

State of Illinois | REPORT

Underrepresented Groups in Academia Task Force

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Introduction

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), per directive of House Joint Resolution 2 (HJR 2) as passed during the spring 2017 legislative session, was assigned to provide administrative support to the Underrepresented Groups in Academia Task Force. The task force held its first meeting on November 30, 2017.

The task force worked to address the main points outlined in HJR 2, which included the following:

1. Perform an in-depth study and analysis to create strategies to sustain and grow Illinois's underrepresented group population in institutions of higher learning;
2. Develop transparent and common placement criteria so that students, teachers, and parents understand what is required in high school to ensure enrollment in credit-bearing college courses;
3. Determine the feasibility of an increase in laboratory schools to support the high school-to-college transition for students;
4. Ascertain the viability of the creation and construction of state government-owned and operated trade schools in Chicago, Rockford, Springfield, and the Metro-East area for non-college bound high school students, with an emphasis on the enrollment in those trade schools of students from underrepresented groups;
5. Ascertain the cause and effect of the drastic decrease of Black students enrolling in institutions of higher learning; and
6. Ascertain the cause and effect of the drastic increase of Latino students enrolling in institutions of higher learning.

Based upon this criteria, task force members decided to split up into three subcommittees to undertake the focus of this work.

1. Enrollment
2. Institutional Policy and Development
3. Student Support Services.

The subcommittees each held one meeting prior to each full task force meeting, usually via conference call.

The underlying mission of the Underrepresented Groups in Academia Task force was to analyze and determine ways to better assist African-American and Latino populations, in particular, in achieving success in their post-secondary endeavors. This includes examining the roles of both personal and educational environments where these students are based in order to provide an optimum outcome tailored to meet their needs.

Rep. Andre Thapedi explained that the impetus for this task force was the bill that he filed during the spring 2017 session (HB 230), which mirrors Texas law in requiring public universities to accept the top 10 percent of graduating students from across the state.

While the task force has many recommendations for specific improvements, they fall into several categories:

I. Awareness

- Students, education institutions from middle school through college, and their families need greater awareness of the many secondary and vocational training opportunities available in Illinois and the benefits of each of them. Better coordination among every level of education and every kind of opportunity would help provide high school students with fulsome information in their decision-making process. Many high schools and secondary education institutions have successful programs that should be communicated across the state.
- Intrusive advising would provide more information and stronger encouragement to pursue secondary education.
- Best practice programs for high school advising must be shared.

II. Support Services

The task force believes some secondary institutions should be more welcoming and more supportive to underrepresented students, and assist students who are at risk for underperforming or falling through the cracks.

- Intrusive advising and mentorship, and rewards to staff/faculty who successfully implement these, will be key to keeping students engaged and inspired.
- Best practice programs for high school advising must be shared.

III. Financing Secondary Education

- Financing secondary education must be possible for underrepresented students. Funding for Monetary Award Program (MAP) grants is crucial to college access for underrepresented student because even the knowledge that the state does provide assistance is a major factor in a student's roadmap for further education and training.
- Outreach to Pell-eligible students must increase.
- Additionally, lawmakers should consider changes to state law to allow for flexibility in procurement and partnerships that would lower higher education costs.

Research

The group used the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) Underrepresented Groups Report as a guiding document to assist with defining the current enrollment of underrepresented students. This report identified the number of students of color who were enrolled in each state school and based on the information reported, it also assisted with what institutions are doing for this population of students (ethnic minority, first-generation and low-income).

The task force reviewed the College Enrollment Patterns October 2017 Consortium report to see what our secondary institutions are doing as far as graduation rate, academic preparedness for higher education, and percentage of high school students who transition to both the two-year or four-year institutions. This information helped to see exactly what we needed to do to improve student enrollment and retention of particularly at-risk student populations. Comprehensive data is located on this website that could prove beneficial to further examining this issue. The group was very interested in this and said they would review the data.

The group believes that school guidance counseling plays a key role in assisting these underrepresented students and getting them “college ready.” Questions we asked: Is there a pipeline challenge? Which colleges help first-generation students succeed and complete? Students should choose colleges that are “best fits” for their overall needs – is this happening? In turn, the type of jobs these students secure post-graduation may shed further light on the success of the various guidance initiatives offered for and to them during their college experience

Possible reasons for the decrease in the number of African-American students:

- State budget challenges have led to reductions in need-based aid, less direct funding
- For public universities, increasing outmigration by Illinois high school graduates.
- Even before enrolling in college, the biggest barrier, especially for first generation students, is college affordability.
- Low-income families face greater burdens as the cost of college rises.

According to the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), White students are overrepresented, and Black and Hispanic students are underrepresented among bachelor’s degree recipients relative to their representation in the general population. (AAC&U News, May 2016) The national demographics for access, retention and college completion reflects unequal outcomes among underserved students, more specifically for Black and Latino students. Among students in the bottom socio-economic quartile, 15 percent had earned a bachelor’s degree within eight years of their expected high school graduation, compared with 22 percent in the second quartile, 37 percent in the third quartile, and 60 percent in the top quartile. (AAC&U News, May 2016) Regardless of how they're defined, first-generation students enroll and graduate at lower rates than do other students. (InsideHigherEd, November 2015) We also know that about 90 percent of low-income, first-generation students do not graduate within six years. (EAB, May 2016)

Unfortunately, these disparities ring true in the State of Illinois across racial and economic lines. According to Partnership for College Completion in its report entitled *Unequal Opportunity in Illinois: A Look at Who Graduates College and Why it Matters – A Meta-Analysis* (September 2017, p. 5), 6-year graduation rates in Illinois remain unequal along racial and ethnic lines.

- African-American 33.7%
- Hispanic 49.3%
- White 66.4%

These graduation rates reflect a complex set of factors that contribute to unequal outcomes for Black and Latino students in Illinois. The policy subcommittee has identified financial, academic and environmental factors that could account for the large number of Black and Latino students who are eligible to enroll in any of Illinois state colleges and universities but have not. College affordability and preparation, family education and awareness can determine if a student sees college attendance as a realistic goal that they can achieve. Many Black and Latino students are graduating from high school and in 2016 reached a high of 86 percent graduation rate. (IBHE- IL School Report Card 2012-16). According to the Partnership for College Completion, despite the increased number of high school graduation rates, the total number of students enrolling in college immediately after high school has only increased by four percent up to 60 percent between 2005 and 2015. In the last ten years, the number Black and Latino students enrolling in undergraduate education has increased from 37 percent to 46 percent in 2016, however, much of this increase is a result of the number of Latino students choosing to attend college, while the number of African-American students enrolling in higher education has declined by 25 percent. As the number of high school graduates grow, it is imperative to increase the number of high school graduates as well as adult learners enrolling in Illinois public higher education.

Any analysis of college opportunity for African-American and Hispanic students in Illinois must focus on the costs of college and the financing of a college education. The poverty rates in Illinois vary dramatically by race: Nine percent for whites, 20 percent for Hispanics, and 30 percent for Blacks. The median household incomes for families of color are significantly below household incomes for whites. Several important factors impacting diversity in Illinois higher education are addressed in this report. However, it seems only common sense to believe that as long as large segments of families in Illinois cannot find a way to finance college from enrollment to graduation, we will not meet the challenge to increase college access and success for underrepresented students.

A college education was once thought to level the playing field for graduates entering the workforce. However, recent studies have shown that despite growing access to higher education for all, there remains an achievement gap between college-educated whites and people of color. A recent study on the demographics of wealth between 1989 and 2016 from the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis has shown that while white, college-educated people have regained much of their upward mobility following the Recession, non-college educated whites and college-educated Blacks' and Hispanics' wages have stagnated.

It is imperative for Illinois to close the achievement gap before, during and after graduation for low-income and minority students. This will provide opportunities to create more

marketable skill sets that in turn enhance industry growth and economic viability in Illinois. Diversity is a strength, education is economic development – therefore, by enhancing diversity in the workplace through the development of underrepresented professionals, this goal simultaneously benefits students and the economy.

In an effort to explore the topic of lab schools, the task force scheduled a full task force meeting at Illinois State University, where the group looked into University High. University High School Principal Andrea Merkert presented the following information about U High:

- U High is owned by ISU, though it is considered to be a public high school.
- The main purpose of U High is to be a ‘living lab’ for those students who want to become teachers. 150-160 ISU students are assigned to classes and work with high school students.
- ISU students and professors volunteer their time to come tutor students. This is a different environment from a typical public high school in the area; more advantageous with connection to ISU.
- Equipment and support is provided from ISU. Through the *Joe Club*, alumni make donations to help students pay for ACT prep classes, college visits, dual credit courses, summer courses, and supplies. Offers opportunities that parents can’t provide.
- Computers are provided to students as freshmen. The school is open and accessible to students 6 a.m. – 10 p.m. with few issues.
- U High does not currently have a diverse faculty but is working to improve this. Minority students do tend to relate to faculty from similar backgrounds. *Example:* An African-American male ISU student came and tutored African-American male students with math, and their grades improved, greatly.
- 610 high school students accepted (this figure never changes).
- Over 30 percent of student population is minority; only about eight percent is low-income.
- U High is not classified as a “gifted” school.
- U High students who graduate predominantly end up attending U of I and ISU, and go out of state too.
- A video describes U High’s freshman program, which encourages team building and communal behaviors among newly-enrolled students. Student testimonials indicated that this is a very positive transitional experience.
- U High selects students through an admissions committee, and the committee casts a wide net. Current student/parent recruitment can impact admissions. There are some non-native English speakers, though they are fairly proficient in English by the time they arrive at U High.
- ISU students prepare to teach to a diverse student population by going to other high schools in the area to meet a special education/socio-economic requirement.
- The percentage of U High students who go on to attend a four-year institution is in the 80s.
- The percentage of U High students who go on to attend community college is in the 90s.

- U High tracks its graduates and has found that the percentage of students who graduate from college is in the low 90s.
- One-on-one attention and work is highly beneficial. Counselors meet with students to assist them with applying for college and seeking scholarship opportunities.
- Other high schools in the district call and ask for advice on how to implement some of the programs at U High.
- U High rarely dismisses students. Once they are accepted, they expect every student to succeed.
- *Student Assistance Program (SAP)* – provides teachers/counselors to assist in broadening student social and skill groups as needed.
- *U-Connect* – provides tutoring on behalf of ISU students in math, literacy, and test-taking ability.
- Successes of its program:
 - Personalized education plans (students work)
 - Resource referrals
 - Activities/student events that all students were required to participate in
 - Advanced enrichment classes

During a recently held conference call with the Partnership for College Completion (PCC) in order to connect their work. PCC is a relatively new 501(c)(3) nonprofit committed to improving completions for African-American and Latino students in Illinois. Its overarching mission is to increase public awareness of the achievement gap which has put college education out of reach for low-income students and students of color. PCC seeks to promote public policy agenda which will create student success by working towards the affordability of education, increasing transfer student success, decreasing both number of students and length of time in remediation and providing technical support to institutions. This fall, PCC plans to gather a cohort of around 20 colleges committed to closing the achievement gap by 2025.

Formulizing partnerships between community colleges and four-year universities would work to smooth the transition for transfer students, which helps to prevent students from losing momentum towards degree completion. It is also key to build and maintain relationships between K-12 and higher education institutions because the path to college starts early. At a recent task force panel, students suggested that there should be more emphasis on high school counseling to prepare for college life – both academically and socially.

The students at the panel made many valuable suggestions, giving firsthand insight as to how colleges can support and retain them. Students would like more opportunities to lead discussions surrounding the issues of student retention and the achievement gap. The theme of the panel discussion centered on keeping things relevant and hands-on to maintain student engagement. Universities will need to get more creative in their use of both marketing and dissemination of important information – creating relatable ways for students to engage and obtain information through apps and social media.

The panel concluded there should be consistent efforts to welcome a diverse student body and provide hands-on opportunities to engage students in the campus community. This means universities need to focus on facilitation of student/faculty relationships. Underrepresented faculty are lacking in higher education, which makes it difficult for underrepresented students to find role models to relate to. There needs to be support in place for non-traditional students who represent the new majority – minorities, veterans, first generation, returning students, etc. It is key for universities to provide relatable peer mentors/ liaisons who can assist these students.

Legislative Initiatives:

- AIM HIGH initiative passed the Illinois General Assembly this session, aimed at recruitment and retention of Illinois college students. \$25 million institutional match. Students must be Illinois citizens with an income threshold of \$150,000. Institutions match dollar-for-dollar, like a waiver. Institutions decide how to use the funds.
- At the start of the 2019-2020 academic year, public college and university students who have completed at least 30 credit hours have to disclose major aspirations to academic advisors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Awareness

Too many students and their families do not know what opportunities exist in Illinois, and when they should pursue them. The Task Force learned the following:

- Illinois has 24 area career/vocational centers throughout the state, which serve more than 11,000 students.
- More than 34,393 students attended Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs), which includes some community colleges, in the 2015-15 academic year.
- Illinois also has about 200 private and vocational schools, the Illinois Math and Science Academy and 12 public universities.
- Two-year colleges are important because national policy discussions increasingly emphasize the roles they play in expanding access to higher education and in providing a viable path to a family-sustaining job (Carnevale, Jayasundera, & Hanson (2012).
- Illinois Network of Charter Schools information offers the following, including traits that predict success:
 - 98 percent of charter students are African-American or Latino.
 - Medium-higher selected smaller colleges are doing a better job of supporting these students by making a commitment to support them – larger institutions don't necessarily provide adequate support.
 - North Lawndale College Prep (Phoenix Pact) – includes 65 colleges signed up to commit to enrolling students of color; commit to helping with additional fees.

Traits:

1. Academic preparation – persistence metrics (GPA + performance)
2. College fit – picking college with track record of success for at-risk students
3. Support once in school – Posse Program
4. Sufficient financial aid – thoroughly vet options to ensure best fit/outcome
5. High school predictors – emotional intelligence

Recommendations:

- More emphasis on high school counseling to prepare for college life – both academically and socially.
- Financial literacy should be prevalent among all who work with high school students.
- Expand outreach programs that help families and students apply to college and navigate the complex admissions process. This should include an increase in funding for ISAC college readiness programs such as the advising corp that have demonstrated effectiveness.
- Develop targeted approaches for adult learners seeking reentry into higher education.
- Design academic programs accessible to adult learners including online, blended, and cohort programs.
- Provide basic resources to prepare for interviews (such as professional attire).

- Develop a student survey on career goals and intentions to pursue secondary education, which will help students learn more about opportunities, and give secondary education a better view of their potential users.
- How many students prefer vocational, or some alternate type of training, to a ‘traditional’ college experience? What other programs are out there? - SURVEY
- Middle-school guidance counseling access – counselor to student ratios to increase counseling availability.
- Tap into alumni networks and do annual programming for students in high school – college fairs.
- Parental involvement earlier on in the schooling process.

Support Services

Illinois needs to focus on growing and maintaining underserved student enrollment, providing support services to students, and changing institutional policy to help better serve the community. This is not just on recruitment, but also on retention of students enrolled in college, providing career-building activities along the way. We seek to structure more coherent pathways to decrease the time it takes students to complete their degree, aiming for four-to-six-year graduation time to increase likelihood of wrap-around services, internships, and degree completion.

Higher education institutions also need to track students throughout their academic careers. Advisors need to be readily accessible and able to provide the appropriate one-on-one support for every student. Meeting these needs would require additional staff and financial support. For students who come from underrepresented backgrounds, their social determinates do not go on hold while they attend our institutions, and stress and trauma from home experiences stay with them. Lack of social capital leaves students wandering through their campus experience and intimidated on who to trust and ask for help.

Currently, institutions are required to report advising and support programs for MAP recipients. Advising questions center on mandatory advising, mode of delivery, contact, time, and frequency. All are self-reported. Furthermore, a report from the MPA Advising Workgroup documents advising data in more detail. (*2013 Illinois Student Support Services Survey – Illinois MAP Eligible Students*) “Forty-two percent of all respondents to our survey indicated they are having problems that are making it difficult to stay in school. When asked to identify the factors or issues that are making it difficult to stay in school, 53 percent reported the cost of college is too high, 35 percent said family reasons, 24 percent employment opportunities, 23 percent each either said school is conflicting with their job or they are having trouble organizing their time, and/or 21 percent each either reported they are having difficulties with classes or they need to support their family.” A surprising number of students reported academic advising provided assistance outside the traditional service of choosing classes and major, with 45 percent receiving information about campus resources and support services. 40 percent financial information, and 19 percent receiving emotional support and guidance.

The committee considered the success of student services outside of Illinois institutions, including a “Hub” in Atlanta, a learning resource center at the University of Washington, and a student success program at Georgia State University. The “Student Success Life Cycle” at Georgia State includes Georgia State LIFT (Learning, Income and Family Transformation), Reduction of Summer Melt, Summer Success Academy, Freshman Learning Communities and Meta Majors, Adaptive Learning Tools, Upgraded Pathway to Careers, GPS Advising, Suntrust Financial Management Center, Panther Retention Grants (small grants for financial shortfalls) and Keep HOPE Alive Scholarships (small stipends serving as incentives). Several of the programs use predictive analytics for monitoring student success and providing early interventions; the committee believes that “intrusive advising” is vital to student retention and success.

The task force chose to define support services beyond the customary notions of student support. Illinois is home to an academically-underserved, untapped adult population of African-Americans and Latinos. Only 32 percent of African-Americans and 21 percent of Hispanics possess a college degree; 30 percent of African-Americans have had some college. (60 by 25 Equity Targets Meeting, CRC Committee, July 31, 2018). Appropriate academic and financial support for adult learners needs to recognize the differences engendered by life experiences.

Recommendations:

- Develop social service supports and financial literacy programs for all students at public higher education institutions.
- Consider redesign and expansion of the DFI program to building a strong pipeline for public institutions to recruit faculty of color in the state of Illinois. The Southern Regional Education Board Doctoral Scholars Program could be a best practice model.
- Public institutions must develop an institutional policy that rewards faculty mentorship of students of color.
- Institutions are encouraged to use best practices that have been identified to effectively demonstrate successful institutional outcomes for students.
- Develop a state-wide predictive analytics system available to all public universities to assist at-risk students with early interventions, most successfully utilized by Georgia State University.
- Expand the predictive analytics system to secondary education, pioneered by the University of Minnesota Extension Partnering for School Success Project.
- Survey high school students in target regions to determine the demand for State-owned and operated trade schools.
- It can be hard for students from a larger city to adjust to a smaller community, or vice versa. The community has to adjust to the students, too. Diversity training/promotion of working together on campus would be beneficial here.
- Needs to be support in place for single-parent students, and different ‘types’ of students, in general (first generation, transfer, etc.). Perhaps admissions offices can provide relatable peer mentors and/or liaisons who can assist these students?
- Need to facilitate student-led relationships. If students can’t relate, they won’t listen.
- Facilitation of student/faculty relationships. Underrepresented faculty is lacking, which makes it difficult for underrepresented students to find someone to relate to, or a role model.
- What can institutions do to help navigate the campus climate? Look for ways to create community.
- Need to change the systems that are in place to facilitate growth in peer mentoring for underrepresented students. Provide financial support, staff – maybe more of an intrusive advising scenario.
- Make incoming student forums/orientations more informative – maybe even offer for transfer students we well. Perhaps poll students after each orientation to find out what they would like to see.

- Arizona State offers an ‘*Online Major Map*,’ where students are able to track and see what classes/credits they need in their fields of study. Institutions need to track students throughout their academic careers. Advisors are not always accessible or able to provide the appropriate one-on-one to every student.
- Students are more and more reliant on social media/phone use. Maybe provide an app where students can obtain the information they need.
- Smaller institutions seem to be able to accommodate their student populations more effectively in some cases. Larger institutions need to create a more hands-on environment.
- Suggestions for additional information and data from the Underrepresented Groups Report:
 - Ask institutions specifically about cultural centers, for example, and other facilities that are specifically aimed at assisting underrepresented students.
 - Gauge participation – how are students doing?
 - Overall graduation/retention rates for students of color.
 - Programs specific for first-generation students.
 - Track first-generation students (possibly part-time and transfers as well).
- Exit interviews for students who don’t return to college.
- GSU has a Men’s Success Initiative – peer to peer/mentor to peer for African-American and Latino students.
- Affinity groups could help students attending college in an unfamiliar area of the state to become more comfortable with their surroundings.

Financing

While still not adequate to the national need, the federal PELL Grant program has grown in number of awardees and size of awards over the last decade. The same cannot be said for Illinois' state programs. Early in this century funds were adequate to ensure that Illinois state need based grants (or MAP grants) were given to all qualified applicants. MAP and PELL grants covered the cost of a four- or two-year college degree in Illinois. Less than 20 years later, MAP funds support only half of the qualified applicants. According to an analysis by the Chicago Tribune recently, about 160,000 students who applied and qualified for these need-based grants received no support because the program ran out of money. Moreover, the MAP grants now cover only a fraction of the cost of a bachelor's degree at a four-year college in Illinois.

These numbers do not include the thousands of likely PELL-eligible students in Illinois who do not even apply for MAP or PELL grants for college. A recent state by state analysis of the PELL grant program showed that each year Illinois leaves more than \$110,000 in federal Pell grants on the table because of the number of PELL eligible students who do not receive grants. The number of recent legislative efforts to tweak the MAP program in various ways do not address the real elephant in the room. Illinois must revitalize its MAP program, a national model for decades. Its need-based structure is what every expert in college financing would recommend as needed to raise state college attainment levels.

Recommendations:

While there are no silver bullets, simple strategies would make a dramatic difference in college opportunity for underserved students.

- Immediately add sufficient funds to the program to ensure all eligible MAP applicants receive awards.
- Launch outreach programs to ensure more Pell-eligible students apply through the MAP program for Pell and MAP programs. Over the course of a four-year college degree span the latter effort would bring hundreds of millions of additional Pell dollars to Illinois to support college for its most vulnerable students. Given state poverty and income levels, it is safe to assume that a significant percentage of those students would be Black and Hispanic. Of course, more effective college outreach to all the Pell-eligible students in Illinois would require further increases in MAP funding over time to meet the real needs of Illinois' low-income population. However, the return on investment of that increase would include up to \$110,000 annual increase in Pell support.
- State government should work with its colleges to identify who is getting institutional aid from private and public colleges and develop strategies to ensure that underrepresented students are accessing this assistance. If combined with the recommended expansion in access to Pell and MAP grants, these three sources of funds could, by themselves, significantly increase the diversity of Illinois' campuses.
- To guarantee maximum impact of the increased targeted funding called for here, state government should work with ISAC, ISBE, and its colleges to deliver

expanded financial counseling to students (adult and traditional) and parents beginning in high school and continuing to graduation. Such programs help students plan for the full cost of college attendance, including housing, dining, and transportation. In other states such programs have been shown to increase college access and success as fewer students drop out due to finances, promote smart subsidized borrowing when loans are needed, and minimize overall student loan debt.

- Immediately increase MAP funding to ensure all qualified applicants receive a MAP grant (currently increasing the number of grants by 160,000).
- Increase college outreach to PELL-eligible students tapping up to \$110,000,000 in unused federal PELL funds in Illinois. Provide corresponding increases in MAP funding as the number of qualified applicants grows through this program.
- Expand financial counseling programs to ensure effective financial planning before and during college, fewer college dropouts due to finances, smarter borrowing when required, and lower student debt levels.
- Study, and as possible, redirect institutional financial aid to target increased college access and success for underserved students.
- Encourage implementation of cost reduction strategies on campuses.
- Streamline and simplify state regulations to encourage innovation, public/private partnerships, and adaptive, nimble approaches to cost containment by colleges and directly add costs to degrees.
- Re-examine and redesign the state “priority” MAP program which has been shown to accelerate tuition levels over time compared to other states and hurt college affordability in Illinois.
- Create matching state funds to incentivize Illinois public institutions’ partnerships with corporate/industry partners to develop internships and research opportunities for students of color. Expanded internship opportunities should reduce the inequitable ROI of a bachelor’s degree for minority students shown in current research.
- In addition to MAP, ensure that AIM HIGH and other state scholarship dollars are equitably distributed to support student of color enrolling in Illinois public institutions.
- Develop transparent and consistent admissions and recruitment policies across all public higher education institutions so that all high school teachers, students, and parents clearly know what defines college readiness.
- All public institutions must create holistic and intrusive advising policies to ensure students stay on a clear career pathway to degree completion that reduces excess credit hours to degree and college costs.
- Seminars or workshop prior to the beginning of each academic year to educate students and their families about their options.
- Colleges themselves must aggressively address the cost challenge. Effective cost containment strategies have been identified in research and should include:
 - Innovative use of technology to expand capacity of high demand programs and reduce costs generally

- Focused first-year programs that ensure all students complete credit-bearing math and English requirements and choose a program of study thus doubling their chances of graduation
- Strong advising and pathway programs that eliminate excess credits and time to degree which add many thousands of dollars to the cost of a degree for many students.
- Creative public/private partnerships that effectively use partners to more efficiently deliver required services (housing, technology implementation, data analysis/mining, student success tracking, intrusive advising).

Many of these strategies will require adaptive and nimble contracting and partnership creation by the colleges. For this to be possible the state must engage in a dramatic redesign of its procurement, unfunded mandates, and other regulations for higher education. The current state approach directly discourages innovation, nimble adaptation, and creative partnerships. It also adds personnel and other costs, raising the cost per degree for students. Consistent with the recommendations of the recent IBHE report on college affordability, Illinois should reconsider its current “tuition priority” program. While the program is attractive on one level in prioritizing students for MAP grants in subsequent years after being awarded a MAP grant in the first year, powerful empirical research conducted on the Illinois program has clearly shown that the long-term effects of the program are to significantly accelerate tuition levels faster for students over time than in states without such a guarantee. In retrospect, this outcome is logical. Colleges know they must lock-in tuition for four years each time it is set. They also know they cannot predict changes that may occur in the environment during that period (e.g., budget impasses/cuts, dramatic cost increases in essential services and products). The smart business strategy then is to minimize risk by setting tuitions higher.

Funding is key to retention. First and foremost, universities must provide education for students about financial aid through workshops and seminars early in the school year. Students would also benefit from financial literacy workshops geared towards loan repayment and building credit post-graduation. For students, remaining in college is often an economic issue. In order to provide funding to better serve students, higher education institutions would need to increase the buying power of MAP awards and investigate incentives for equity-based funding.

Illinois can achieve its goal of narrowing achievement gaps by providing resources necessary to success for underserved students. Colleges and universities can assure their success before, during and after graduation by keeping them involved in the conversation and providing consistent education, financial support and mentorship. Students who have earned the right for a college experience should have it with full accessibility and support that carries over into their careers and postsecondary education.

Conclusion

The recommendations and work conducted by this task force span many months of thorough group discussions and analysis. Ensuring underrepresented student group success in seeking postsecondary education requires an ongoing effort on behalf of not only Illinois colleges and universities, but also high schools, counselors and advisors, and all other support-related tools that lend themselves to helping underrepresented students thrive beyond a junior high and high school setting.

Graduating high school students decide every year whether to attend college or enter the workforce. For many high school students, college readiness, or the lack thereof, prevents them from choosing to attend college. In addition, many of these students hail from ethnic or racial backgrounds that have had historically limited educational opportunities. Breaking down these barriers takes time, support, and care on behalf of those most directly involved, particularly parental/familial structure and school resources and advisors. Not all students have the benefit of such attributes, which makes it more crucial for high schools and postsecondary institutions to step up and provide the guidance necessary to assist these students.

These concerns are not new. Underrepresented students, particularly those coming from underserved areas where schools are not as economically viable, tend to struggle more with college preparedness, and are unaware of the benefits a college education or vocational training can provide. This ever-evolving rhetoric is reflected in the recommendations of this task force and should continue to be at the forefront and interest of any and all dialogue regarding the success of postsecondary education in Illinois.

APPENDIX A
TASK FORCE AND SUBCOMMITTEE ATTENDANCE

FULL TASK FORCE MEETINGS

Task force members present included:

November 30, 2017 Conference Call

Rep. Andre Thapedi
Rep. Norine Hammond
Dr. Mona Davenport
Dr. Valerie Goss
Dr. Satasha Green
Ms. Veronica Cortez
Dr. Suleyma Perez
Dr. Linda Baker
Mr. Andrew Broy
Dr. Vernese Edghill-Walden
Mr. Will Davis
Ms. Candace Moore
Dr. Daniel Lopez
Ms. Claudia Castro
Dr. James Applegate

February 13, 2018 Illinois State University

Dr. Mona Davenport
Dr. Nancy 'Rusty' Barcelo
Dr. Valerie Goss
Dr. Jim Applegate
Mr. Will Davis
Dr. Vernese Edghill-Walden
Ms. Cathy Early
Dr. Suleyma Perez
Dr. Linda Baker
Dr. Satasha Green

May 8, 2018 Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

Dr. Mona Davenport
Dr. Valerie Goss
Dr. Jim Applegate
Dr. Vernese Edghill-Walden
Dr. Suleyma Perez
Dr. Daniel Lopez
Mr. Trey Price (representing Dr.
Barcelo)

August 21, 2018 Northern Illinois University

Dr. Vernese Edghill-Walden
Dr. Mona Davenport
Dr. Mark Sudeith
Dr. Jim Applegate
Will Davis
Rusty Barcelo

September 20, 2018 Illinois State University

Mona Davenport
Vernese Edghill-Walden
Mark Sudeith
Jim Applegate
Will Davis
Rusty Barcelo

SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

Enrollment/Student Participation Subcommittee

**January 1, 2018
Conference Call**

State Rep. Andre Thapedi
Dr. Mona Davenport
Ms. Cathy Early
Ms. Khadine Bennett
Ms. Veronica Cortez
Mr. Andrew Broy

**March 22, 20178
Conference Call**

State Rep. Andre Thapedi
Dr. Mona Davenport
Ms. Cathy Early
Ms. Khadine Bennett
Mr. Andrew Broy

Institutional Policy/Development Subcommittee

**January 31, 2018
Conference Call**

State Rep. Norine
Hammond
Dr. Vernese
Edghill-Walden
Dr. James Applegate
Mr. Will Davis
Ms. Candace Moore

**March 16, 2018
Conference Call**

State Rep. Andre
Thapedi
Dr. Vernese
Edghill-Walden
Dr. James Applegate
Mr. Will Davis

**June 18, 2018
Conference Call**

State Rep. Norine
Hammond
Dr. Vernese
Edghill-Walden
Dr. James Applegate
Mr. Will Davis

Support Services Subcommittee

**January 24, 2018
Conference Call**

State Rep. Andre Thapedi
Dr. Valerie Goss
Dr. Satasha Green
Dr. Linda Baker

**June 1, 2018
Conference Call**

Dr. Linda Baker
Mr. Trey Price (for Dr. Barcelo)

APPENDIX B
DATA RESOURCES

DATA RESOURCES

Charter Schools Information:

<https://www.incschools.org/about-charters/school-performance/>

IBHE Underrepresented Groups Report:

<https://www.ibhe.org/board/2018/march/URG2017.pdf>

Information from the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research:

<https://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/educational-attainment-chicago-public-schools-students-2016>

2016 Attainment Report:

<https://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/educational-attainment-chicago-public-schools-students-2016>

Details on college enrollment:

<https://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/patterns-two-year-and-four-year-college-enrollment-among-chicago-public-schools>

General project website for work on attainment:

<https://toandthrough.uchicago.edu/>

Data from the Partnership for College Completion:

<http://partnershipfcc.org/meta-analysis>

Performance funding:

https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=ZVfzDAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR5&q=performance+funding+HCM&ots=_JfHsBeu5z&sig=TXIxnCjFhy_BGjKz_PyXzNg_BMs#v=onepage&q=performance%20funding%20HCM&f=false

Data links from ISAC:

Link to general information about the MAP Advising Working Group that ISAC facilitated a few years ago, including links to data, resources, etc. –

<http://www.isac.org/about-isac/map-advising-workgroup/index.html>.

As a result of the working group's recommendations, ISAC implemented a process to collect information from MAP-approved schools about their advising and support programs as well as graduation, retention and completion data on an annual basis. The database is intended to serve as a repository of best practices, and will eventually include more descriptive data that schools can use to develop additional programs and/or enhance existing programs. The database information will also be analyzed along with the retention and completion data to identify which programs/approaches are working particularly well.

Link to the database of information that schools are reporting to ISAC about their student advising programs – <http://www.isac.org/about-isac/map-advising-workgroup/programs-searchable-database.html>

Link to information about the data collection tools/guidance we use to gather retention and completion data from the schools – <http://www.isac.org/about-isac/map-advising-workgroup/data-collection/>

Additional resources:

<https://1k9gl1yevnfp2lpq1dhrqe17-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/PracticeGuide1.pdf> (Ed trust analysis of effective college practices at institutions that have dramatically reduce gaps)

<https://completecollege.org/completion-roadmap/> (Complete College game changers)

https://cue.usc.edu/files/2017/02/Overcoming-Challenges_Final_Online.pdf (Center for Urban Education review)

<http://www.umuc.edu/documents/upload/predictive-analytics-for-student-success-executive-report.pdf> (Two- to four-year transition – Maryland)

<https://www.eab.com/research-and-insights/academic-affairs-forum/studies/2016/promoting-timely-degree-completion> (Proven strategies that cut costs and get students out on time)

<http://www.k12.wa.us/Equity/pubdocs/AfAmerAchGapReport.pdf>

<https://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/educational-attainment-chicago-public-schools-students-2016>

<https://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/vocational-trade-school/illinois/>

<https://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/patterns-two-year-and-four-year-college-enrollment-among-chicago-public-schools>

<https://www.incschools.org/about-charters/school-performance/>

<https://bebraven.org/about-us/>

https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A_www.thirdway.org_report_completion-2Dreforms-2Dthat-2Dwork-2Dhow-2Dleading-2Dcollege-2Dare-2Dimproving-2Dthe-2Dattainment-2Dof-2Dhigh-2Dvalue-2Ddegrees&d=DwIFAg&c=euGZstcaTDllvimEN8b7jXrwqOf-v5A_CdpgnVfiiMM&r=7_ZhIEYb20RW2q6wttmug&m=dcKP-8X9DXwxE9pji1Id1bZZGEgbQZbJZtD_1jMP6kI&s=5FNT7lpGSZEIGB6fUlWvCqvptYXzdsGyKUZK63az5x8&e

APPENDIX C
HIGHER EDUCATION WORKING GROUP LEGISLATION

HIGHER EDUCATION WORKING GROUP LEGISLATION

After months of deliberate study and conversations around the future of Illinois' higher education system, the Higher Education Working Group of the Illinois General Assembly has developed a series of impactful legislation aimed at strengthening Illinois' colleges and universities and making them more attractive and affordable for students across the state for many years to come.

SB 2354 –

Starting in 2019-2020, each public college and university student with 30 academic credit hours completed must disclose their degree programs of interest to their college or university for a possible advisement session. IBHE and ICCB shall develop policies to encourage reverse transfer credits for students at colleges and universities. Tuition waiver amounts shall not be limited by the Board of Higher Education at public universities.

HB 5020 –

Expands MAP grant awards to public institutions from yearly to four years.

SJR 76 –

Instructs IBHE, ICCB and public institutions to work together on identifying cases where courses are not transferable with full credit between institutions, ensure the General Education Core curricula has aligned course codes and prevent students transferring between Illinois public institutions from having to retake core curriculum courses or take additional general education courses to satisfy degree requirements.

SB 2927 –

Creates the AIM HIGH Grant Pilot Program to encourage access and affordability for Illinois colleges and universities through a new merit-based scholarship. Illinois citizens with qualifying income, GPAs and test scores would be eligible, and funds would be provided through the Illinois Student Assistance Commission to colleges and universities who participate. Participation in the program will be tracked by ISAC and reported back to the Illinois General Assembly.

SB 2969 –

Greatly expands debt limits at the state's public universities to allow them to address deferred maintenance and make capital improvements that have been delayed for several years. Universities must disclose how the borrowing for capital improvements will affect their overall fiscal condition to the General Assembly.

HB 4781 –

Authorizes the Illinois State Board of Education to conduct a brief survey of all Illinois students taking state assessments on their contact information, career interests, intended fields of study and self-reported cumulative GPA. All Illinois public higher education institutions will receive the information unless students opt out.

APPENDIX D
HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 2

1 (hereinafter the "Report") that "the main findings specific to
2 enrollment among underrepresented groups from 2010 through
3 2014 center on the drastic decrease in African American
4 undergraduate enrollment (15.8% total decrease) and a
5 corollary increase in Hispanic undergraduate enrollment (16.9%
6 total increase)"; and

7 WHEREAS, In its Report, the BHE further noted that
8 "unfortunately, far too many high school graduates are not
9 prepared for college in essential areas like math, reading and
10 science. According to the 2014-2015 Illinois State Board of
11 Education's Illinois Report Card, just a quarter of high school
12 graduates are college-ready in all four core subjects per ACT
13 benchmarks"; and

14 WHEREAS, The BHE is responsible for the development and
15 implementation of the strategic courses of action for
16 sustaining and improving higher education; and

17 WHEREAS, The BHE made specific recommendations in its
18 Report to address the issues with the drastic decrease of
19 certain underrepresented groups in Illinois academia and the
20 unreadiness of such students to meaningfully compete in the
21 halls of Illinois institutions of higher learning; and

22 WHEREAS, Two of the BHE recommendations in its Report

1 address and are specifically tailored to: (1) increasing the
2 enrollment of underrepresented groups in Illinois institutions
3 of higher learning and (2) improving the preparation and
4 readiness of high school students for their matriculation into
5 institutions of higher learning; and

6 WHEREAS, According to the BHE in its Report, to promote
7 enrollment increases in the underrepresented groups, a task
8 force is necessary to conduct an in-depth analysis and study in
9 order to triangulate results from surveys, focus groups, and
10 key stakeholder communities and to develop a plan of
11 remediation addressing the associated decline of such student
12 groups; and

13 WHEREAS, According to the BHE, to improve college
14 readiness, it is essential that Illinois effectively address
15 and accelerate its work in the re-design of the high
16 school-to-college transition; to do so, BHE opines in its
17 Report that the State should incorporate alternative
18 strategies of "speeding up" learning for more advanced high
19 school students and, alternatively, strategies of "catching
20 up" high school students who are less advanced, as necessary;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, The Oxford English Dictionary defines a
23 "laboratory school" as "an institution affiliated to a college

1 or university, combining both a teacher-training college and a
2 school in which innovative or experimental teaching methods are
3 researched and applied"; and

4 WHEREAS, In that same vein, Merriam-Webster's dictionary
5 defines a "laboratory school" as "a school operated by a
6 college or university and used especially for student teaching
7 and the demonstration of classroom practices"; and

8 WHEREAS, The State of Illinois has 9 public universities on
9 12 campuses throughout the State; of those 9 public
10 universities, there exists a dearth of laboratory schools to
11 foster the necessary policies and strategies identified by the
12 BHE in its Report; therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
14 HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE
15 SENATE

16 CONCURRING HEREIN, that there is created a Underrepresented
17 Groups in Academia Task Force within the Board of Higher
18 Education; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall be composed of the
20 following members, to serve without compensation:

- 21 (1) a member appointed by the Speaker of the House;
- 22 (2) a member appointed by the Minority Leader of the
House;

1 (3) a member appointed by the President of the Senate;

2 (4) a member appointed by the Minority Leader of the
3 Senate;

4 (5) a member appointed by the Governor;

5 (6) a member appointed by the Chairperson of the State
6 Board of Education;

7 (7) a member appointed by a group representing
8 principals in the State;

9 (8) a member appointed by a group representing
10 African-American attorneys in the State;

11 (9) a member appointed by a group representing Latino
12 attorneys in the State;

13 (10) a member appointed by a group representing
14 attorneys concerned with the protection of American civil
15 liberties;

16 (11) a member appointed by a group representing a
17 federation of labor organizations; and

18 (12) 9 members, each appointed by a different board of
19 trustees of a State institution of higher education; and be
20 it further

21 RESOLVED, That a vacancy in the membership of the Task
22 Force shall be filled in the manner in which the original
23 member was appointed; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the Task Force is charged with the following

1 tasks:

2 (1) perform an in-depth study and analysis to create
3 strategies to sustain and grow Illinois's underrepresented
4 group populations in institutions of higher learning;

5 (2) develop transparent and common placement criteria
6 so that students, teachers, and parents understand what is
7 required in high school to ensure enrollment in
8 credit-bearing college courses;

9 (3) determine the feasibility of an increase in
10 laboratory schools to support the high school-to-college
11 transition for students;

12 (4) ascertain the viability of the creation and
13 construction of State-owned and operated trade schools in
14 Chicago, Rockford, Springfield, and the Metro-East area
15 for non-college bound high school students, with an
16 emphasis on the enrollment in those trade schools of
17 students from underrepresented groups;

18 (5) ascertain the cause and effect of the drastic
19 decrease of Black students enrolling in institutions of
20 higher learning; and

21 (6) ascertain the cause and effect of the drastic
22 increase of Latino students enrolling in institutions of
23 higher learning; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the Board of Higher Education shall provide
25 any necessary administrative support; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall elect a chairperson
2 from its membership and shall have the authority to determine
3 its own meeting schedule, hearing schedule, and agendas; and be
4 it further

5 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall submit a report
6 concerning its assigned tasks to the Governor and General
7 Assembly no later than December 31, 2018.