

Illinois Higher Ed
The Friday Memo

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[Expanding opportunity for every American: Education and the State of the Union](#)

President Obama delivered his [sixth State of the Union address](#) on January 20. In his speech, the President noted the significant educational progress that our nation's schools, teachers, and students have made – including young students earning math and reading scores at record levels, a high school graduation rate at an all-time high, and more Americans finishing college than ever before. He committed to his recently announced [America's College Promise](#) proposal, which would make two years of community college free for responsible students; and he asked more businesses to offer educational benefits and paid apprenticeships, giving workers the chance to advance in their careers, even if they haven't achieved higher education.

Below are education excerpts from the speech:

Higher Education:

"... I am sending this Congress a bold new plan to lower the cost of community college – to zero.

"Keep in mind: forty percent of our college students choose community college. Some are young and starting out. Some are older and looking for a better job. Some are veterans and single parents trying to transition back into the job market. Whoever you are, this plan is your chance to graduate ready for the new economy, without a load of debt. Understand, you've got to earn it – you've got to keep your grades up and graduate on time. Tennessee, a state with Republican leadership, and Chicago, a city with Democratic leadership, are showing that free community college is possible. I want to spread that idea all across America, so that two years of college becomes as free and universal in America as high school is today.

"Let's stay ahead of the curve. And I want to work with this Congress, to make sure those already burdened with student loans can reduce their monthly payments, so that student debt doesn't derail anyone's dreams."

Job Training and Workforce Development:

"... To give working families a fair shot, we still need more employers to see beyond next quarter's earnings and recognize that investing in their workforce is in their company's long-term interest.

"[T]o make sure folks keep earning higher wages down the road, we have to do more to help Americans upgrade their skills. ...Thanks to Vice President Biden's great work to update our job training system, we're connecting community colleges with local employers to train workers to fill high-paying jobs like coding, and nursing, and robotics. Tonight, I'm also asking more businesses to follow the lead of companies like CVS and UPS, and offer more educational benefits and paid apprenticeships – opportunities that give workers the chance to earn higher-paying jobs even if they don't have a higher education."

UPCOMING

JANUARY

23 [Illinois Community College Board](#) meeting, Crisp Community College Center, Springfield

27 [Illinois Student Assistance Commission](#) meeting, Bilandic Building, Chicago

29-30 Illinois Community College Presidents Council meeting, Heartland Community College, Normal

30-31 [IBHE-Student Advisory Committee](#), ISU, Normal

FEBRUARY

3 [IBHE Board Meeting](#), NEIU, Chicago

4 [State of the State message](#), Springfield

9 [ICCTA Board of Representatives](#) meetings, Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, Washington, D.C.

18 [Governor's Budget Address](#), Springfield

DCFS accepting applications for 2015 Scholarship Program

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is currently accepting applications for the 2015 DCFS Scholarship Program. The scholarship program provides a minimum of 53 scholarships each year, four of which are awarded to children of veterans. Those eligible to apply are youth who the department has court-ordered legal responsibility for, youth who aged out of the department's care at age 18 or older, youth who the department had legal responsibility for prior to the youth's adoption being finalized, and youth who are in the Subsidized Guardianship or KinGap Program.

Scholarship recipients receive up to five consecutive years of tuition and academic fee waivers to be used at participating Illinois state community colleges and universities, a monthly grant, and a medical card. Scholarship applicants are required to submit their applications to the Office of Education and Transition Services (OETS) no later than March 31, 2015. All questions, or to request a scholarship application, should be directed to either of the following DCFS offices: Springfield at (217) 557-2689 or Chicago at (312) 814-5959.

**STUDENT VETERANS LEADERSHIP DAY
February 25, 2015 – Illinois State Museum**



Student Veterans Leadership Day is an event for student veteran leaders attending Illinois' colleges and universities. Workshops will be designed to engage student veterans in four areas of leadership: Legislative, Entrepreneurial, Educational, and Community-Based.

On-line registration will begin in January. For questions, please contact Richard Tapia at tapia@ibhe.org.



Participation in this event is limited to the first 140 people to register. Registration is now open and can be accessed through the following link: <http://iccbdsrv.iccb.org/stuvetleadreg/registration.cfm>

After the Rainbow: The Future of Alliance Across Communities and the Implications for Higher Education

The Illinois Committee on Black Concerns in Higher Education (ICBCHE) and the Illinois Latino Committee on Higher Education (ILACHE) are involved in a collaborative effort to increase the participation of underrepresented students on college and university campuses across the State of Illinois. Through the two groups combined efforts the IALHEA Diversity Dialogue and Research Forum will take place on April 15, at the University of Illinois at Chicago Student Center East. Register [here](#).

Lincoln Academy of Illinois' Student Laureates honored



Dominican University: Arianna Salgado is from Chicago, majoring in History.



Eastern Illinois University: Mitchell Gurick is from Darien, majoring in Career and Technical Education.



Elmhurst College: Eleni N. Vrettos is from Cicero, majoring in Secondary Education and English.



Eureka College: Eleanor M. Stewart is from Holyoke, Colorado, majoring in Biology and Chemistry.

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

[Rock Valley College to Launch Celebration of 50th Anniversary](#)

Rock Valley College (RVC) will kick off a year-long celebration of its 50th anniversary. Rock Valley College was created by district-wide referendum on October 10, 1964, after a two-year study established the need for a community college. The first classes began on September 29, 1965, at various community locations and the first classes were held on what is now known as RVC's main campus on Mulford Road in the fall of 1966.

[YouTube Co-Founder Steve Chen designates \\$1 Million gift to IMSA for IN2 -- Innovation Hub](#)



Steve Chen, co-founder of YouTube and AVOS Systems, Inc., has designated a \$1,000,000 lead gift, through the Schwab Charitable Fund, to the IMSA Fund for Advancement of Education to benefit his alma mater, the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy (IMSA). The gift will be toward the construction of a \$1.9 million, 6,400 sq. ft. [Innovation Hub - an open space design concept for STEM collaboration and development -- IN2](#). The new space, coined as "IMSA's new front door," will be modeled in part after the highly successful digital co-op, 1871, in Chicago's Merchandise Mart. IMSA partners with 1871 to advance Chicago-area innovation and economic development and expand opportunities for entrepreneurial students.

News from Higher Education

[University of Illinois leaders speak out against sex assault](#) (Springfield State Journal-Register)

Big names at the University of Illinois are lending their voices to a White House-backed campaign to end sexual assaults at colleges across the country.

[Checked recovery continues](#) (Inside Higher Ed)

Most states increased higher education spending last year but half still spend less on college-related programs than they did five years ago, according to a Grapevine report.

[U of Illinois professor embraces open-source textbooks](#) (Springfield State Journal-Register)

One professor at the University of Illinois thought textbooks were getting too expensive, so he partnered with other educators to write their own book and make it available online to download for free.

[Support our students](#) (The New York Times)

All college commencements are happy, but community-college commencements are the happiest of all. Many of the graduates are the first in their extended family to have earned degrees.

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