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Quinn won't sign bill to let colleges borrow

Associated Press

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SPRINGFIELD, Ill.

Gov. Pat Quinn says he will not sign a bill that would allow Illinois' public universities to borrow money to make up for millions of dollars in overdue state funding.

Quinn said Tuesday that he instead wants to include universities in a broader bill now in the General Assembly that would allow the state to borrow to pay for a range of services. Illinois currently can't afford to provide many services because of the $13 billion state budget deficit.

Universities sought the ability to borrow as they wait for money held up because of the deficit. The University of Illinois, for example, is owed $350 million.

A university spokesperson says interim Illinois President Stanley Ikenberry supports Quinn's position.

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Our Opinion: Disappointing decisions by U of I board

THE STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER
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SHOULD THE PRESIDENT of the University of Illinois make more than the governor of Illinois and the president of the United States combined?

There is no doubt a university presidency is a difficult, 24/7 job. But the fact that new U of I President Michael Hogan's salary of $620,000 is more than the $177,412 that Gov. Pat Quinn earns and President Barack Obama's $400,000 salary shows how university administrator salaries have gotten out of hand.

THE U OF I BOARD approved Hogan's salary at the same time it socked incoming freshmen with a 9.5 percent tuition increase when many are no doubt struggling to make ends meet. This all comes at a time when our deadbeat state government isn't making timely payments on the money the legislature appropriated to cash-strapped universities and university employees have had to take unpaid furlough days.

We know the argument from trustees and higher education observers: The Hogan salary is what the market demands. What about what fiscal responsibility and frugality demands? Is there not a well-qualified and passionate person who would take the job for what interim President Stanley Ikenberry earns — a paltry, poverty-inducing $450,000?

THE U OF I BOARD is composed of a group of distinguished individuals — lawyers, academics, corporate officers — almost all of whom have served on the boards of similar organizations.

Unfortunately, their two decisions last week on the new president's salary and the tuition increase show a tone-deafness to the real-world finances of this state and its residents.

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The News-Gazette
May 26, 2010

MONETARY AWARD PROGRAM GRANTS

27,000 financial aid applications denied

By DAVID MERCER
Associated Press Writer

CHAMPAIGN — Thousands of Illinois college students who were hoping for financial aid from the state may be out of luck: The agency that distributes the payments says an increase in demand has forced it to turn down almost 27,000 students, and that figure could grow to 200,000 by fall.

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission says it expects to have about $400 million to spend on its Monetary Award Program grants during the next school year. But as of April 19, that money was spoken for, and the agency started turning students down, spokesman Paul Palian said.

"In normal times, $400 million is a pretty substantial amount of money," Palian said. "But because of the way the economy is, we've just seen a surge in demand the

Please see COLLEGE, A-8

COLLEGE

Continued from A-1

last couple of years."

MAP is a state-funded, need-based program that provides as much as $4,968 a year in grants for college for eligible students. For the school year that just ended, ISAC provided more than 183,000 grants worth $430 million.

In most years, tens of thousands of students are turned away because demand exceeds the money available — this academic year 120,000 eligible students were turned down, and almost 60,000 the year before, according to ISAC. But the state is on pace this year to far exceed those numbers.

This year, increasing numbers of students are finding that they need more help than in the past to pay for college because of the economy and related increases in tuition, while other people either choose to head to college or stay in college longer because they can't find a job, Palian said.

Some schools — like the University of Illinois' flagship campus in Urbana-Champaign, where 207 eligible students have been denied MAP funding — have money to help make up the difference. The UI says it plans to spend more than $40 million on supplemental financial aid next year.

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STATE GOVERNMENT

Some budget cut ideas fly through; others fall short

By TOM KACICH
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SPRINGFIELD — A series of budget cuts proposed by a group of 10 House Democrats, including Rep. Naomi Jakobsson, D-Urbana, got a mixed review from House committees Tuesday.

An amendment that would slice a lump sum of $200 million from the state's multibillion-dollar Medicaid budget was approved in a House Human Services Appropriations Committee, 13-3.

But about an hour later, an amendment to take $100 million from the state's higher education system — including $42 million from the University of Illinois — was defeated, 16-3. Jakobsson and Rep. Chapin Rose, R-Mahomet, were among the no votes.

About $1.3 billion in budget cuts are being pushed by a group of mostly suburban Democratic women, led by Rep. Elaine Nekritz of Northbrook.

"The fact is that we're unable to pay our bills right now, and as a result, we're hurting the very institutions that we think we're supporting, whether it be social service agencies, K-12 education or higher education," she said. "What we've done is made promises we can't keep."

Nekritz said "it causes me great pain" to propose a $100 million cut in higher-education funding, "but the fact is we don't have the resources to pay our bills.

"I think we can give institutions an idea of what we're actually going to give them

Please see BUDGET, A-8

BUDGET

Continued from A-1

and they can plan for that. That strikes me as a better philosophy."

Jakobsson said the Democratic budget-cutters, dubbed by some "the group of 10," met with other Democratic and Republican lawmakers early Tuesday morning to brief them on their plan.

She said the discussion left her believing some of the cuts would be approved by the full House.

"Let me just say that I'm probably more optimistic than some people," she said.

Among the other budget-cutting amendments defeated Tuesday were proposals to cut the travel reimbursements for all state employees from 50 cents to 39 cents a mile, to require state retirees to pay a greater share of their health care costs and to cut $100 million in elementary and secondary education funding.

Approved were amendments to rebid state contracts that Jakobsson said could save $300 million, to eliminate cost-of-living raises for legislators and to reduce their per-diem payments to $111 a day and their mileage reimbursements to 39 cents a mile.

THE CHRONICLE
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The Ticker

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7 U.S. Universities Were Among Top Patent Winners in 2009

Seven universities, led by the University of California system, were among the 300 organizations awarded the most United States patents in 2009, according to a compilation by the Intellectual Property Owners Association. The 10-campus UC system ranked 83rd on the list, with 251 patents. It was followed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (ranked 153rd, with 134 patents), the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation, which manages patents for the University of Wisconsin at Madison (173rd, with 115 patents), Stanford University (178th, with 110 patents), the University of Texas (191st, with 98 patents), the California Institute of Technology (198th, with 93 patents), and the University of Illinois (266th, with 65 patents). The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office ceased compiling rankings three years ago to avoid the perception that it was endorsing the theory that more patents were better, but the association said such a list is at least one objective measure of the patent system.

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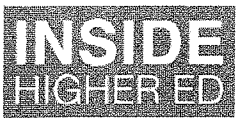

News

School's (Not) Out for Summer

May 26, 2010

Many public colleges and universities were overrun this year by larger-than-ever enrollments driven up by economics and demographics, and early signs suggest that this summer will approach or pass record highs.

Across the country, at flagship universities, state colleges and community colleges, administrators are reporting that their summer session enrollments are up, as the same pressures that put students in the classroom September through May keep them in their seats all summer.

"Having a poor job market is something we correlate positively with," said Richard Russo, director of summer sessions at the University of California at Berkeley. High unemployment drives nontraditional students to enroll in college at all times of the year, but a tough economy makes it more difficult for traditional-age students to find jobs and internships, or gives them greater awareness of the need to complete a degree as quickly and inexpensively as possible. "There's more pressure; students are being pushed into the summer."

There's no one reason why students are choosing to spend their summers in class, said Curt Eley, vice president for enrollment management at the University of Texas at Dallas. "We can't say that any one factor is leading to our summer growth -- there's just so much going into it, so many things that are increasing the numbers at the margins."

Among the factors: the competitiveness of the summer job and internship markets, a rise in the number of students who attend other institutions but are looking to save money by taking classes at home this summer, and the implementation of year-round Pell Grants.

At UT-Dallas, Eley said, summer enrollment is up 5.3 percent from last year at this time, to 6,751 students. "Our strategic plan is for growth throughout the year and that includes the summer," he said. "We are really looking actively to make sure that we have a value proposition that appeals to the students in our market and to increasing our enrollment in any way we can."

When the first set of summer classes started Monday at Berkeley, more than 13,800 had already enrolled in the university's summer offerings, a thousand more than had registered by the first day of class last summer. Russo said that he had expected to see more summer students in part because of intensified efforts to attract them. "We've introduced more online classes and are building partnerships to bring international students here in far greater numbers than we can during the rest of the year," he said. "That's where some of our growth is coming from."

Growth in Berkeley's summer enrollment is also coming from Berkeley's own students. The University of California System introduced two sets of fee hikes that will make this fall's tuition 32 percent more than last fall's, but rather than the full increase, only the 15 percent increase introduced with the spring semester will apply this summer, Russo said. "We know we have more Berkeley students taking more credits than in the past because they see that here's a way to save a little money and get some of your courses out of the way," he said. "We made a bet that if we don't increase the tuition for the summer we may lose some revenues that way, but we'll make up for it in volume."

Before this year, Berkeley provided institutional aid to Pell-eligible students who wanted to take summer classes. Because of the changes in Pell regulations, the aid that would have gone to those students will be given to low- and middle-income students who

don't qualify for Pell. "Some students who might've felt like they couldn't afford the summer session may be able to now," he said. It's too early, though, for him to have statistics on how the aid picture has changed summer enrollment.

The enrollment picture for summer sessions at the University of California at Los Angeles is roughly flat. About 14,000 students have registered so far, said Kathleen Micham, associate director of summer sessions. But because the full UC fee hike goes into effect at UCLA this summer, "I was fearing the worst and we haven't gotten the worst," she said.

Even before the UC system became even more crippled this year by furloughs and budget cuts, Micham added, "it was already the understanding here that if you want to get your degree done in four years, you're going to have to do a summer." About 80 percent of UCLA students spend at least one summer taking classes, she said, "but they make the best of it – there are fewer students on campuses, things aren't as crowded, class sizes are smaller." And, perhaps most importantly in the era of oversubscribed required courses, "in the summertime, there's no line to get into classes."

Youngstown State University's summer enrollment is down 266 students to 4622 thus far, said Ronald Cole, a spokesperson. "The numbers are so preliminary and fluid at this stage that we're not worried."

Greg McCalley, associate vice president for student affairs at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, said his institution has seen its summer sessions grow in popularity for the last few years. "With the economy as it is, we're seeing a lot more students interested in continuing on with their education instead of taking the summers off," he said. "They want to get their degrees done earlier and this is a way to stack up the hours and get a lot of courses out of the way quickly."

As of Tuesday, 5,012 students had enrolled in the summer session, up 4.6 percent from 4,789 a year ago. Credit hours, McCalley added, were up 6.3 percent, suggesting that some students may be taking on heavier course loads this summer than they did in the past.

Eastern Michigan University reports that 5,775 students have signed up for summer classes. A year ago, the number was 5,358. While the headcount is up 7.8 percent, credit hours are up 8.3 percent, hinting at the same pattern as at Missouri-St. Louis.

At the University of Central Florida, summer enrollment is up about 5 percent, to 31,500, said Gordon D. Chavis, associate vice president for undergraduate admissions, student financial assistance and student outreach. The university hasn't yet surveyed students but what he's heard so far from current UCF students suggests that "the fact that students are unable to gain employment in the summer is probably one of the major reasons why they're taking classes," he said.

As of late last week, more than 6,600 students had enrolled in Boise State University's summer classes, a 5.4 percent increase over a year ago. Washington State University in Pullman has 4,700 summer students so far, about 150 more than it did last year at this time.

The Houston Community College District experienced dramatic enrollment growth during the academic year that seems to be carrying on into the summer. "We're seeing more students than ever who want to take summer classes," said Diana Pinot, vice chancellor for student services. As of Tuesday, 28,771 students had signed up for summer classes, up from 21,216 a year ago at this time. Thousands more, she said, will sign up as the summer rolls on.

Though the Houston district has not yet surveyed students to learn who they are and why they've chosen to enroll, Pinot said she thinks the 35 percent growth over last summer is an extension of the trends that drove enrollments up throughout the academic year, as well as an indication that greater numbers of students from four-year institutions are opting to take summer community college classes. "Some of these students are coming back home to work or to save resources in terms of room and board by living with their parents," she said, "and they want to take advantage of the fact that we're less expensive than four-year universities."

The same factors are at play at other community colleges. The Community College of Vermont projects a summer enrollment totaling 1,065 students, up 7 percent from last year. Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio, has nearly 7,200 students already enrolled in summer classes; a year ago, 6,000 students had enrolled.

— Jennifer Epstein

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