate the achievement gaps in academic success for all Illinois college students regardless of their race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

IBHE Interim Executive Director Dr. Harry Berman echoed Poshard's description of "...the two Illinois—one Illinois is well off, well educated, economically dynamic, with a seemingly bright future. The other Illinois struggles to make ends meet, lags in educational attainment, and is economically stagnant." In order to meet the goal that by 2025, 60% of Illinois' adult population will have earned a postsecondary credential or degree, Berman outlined [IBHE's budget priorities for fiscal year 2014](#) as "core funding for institutions, student financial aid, and deferred maintenance expenses."

Dr. Elaine Maimon, president of Governors State University, upon concluding her testimony in the House, provided the lawmakers with a context for their decision making for the upcoming fiscal year 2014 appropriations for public

UPCOMING

MARCH

27 [Senate Appropriations II Committee](#), C 600
Bilandic Bldg., Chicago

APRIL

2 [IBHE Board Meeting](#), Elgin
Community College, Elgin

3 **Veteran Students,
Faculty, and Staff
Training Seminar**,
Parkland College,
Champaign

universities, by stating, " I appeal to you to see the relationship among reduced appropriations, the possible increase in university contributions to the normal cost of pensions, and the concern to keep tuition increases at a minimum."



Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy (IMSA) leaders brought three of their students to give testimony at their House and Senate Appropriations Hearings on March 14: Chris Norris (hometown East St. Louis), Ashima Gupta (Aurora), and Jorge Acosta (Cicero). The students, who engaged in summer and pre-admissions programs at IMSA prior to entering the high school residential program, received high praise from the Committee members, including a standing ovation from one State Representative.

IMSA VP of Strategy & Advancement Cathy Veal, IMSA Senior Chris Norris (hometown East St. Louis), and IMSA President Dr. Glenn W. "Max" McGee after giving testimony at the House and Senate Appropriations Committees.

Update on pension reform efforts in the General Assembly

The General Assembly has adjourned for Spring break, returning the week of April 8. The past few weeks both the Senate and the House have focused on the passage of various pension bills for four of the five-state funded pension systems, including the State Universities Retirement System (SURS). SB 1, Amendment 3, only includes the participants and beneficiaries of the Teachers Retirement System with no changes made for current retirees. This measure passed the Senate and has been referred to the House Rules Committee. SB 1544 was brought forward with basically the same content as the original Amendment 1 to SB 1 which includes the SURS, the State Employees Retirement System, and the General Assembly's Retirement System. This bill requires those currently working and retirees to make an irrevocable election. Simply stated the choices for both would be 1) a reduced, non-compounded COLA on their annuity (the COLA is equal to the lesser of 3% or one-half the urban Consumer Price Index) with access to the State provided health insurance (or the College Insurance Program); or 2) keeping their 3% COLA with no access to state provided health insurance. SB 1544 remains on third reading in the Senate while SB 1 has been referred to the House Rules Committee.

The Speaker of the House continued to present floor amendments that are being used as predictors of what legislation might pass for the creation of yet another pension reform bill. On March 21, HB 1165 Floor Amendment 6 passed; it holds the COLA to \$750, which applies to only the first \$25,000 of each person's pension annuity. HB 1154, Amendment 10, provides that pensionable earnings shall not exceed the Social Security Wage Base, which is \$113,700 for 2013. HB 1166, Amendment 6, increases the normal retirement age for Tier 1 active employees to 67. Having passed the House, all three of these Floor Amendments have now reached the Senate.

More combinations of pension reform language will undoubtedly unfold as the end of the first half of the 98th General Assembly's Legislative Session draws nearer.

[Spring 2013 opening enrollments in the Illinois Community College system](#)

Overall, statewide results of the fiscal year 2013, Illinois Community Colleges Spring enrollment survey show a slight decrease from last year for headcount enrollment and full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment. The Spring 2013, semester headcount was 366,003 compared to 373,785 last year (a headcount decrease of 7,782 or -2.1 percent). The latest FTE count was 205,947 compared with 211,247 a year ago (an FTE decrease of 5,300 or -2.5 percent). The latest Spring enrollments remain strong by historical standards. While down from recent record levels, Spring 2013 headcount enrollments are at the seventh highest level and FTE enrollments are at the fourth highest level in the 39 years that a separate Spring opening enrollment survey has been collected. Enrollments in online courses continued to grow through Spring 2012, but decreased slightly in Spring 2013.

[The Exchange - Moving from Certification to Licensure](#)

The Illinois State Board of Education, in cooperation with the Illinois Principals Association, has created a 15-minute online presentation explaining the ongoing transition from a certificate system to a licensure system for Illinois educators. This is a first in a series of tutorials.



The Illinois Latino Council on Higher Education (ILACHE) will award a one-time [\\$1000 scholarship](#) to two eligible Latino/a students from Illinois. High school seniors and undergraduate students are eligible to apply. Selection will be based on careful review of the following areas: 1) campus involvement, 2) community involvement, 3) academic achievements and goals, and 4) career aspirations.

To be considered, an applicant must be an Illinois Latino/a graduating high school senior or a continuing undergraduate level college student and enrolled full-time during the fall term of the upcoming academic year at a four or two-year regionally accredited college or university in Illinois. Past awardees are not eligible. Complete applications with all the required supporting materials must be submitted (postmarked) by **May 1, 2013**. Incomplete and late applications will not be considered. **Awardees will be notified by September 2013**. If awarded the ILACHE Scholarship, the recipient must send proof of full-time registration for the Fall 2013 term.

Search for ICCB executive director underway

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) has established a special committee to conduct a search for its Executive Director. President Geoffrey Obrzut announced his plans to retire at the end of June, 2013. The search is underway and the Board expects to have a new executive director in place on July 1, 2013. Information about the position and application procedures can be found at <http://www.iccb.org/executive.search.html>.

[People in the News](#)



[SPOTLIGHT: 2012 - 13 DFI Fellows](#)

Thirty-nine new Diversifying Higher Education Faculty (DFI) in Illinois Program Fellows were recently awarded a Fellowship for the 2012-2013 academic year. The purpose of the DFI program is to increase the number of underrepresented faculty and staff in Illinois institutions of higher education. The complete list of new and renewal Fellows by institution and program major can be viewed on the IBHE website at <http://www.ibhe.org/DFI/fellows.asp>. **The Friday Memo** will feature DFI Fellows throughout the year.



Maria Byndom graduated cum laude with a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville in 2011 (minor in Speech Communication), and is currently pursuing a master's degree in Clinical Counseling from Eastern Illinois University. Byndom plans to pursue a doctoral degree in Counseling Psychology. Research interests include deaf literacy and counseling the deaf and hard-of-hearing as well as multicultural issues in counseling. She has presented at the College of Education and Professional Studies (CEPS) Research Fair (Spring, 2012) "Best Practices for Counseling the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing;" and at the Illinois Counseling Association (ICA) conference (Fall, 2012) "Best Practices for Counseling the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing: The Need for a Clinical Specialization."

Byndom is a member of the Illinois Counseling Association, the American Education and Research Association (AERA), and Chi Sigma Iota National Honor Society. She is the recipient of the Williams Travel Grant Award (2013), and has been recognized as one of Eastern Illinois' "Top Black Scholars" (2012). She has worked in a variety of mental health settings including, most recently, juvenile corrections, a behavioral health hospital, and the National Guard Youth Challenge Program. Byndom's future plans are to work as a researcher/professor in an institution of higher education as well as serving as a clinician within the community.

Continuing his efforts to support the advancement of higher education, State Rep. Fred Crespo (D-Hoffman Estates) announced on March 19, that he has been appointed to the Illinois State Board of Higher Education Performance Funding Steering Committee. Crespo was appointed by House leadership to sit on the committee after his time spent creating a task force to study performance based funding of higher education in Illinois. “As state representative, improving higher education in our State is one of my priorities,” Crespo said. “For the past several years, I have worked with education leaders in my community and throughout the State to see how we can best distribute funds to maximize the impact of our dollars in the classroom. I look forward to working with the committee to devise a system for allocating state resources to state colleges and universities based on student success.”

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



Lake Forest College: Lauren Nicole Levinson, is from Northbrook, majoring in Communications.



Lewis University: Emily A. Keene, is from Hebron, Indiana, majoring in Business with a minor in Marketing.



Lincoln College: Hailey Michelle Gehlbach, is from Roanoke, majoring in Pre Law.

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](#)

Education Justice Project at UIUC brings upper-level college courses to prisoners



The Education Justice Project (EJP) celebrates its fifth year of offering for-credit upper-division courses to men incarcerated at Danville Correctional Center. A program of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), the project currently enrolls about 75 students who take accredited courses each semester in topics ranging from Engineering Robotics to Argumentation, from History of American Theatre to Sustainability—to name a few of the classes that have been offered in the current academic year. The program is a unit of the College of Education at UIUC and its funding comes entirely from discretionary sources—university awards, donations, and private grants. Many family members of the Danville students are contributors, as are some EJP students themselves.

Costs are low—EJP’s budget last year was about \$38,000—in large part because the program is a mostly volunteer effort. About 60 UIUC faculty, graduate students, and staff donate their time and energies to all aspects of the program, from teaching to maintaining its prison library to coordinating carpools to Danville. While the program’s director, Rebecca Ginsburg, hopes that departments will one day treat teaching for EJP as part of instructors’ teaching assignments, for now everyone who teaches at the prison does so by assuming a voluntary overload.

The Project has recently started a year-long evaluation of the impacts of its program upon the family members of its incarcerated students. Ginsburg reports, “We hope to find that educating an incarcerated man produces positive ripple effects among people who are close to him, especially among his minor children.” Other plans for the Education Justice Project in coming years include offering a degree program at the prison and extending its “alumni” program, which works with released students to support their efforts to continue their education on the outside.”

[Lewis University Fire Service Administration bachelor’s program receives recognition from FEMA](#)

The National Fire Emergency Services Higher Education program of the Federal Emergency Management Agency recently recognized the Lewis University Bachelor of Arts Degree in Fire Service Administration. Lewis University is one of three recognized institutions in Illinois. Only 14 four-year institutions of higher education were honored. “This national recognition acknowledges the quality of our program and our faculty’s ability to prepare students for fire service,” commented Dr. Calvin Edwards, chair of Justice, Law and Public Safety Studies.

[News from Higher Education](#)

[New report details steep declines in state support for higher education](#) (Chronicle of Higher Education)

A report released by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities details the steep declines in state support for higher education since the economic downturn that began in 2007, as well as the tuition increases colleges have imposed in order to compensate for those losses.

[Illinois’ fiscal woes hit state university credit ratings](#) (Crain’s Chicago Business)

Illinois’ credit woes are spreading to public universities and governments that have ties to appropriations from the cash-strapped state.

[Beyond the credit hour](#) (Inside Higher Ed)

The U.S. Department of Education has endorsed competency-based education with the release of a letter that encourages interested colleges to seek federal approval for degree programs that do not rely on the credit hour to measure student learning.

[Better colleges failing to lure talented poor](#) (The New York Times)

Most low-income students who have top test scores and grades do not even apply to the nation’s best colleges, according to a new analysis of every high school student who took the SAT in a recent year.

The Friday Memo will not be published next week. It will return on April 5.

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