

Report to Senate-October 2008

Since we met last, I have been to meetings at Lakeland and Morton colleges. This report will be brief. I have no official news on finances. Board staff are not speculating on what will happen after the election. What we do know is this. The legislature passed a funds sweep bill for around 220,000,000. Those funds were intended to fund keeping state parks and historic sites open the governor cut funding for last summer. Since the funds sweep was passed, the governor's office has sat on the funding-with no announcement the soon to be closed state sites will be reopened.

That may be good for us. There is no question that revenues are falling short of the projections the budget was based on. If the governor uses the funds sweep dollars to avoid a rescission or to make any rescission less onerous, any cuts we would have to endure could be smaller.

I brought to the group a draft of a plan being developed by John Haller in the president's office and Rick Pierce of the IBHE that could go a long way toward helping the public universities provide the degree completion programs on community college campuses that are now being provided by the privates like Franklin and Mid Continent Universities.

The Plan called the Preferred Provider Program calls for funds from the state to the publics who agree to provide a course degree program at one of the public's designated community college campuses. Money also flows to the community colleges involved. The idea is to beat the out of state privates on price and quality. The plan is a long way from being put into practice. Obstacles include opposition from private schools and actually having state money available to fund the programs.

One more item-and one for your calendars. The board is getting close to adopting a new strategic plan, called "The Public Agenda for College and Career Success." It has four major goals:

- Increase educational attainment to match the best-performing states and nations.
- Ensure college affordability for students, families, and taxpayers.
- Increase the number of individuals with quality postsecondary credentials to meet the demands of the economy.
- Better integrate Illinois' educational, research, and innovation assets to meet economic needs of the state and its regions.

The Board staff is taking the Public Agenda on the road to get public comments. They will be here on campus October 17th 1-3, in the Student Center Video Lounge on the 3rd Floor. This is an excellent opportunity to make your thoughts known to the Board. The Public Agenda can be found on the IBHE website at ibhe.org. If you are not able to go in person, you can make comments on the website.