

# Here's another one

Today's General Assembly scholarship outrage: Former state Rep. Robert Molaro granted tuition waivers totaling \$94,000 to a longtime political pal's four children, who met the residency requirement only if you squint at their paperwork really, really hard.

That's right: The Southwest Side lawmaker looked high and low for deserving young scholars who might not otherwise go to college and found four of them living with his buddy Phil Bruno's ex-wife in Oak Lawn. To satisfy the residency rule, they listed an aunt's address or a two-flat co-owned by their father, both in Molaro's district.

As the Tribune reported Wednesday, all four of Bruno's kids lived with their mother during high school. The Oak Lawn address appears on all of their driver's licenses, and three of them listed it as their permanent address on college documents. Their father didn't live in Molaro's district either.

If you believe those young scholars are legitimately Molaro's constituents, then you probably also believe they were chosen on their merits and not because of their father's decades-long friendship with the lawmaker, who is now a lobbyist. Bruno said he worked on Molaro campaigns dating back to the 1980s. He also contributed \$1,400 to Molaro's campaign funds from 1994 to 2004. But he says his kids applied for the scholarships like anyone else and won them fair and square.

So Molaro apparently had ghost constituents. But who should be surprised at that?

In 1997, Molaro's wife, Barbara, pleaded guilty to being a ghost-payroller under contract to the Illinois Senate.

The Tribune reported Wednesday that "Molaro aide Greg Swan had a series of caustic exchanges with University of Illinois at Chicago officials in which he flaunted the scholarship as he pressed

them to admit one of the Bruno children into a competitive nursing school program."

In 1998, Swan was convicted of racketeering, extortion, money laundering and other charges connected to ... a City Hall ghost-payrolling scheme.

Lawmakers have been embarrassed time after time by General Assembly scholarship abuses. This spring they voted to "reform" the scholarship program. The bill they passed would bar them from giving scholarships to immediate family members of recent campaign contributors. It also says that if the

state Board of Education finds that an applicant used a fake address, then the applicant must repay the tuition.

But the bill provides no means for policing the scholarships and no penalties for lawmakers who cheat. It doesn't address the practice of trading scholarships for favors other than cash.

Lawmakers have been endlessly creative in gaming the system, and the bill they passed wouldn't slow them down. Wisely, Gov. Pat Quinn vetoed it. He argued, as we have for years, that the program should be abolished. As it happens, the House passed a bill that *would* abolish it. Quinn urged the Senate to pass the House bill — it would have taken five minutes. But Senate President John Cullerton's chamber was too busy not fixing the state budget and eventually went home without doing either.

Lawmakers hope this will all die down by November, so they can override Quinn's veto of their fake bill or let the "reform" effort die altogether. By then they'll be safely re-elected, or not.

That will be your call.

## More abuse of scholarships.



[chicagotribune.com/action](http://chicagotribune.com/action)

Fed up with scholarship abuses?  
Call your representatives. We'll  
give you the numbers.

# ***mysuburbanlife.com*** **BOLINGBROOK REPORTER**

## **Suburban Life Publications**

Posted Jun 02, 2010 @ 11:26 AM

Western suburbs —

The problems with legislative scholarships — an egregious perk allowing lawmakers to annually give two four-year scholarships to any state university — are well-documented.

Gov. Pat Quinn was right when he recently vetoed a half-hearted attempt to reform the practice and instead demanded that they be eliminated. The General Assembly should sustain Quinn's veto and pass legislation to get rid of the scholarships.

These are among the problems with the scholarships:

- The General Assembly does not pay for them, leaving the universities to eat the cost. Last year, the scholarships doled out cost state universities \$13.5 million.
- The **University of Illinois** gets hit hard by these scholarships. The Urbana-Champaign campus had to absorb \$5.5 million in 2008 for more than 500 of the 1,509 scholarships granted that year, according to The Associated Press.
- Lawmakers have often used them to reward contributors.

The bill Quinn vetoed would have barred lawmakers from giving the scholarships to people whose family was linked to a campaign contribution within the past five years and barred family members of recipients from donating to the legislators who gave them the award.

That may seem like a good step forward, but we believe it's just too tempting for a few legislators not to reward people they favor. The bill also doesn't address the significant cost to universities at a time when the state — because of a General Assembly that refuses to do its job and fix the budget problems — owes universities millions of dollars.

If legislators really want to help out those who want to go to college but cannot afford it, they ought to first start repairing the state's budget problem. Then, they should appropriate the same amount of money they steal from universities for legislative scholarships to merit- and need-based scholarship programs that already exist.

*GateHouse News Service*

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<http://www.mysuburbanlife.com/bolingbrook/jerry.moore/x157343316/State-should-drop-legislative-scholarships>



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# UI begins process of choosing new interim dean for College of Media

By *Julie Wurth*  
Created 06/03/2010 - 6:00am

URBANA – As its future is debated by a budget review team, the University of Illinois College of Media has begun the process of choosing a new interim dean.

Walt Harrington, who took on the interim job last August after former Dean Ron Yates stepped down, agreed to serve for a year while the college found a permanent replacement.

But the campus called off the search for Yates' successor in February, citing the lack of a clear favorite and the bleak financial conditions facing the university.

A month later, the campus announced that the College of Media would be one of four small academic units examined for potential savings and possible consolidation. A budget review committee headed by law Professor Thomas Ulen was asked to give its recommendations by June 1.

Harrington is due to step down Aug. 15, and the campus needs to appoint another interim dean for at least the 2010-11 academic year, said Richard Wheeler, interim vice chancellor for academic affairs.

"We have many outstanding choices, and I know the college will be in good hands," Harrington said Wednesday.

Wheeler met last week with department heads and other staff from the college to get "a clear understanding" of what they'd like to see in an interim dean.

"We'll use that knowledge in trying to identify someone who can go over and take the job on for at least a year, beginning in the fall," he said.

Faculty suggested possible candidates but were "eager to get moving again as soon as possible in finding a permanent dean," Wheeler said.

"They're worried about continuity in the college. They were frustrated when we did not appoint a permanent dean. They would like someone who will come in and be a strong leader," he said. "They would like to be able to begin the search again next year if that's possible. I very much hope that it will be."

Regardless of what the budget review committee recommends, "the college will be intact for next year as it is. We need a dean to provide leadership for next year," Wheeler added.

The report from Ulen's committee is "very close" to being completed, Wheeler said, though he won't see it until it's been reviewed by the four deans of the programs in question. Besides media, they are the School of Labor and Employment Relations, School of Social Work and Graduate School of Library and

Information Science – the smallest on campus in terms of staff size, with less than 40 full-time equivalent faculty.

The committee was asked to examine whether those units could collaborate or be combined with others on campus, how a merger might save money through lower administrative overhead or personnel costs and whether the units have unique elements that require them to be independent.

Ulen could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

The four deans wrote to the review committee last month challenging Wheeler's assertion that small units were inefficient. Wheeler had invited them to examine the campus data he used, and the deans said their analysis showed that small, freestanding schools are not inherently less efficient than larger colleges in terms of cost per instructional unit. In a separate letter, Harrington said only one of the four units – Labor and Employment Relations – would actually save money by consolidating its administration and support staff.

The College of Media's National Advisory Board also sent a letter to Wheeler and interim Chancellor Robert Easter, expressing disappointment that the college suspended the dean's search, urging them to keep the college intact and pledging financial support to help it reach its potential.

Some areas of the college need "considerable attention," the letter said, such as "visionary leadership," budget challenges, faculty professional development, grant funding, branding and marketing issues, and more involvement of alumni and industry professionals, the letter said. But those could be addressed "with the right leadership."

"The board understands that the financial crisis is real and must be dealt with in both a strategic and timely way. ... (W)ith the right leadership, the college can develop plans to restructure and reallocate resources in such a way as to not only cover its operating budget with tuition, but also become less dependent on state funding, organize a deficit reduction plan and create a vision for this college that makes media education relevant and better serves its industries," the letter said.

The college's alumni board, which created a Facebook group called "Save the College of Media at Illinois," wrote to Wheeler and Easter arguing that the college is "greater than the sum of its parts" and noting that its enrollment has continued to grow.

The campus has appointed 17 budget review teams so far, on the Institute of Aviation, information technology services, scholarships, the Graduate College and UI Extension, among others.

On the web:

UI "Stewarding Excellence" budget reviews: <http://oc.illinois.edu/budget/> [1]

College of Media responses: <http://illinois.edu/lb/imageList/2998> [2]

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**Links:**

[1] <http://oc.illinois.edu/budget/>

[2] <http://illinois.edu/lb/imageList/2998>



## State: Students should complete financial forms

**The Associated Press**

Posted Jun 03, 2010 @ 08:21 AM

College students might not get the money they're looking for, but the state of Illinois is encouraging them to fill out financial aid forms anyway.

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission says students should continue to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA.

That's the form also used to apply for the state's Monetary Award Program, although the state has been denying eligible students since April because it says it doesn't have enough money.

Completing the financial aid form can help students qualify for federal grants, loans and other money for school.

ISAC says more than 31,000 eligible students have so far been denied MAP grants since the agency cut off the program April 19. Most of the students looking for money wanted to attend community colleges.

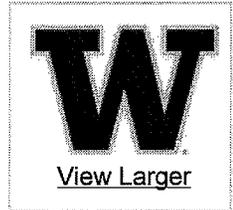
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## University of Washington changes freshman admission policy

Puget Sound Business Journal (Seattle)

The University of Washington said it will change its admission process for incoming freshmen beginning later this year, including moving up the admissions deadline.

The Seattle school said it will begin using a “pooling admissions process,” which mandates an earlier application deadline for prospective freshmen. Under the new system, applications for the autumn 2011 class will be received from Oct. 1 and Dec. 15 and applicants will be notified of their admission status before March 31. Next year, the school said it will move up the application deadline to Dec. 1.



The school currently uses a “rolling admissions process,” which communicates to future students their application status as soon as they’re received and assessed.

“We’ve found that rolling out admission decisions from December through March was causing significant anxiety among applicants and their parents, leading to thousands of phone calls and e-mails about application status and notification about decisions. By moving to an earlier application deadline as well as a single admissions decision window for all freshman class applicants, we hope to bring more clarity to the admissions process, relieve undue anxiety among students and their families and improve the efficiency and speed with which we are able to process and holistically review ever-growing application pools,” said Philip Ballinger, assistant vice president for enrollment, in a statement.