

Illinois Higher Ed  
*The Friday Memo*

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**April 12, 2013**

**[Public universities' leaders endorse pension plan](#)**

The presidents and chancellors of the 14 public universities in Illinois have unanimously endorsed a six-point proposal for addressing the State's pension funding crisis as it relates to the State Universities Retirement System (SURS), and in an April 4 [letter to the governor](#) and legislative leaders they called it "a thoughtful and responsible approach."

"We write to inform you of our unanimous endorsement of the reform proposal recently published by the Institute of Government and Public Affairs (IGPA) of the University of Illinois entitled, '[Six Simple Steps: Reforming the Illinois State University Retirement System.](#)' We believe that, as a package, the steps outlined in this proposal represent a viable path forward for reforming the SURS pension plan," the university chiefs stated. "Compared to other options, it represents the most desirable long-term solution."

The individual steps outlined in detail in the IGPA paper which is part of the Institute's ongoing contribution to the pension funding dialogue, would do the following:

- Change the annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) to link it to the consumer price index;
- Change the value of the Effective Rate of Interest to eliminate a so-called "hidden subsidy;"
- Shift pension contributions by the State to colleges and universities in a gradual transition;
- Increase employee contributions by an additional two percent;
- Require the State to amortize the current SURS unfunded liability; and
- Provide a new "hybrid" defined-benefit/defined-contribution plan for new employees.

**[President Obama submits proposals for fiscal year 2014 budget](#)**

On April 10, President Obama sent Congress his annual budget, requesting \$71.2 billion in discretionary funding for the U.S. Department of Education, an increase of \$3.1 billion -- or 4.5% -- over the Fiscal Year 2013 pre-sequester level. "We must continue to build on the reforms already transforming classrooms across the country," Secretary Arne Duncan stated. "Strategic investments in our educational system will not only provide more opportunities for millions of Americans, but they will also strengthen our Nation's workforce."

**UPCOMING**

**APRIL**

- 15** [House Higher Ed Committee](#), Room 115, Capitol, Springfield
- 16** [Senate Higher Ed Committee](#), Room 400, Capitol, Springfield
- 18 & 19** [House Appropriations-Higher Ed Committee](#), Room 114, Capitol, Springfield
- 18** [Senate Appropriations II Committee](#), Room 400, Capitol, Springfield
- 30** **ICCTA Board Meeting**, President Abraham Lincoln Hotel, Springfield

The President's budget is targeted to strengthen the education pipeline from cradle to career, including:

- Furthering the K-12 reform agenda by investing in school turnaround efforts, STEM programs (<http://www.ed.gov/stem>), and teachers and leaders (<http://www.ed.gov/teachers-leaders>), as well as increasing investments in what works (<http://www.ed.gov/k-12reforms>);
- Redesigning the high school experience and increasing the career readiness of high school students and adult learners (<http://www.ed.gov/highschool>); and
- Making college more affordable and improving quality by incentivizing states and institutions to do their part in controlling costs and providing value (<http://www.ed.gov/college>).

### **More diverse student success measures coming to IPEDS**

The National Center of Education Statistics has revealed plans to begin tracking and reporting on additional cohorts of students in the 2014-2015 collection including part-time students and non-first-time students. Comments are now being accepted on these proposed changes and more details can be found here; [http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/news\\_room/ana\\_04\\_08\\_2013.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/news_room/ana_04_08_2013.asp).

### **[With Monetary Award Program funds exhausted Federal Pell Grants still available](#)**

In 2013, Illinois students filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) have already qualified for nearly \$1.16 billion in federal Pell Grants to help pay for their postsecondary education during the 2013-2014 academic year. "Students should be aware that even with projected funding for the State's Monetary Award Program (MAP) exhausted, those who are MAP-eligible will likely also qualify for a Pell Grant, which can provide up to \$5,645 annually when attending an eligible institution full time," said Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) Executive Director Eric Zarnikow. "While not every student eligible for a grant claims one, last year Illinois students received more than \$1.3 billion in Pell Grants. When combined, MAP plus Pell accounted for nearly \$1.7 billion in non-loan financial assistance," Mr. Zarnikow added. "Pell is vitally important, especially when MAP funding is exhausted."

Mr. Zarnikow noted that nearly 94 percent of MAP-eligible students are also eligible for Pell. For a community college student in Illinois, the maximum Pell Grant covers 100 percent of tuition and fees with some money remaining to help pay for books and other expenses. "It's important that students not end their search for non-loan assistance once MAP awards are suspended," he added. "But, as with almost all financial assistance, the important first step is for a student to file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)."

### **[Illinois Student Assistance Commission Corps is still recruiting, apply today!](#)**

ISAC has several job openings in its ISACorps program for recent college graduates interested in working with students and parents as they navigate the college going process, especially for students who will be the first in their family to go to college and/or are from low-income households. The ISACorps program provides a tremendous opportunity for recent college graduates to gain work experience in a variety of education settings and help make a difference in the lives of students and families. As a result of their work, Corps members have presented at state and national conferences, transitioned to graduate school, and moved on to other exciting positions within education. Many former Corps members can be found working in high schools, colleges, and non-profit organizations throughout Illinois.

## High school students showcase financial knowledge, compete for scholarships at Financial Literacy Bowl



On March 15, over 100 Illinois high school students came together at the University of Illinois at Chicago to test their knowledge of financial awareness and vied for scholarship prizes at the second annual Financial Literacy Bowl, hosted by the Illinois College Advising Corps (ICAC). During this one-day tournament, teams of six seniors from ICAC's partner high schools competed against one another, solving challenging questions on interest rates, minimum wage, budgeting, and other important

real-world financial matters. The team of seniors from Rantoul High School came away as champions, with each team member winning a \$1,000 scholarship to the college of his or her choice.

The Illinois College Advising Corps is a program run by the University of Illinois in partnership with the National College Advising Corps, which places recent University of Illinois graduates in high-need high schools to help students through the college-going process. As a part of their overall college preparedness curriculum, ICAC Advisers have been facilitating financial literacy workshops designed to teach money management skills and knowledge critical to a successful financial future. In 2011, ICAC started the Financial Literacy Bowl to help ICAC Advisers get their students excited about financial literacy topics. The competitive atmosphere and the chance for scholarship dollars provide extra motivation for students to brush up on their knowledge.

### **Workshops planned to “*Delve into the Details*” of the ACE review process of military transcripts**

Illinois Joining Forces-Education Committee and the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs are hosting two workshops for College Deans, Admissions Counselors, Academic and Program Advisors, Career Advisors/Counselors, Veterans Service Coordinators and anyone involved in the evaluation of military transcripts; advising veterans and military members; and the determination of transfer credit policies. On April 23, the workshop will be held at Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield, and on April 24, at the College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn.

Workshop participants will learn about the new Joint Services Transcript from Michelle Spires, Director of Military Programs, Center for Lifelong Learning -- American Council on Education (ACE), who will lead the discussion on evaluation of learning acquired through military occupations and training.

Registration is free and includes lunch. Participants are required to preregister and will receive a ticket for the event. Seating is limited and **registration closes at 7:00 p.m. on April 16**. Register and receive your ticket at: <http://aceevent04232013.eventbrite.com>.

## [Webinar video from April 3 Veterans Conference now available on the IBHE website](#)

The IBHE, in partnership with the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Illinois Community College Board, and Parkland College, hosted a one-day event for veteran students, faculty, and staff members from all institutions of higher education on April 3, at Parkland College. The intent of the conference was to provide examples of strategies necessary to build a stronger foundation in student success programs for veterans, and develop a state network of informed professionals in higher education that will create a cohesive association to assist veteran students.

As a follow-up to last week's Veterans Conference, the IBHE has provided a link on its website to access the Conference's three Webinar sessions. Please go to <http://www.ibhe.org/Veteran/List2.asp> in order to view the sessions. The sessions showcase Amy Sherman from the Council on Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), Brian Clauss, Executive Director of The John Marshall Law School's Veterans Legal Support Center & Clinic, and a student veteran panel comprised of students from Parkland College, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and Eastern Illinois University.



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.

## [People in the News](#)

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



**Millikin University: Jamiahus D. Walton, is from Peoria, majoring in Physics.**



**Monmouth College: Michelle M. Hutchison, is from Galesburg, majoring in Communications and Public Relations.**



**National-Louis University: Willie Powell, is from Maywood, majoring in Applied Behavioral Sciences.**

***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

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### [Supporters unite at UI Day at the Capitol](#)

University of Illinois (UI) Day at the Capitol, sponsored by Illinois Connection, the UI Alumni Association's advocacy network for the University of Illinois, brought nearly 200 [University of Illinois students](#), alumni, staff and friends to Springfield to visit their state legislators on April 10. "Legislative decisions affect the success of Illinois," said UI President Bob Easter, who attended the fifth annual event and called it "an opportunity for alumni to express the value they found and continue to find in what we do" on all three UI campuses. Facts were shared to support the Monetary Award Program (MAP) grants for students and to fund the University at a level comparable to the last fiscal year (\$667 million). According to Amy Eichhorst, the Alumni Association's vice president of alumni advocacy and outreach, that level of funding, when adjusted for inflation, is below 1965 levels and in nominal dollars is the same amount the University received in 1997.

## News from Higher Education

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### ['Rethinking Pell Grants': Group suggests separate pathways for younger students and adult learners](#)

(Chronicle of Higher Education)

During the economic downturn, the Pell Grant program, the government's main support for needy college students, got more expensive, and at the same time President Obama called for more Americans to earn a postsecondary credential.

[Gap widens for faculty at colleges, report finds](#) (The New York Times)

For the academic elite — tenured professors at private research universities — average pay this year is \$167,118, while at public research universities such professors earn \$123,393, according to the annual report by the American Association of University Professors.

[Scorecards get an A](#) (Inside Higher Ed)

California's community college system unveiled [Web-based "scorecards" on student performance](#) at its 112 colleges. The new data tool is user-friendly and often sobering, with graduation, retention and transfer rates for each of the colleges and for the overall system, which enrolls 2.4 million students.

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