



UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS
SYSTEM

EXTERNAL RELATIONS
AND COMMUNICATIONS

GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



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Introduction

The following report covers work conducted by the University of Illinois System’s Office of Governmental Relations, part of External Relations and Communications (ERC), during the 2022 fiscal year.

ERC Mission

State, federal, and local support is essential to the U of I System and its efforts to provide a high-quality education, promote economic growth and opportunity, and produce cutting-edge research and scholarship. The mission of ERC is to support the U of I System by building and sustaining effective partnerships with state and federal government. This is achieved through advocacy of the system’s needs and interests with elected officials and policymakers in Springfield, Washington, D.C., and throughout Illinois.

The U of I System is proud to provide the state with steady, responsible leadership. Throughout our long partnership with the state, we have a proven track record of serving Illinois as its land-grant institution and flagship university system.

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State Relations

Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Update

ERC is proud of the work the state relations team was able to accomplish. The 2021 session was legislatively robust, which resulted in an intense volume of legislation directly impacting the U of I System. The state budget for the 2023 fiscal year, which began July 1, 2022, will increase the U of I System appropriation by 5 percent over the current year. The budget also applies an additional \$28.1 million supplemental appropriation to the current fiscal year's \$622 million in state operating funds. This essentially provides the fiscal year 2023 increase a year early.

The budget will provide \$655.2 million in general operating funds to the U of I System for the coming fiscal year, as well as a \$122 million increase for the Monetary Award Program (MAP), the state's primary student financial aid program.

This marks the third consecutive year that legislators and the governor have maintained or increased U of I System funding. These increases signal continued recognition of the value the U of I System provides not only to our more than 94,000 students, but also to the state, and we are grateful to our legislators and the governor for their investment in higher education.

As outlined below, the state relations team was able to collaborate with legislators to negotiate solutions that worked for the U of I System, secure new funding for line items in the budget and capital request, and elevate the importance of the U of I System as a partner with the State of Illinois. The following outline shows the results of many months of work with members of the Illinois General Assembly (ILGA):

- U of I supplemental increase of \$28.1M for FY22
- FY23 U of I increase of \$33.2 million +5.3% to \$655.2 million
- Includes increase of 5% for LER lines (to \$687.1 thousand and \$893.3 thousand)
- Includes \$3M in new funding for the Illinois Innocence Project at UIS and \$2M for a newly created Climate Jobs Institute (within LER created in BIMP HB4700)
- No increase for the following legislative add-ons: PRI, Hospital, HCOE, Dixon Springs, Public Policy Institute, and Illinois Heart Rescue
- COM Rockford \$500,000 appropriation from the General Professions Dedicated Fund remains, as well as all other special state fund appropriation (including reappropriation of the carbon dioxide funding and the Water Rate Study funding)
- Additional \$6M from the Coal Tech Fund for continuation of the carbon dioxide technology projects in consultation with the US Department of Energy
- Fire Services Fund is intended to reflect the statutory amounts for regular operation and for the Cornerstone Training program at the statutory amount of \$5,127.3 thousand (+\$432.6 thousand).

- MAP funding increases by \$122 million, to \$601 million, up 27% over FY22. Maximum award increased to \$8,508; expands eligibility to students seeking short-term credentials and certificates.
- AIM High funding remains flat at the FY22 amount of \$35 million.
- \$230 million appropriation for College Illinois to address the remaining unfunded liabilities of the program (was completed earlier in session)
- SURS is at the certified amount of \$2.12 billion – an increase of 0.8%, or \$17.3 million over FY22 appropriated amount. Additional one-time funding of \$38.8M was appropriated from the pension stabilization fund.
- No new capital, all outstanding capital projects are reappropriated.

2022 State Priority Bill Highlights

Below is a list of the priority bills tracked by the State Relations team.

SUPPORT

[HB722](#): Name Image Likeness effective date (Buckner/Bennett)
Changes the effective date of HB1175 to be immediately
Status: Signed into law

[HB1172](#): State Universities Civil Service Omnibus (Stuart)
Provides that all examinations given under the University System shall be open to all applicants
Status: Held on second reading

[HB1175](#): Name Image Likeness updates (Buckner/Harris)
Allow for institutional discretion regarding facilitation of student-athlete NIL activities and other changes
Status: Signed into law

[HB2770](#): Procurement reforms (Munoz/Stuart)
Allows for Illinois public universities to enter into 30-year lease agreements, allows automotive reciprocity to help minority vendors, includes a two-year investment RFP exemption, changes the disclosure requirements and exemption posting for small purchases, renewal clarification on CPO activity, IDHR cure and establishes a taskforce to report on further procurement reforms needed to legislate in the fall veto session.
Status: Signed into law

[HB4332](#): Health Care Registry-Identity (Hirschauer/Villa)
Allows for a federal tax identification number to be used if a student does not have a Social Security number
Status: Passed both houses

[HB4724](#): Retail Sales Act Amendment to decrease textbook costs (Burke/Bennett)
Allows universities to extend credit to students to purchase textbooks and school supplies
Status: Signed into law

[HB5186](#): Budget for Results-Audit finding fixes (Davis/Harris)

Repeals the U of I Gerontological Committee Act and the Illinois Health Policy Center Act to clean up audit findings

Status: Passed both houses

[SB3613](#): Hydrogen Economy Task Force (Ellman/Costa Howard)

Bill to create a task force to discuss how we get federal funds for hydrogen hub to Illinois

Status: Passed both houses

OPPOSE

[HB2992](#): Requires U of I Hospital to offer health insurance to all employees (Lilly)

Status: Re-referred to Rules

[HB3898](#): Healthy Workplace Act. Required sick time off for student workers (Gordon-Booth)

Status: Re-referred to Rules

[HB4361](#): Minimum salary for instructors of not less than \$1,333.33 per credit hour taught (Conroy)

Status: Re-referred to Assignments

[HB4676](#): Creates the Second Chance State Behavioral Health Workforce Development Act (Conroy)

Requires each university to admit one previously incarcerated returning resident annually into a program that will lead them to be a licensed behavioral healthcare professional

Status: Re-referred to Rules

[HB5315](#): Class posting notifications and free parking for adjunct professors (Stuart)

Status: Re-referred to Assignments

[SB3046](#): SURS Pension Omnibus (Martwick)

Status: Re-referred to Assignments

[SB3856](#): Free Higher Education Course Material (Bennett)

Requires the university to supply free textbooks for all

Status: Re-referred to Assignments

NO POSITION

[HB4201](#): Higher Education Benefits Navigator (West/Pacione-Zayas)

No position with university amendment

Status: Signed into law

[HB5408](#): Codifies SURS existing practices (Ammons/Bennett)

Status: Passed both Houses

[SB0819](#): Map grants can be used toward room and board and books (Fine)

Status: Remains in committee

[SB3009](#): University Unemployment Insurance (Holmes)

Status: Re-referred to Assignments

[SB3032](#): Student Debt Assistance Act (Fine/Morgan)
No position with university amendment
Status: Signed into law

Click below to see the current status of bills tracked by ERC sorted by topic area:

| Issue Area | Hannah Bill List |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Academics | Click Here |
| Administrative Burden | Click Here |
| Administrative Reform | Click Here |
| Admissions | Click Here |
| Appropriations | Click Here |
| Athletics | Click Here |
| Board of Trustees | Click Here |
| Campus Specific | Click Here |
| Capital | Click Here |
| Economic Development | Click Here |
| Ethics and Compliance | Click Here |
| Financial Aid | Click Here |
| FOIA | Click Here |
| Healthcare/Hospital | Click Here |
| Human Resources | Click Here |
| Labor | Click Here |
| Pensions | Click Here |
| Prairie Research Institute | Click Here |
| Procurement | Click Here |
| Research | Click Here |
| Tuition/Fees | Click Here |
| U of I Bills | Click Here |
| Utilities and Workers Comp | Click Here |

Local Relations

Illinois Legislative Black Caucus Foundation - July 2021

The U of I System's Office of Governmental Relations and Office of the President sponsored the ILBCF Golf and (virtual) Scholarship Reception in an effort to support student scholarships across Illinois, and many representatives from across the system participated. President Killeen was a featured speaker and was able to highlight our essential and growing partnership with the ILBCF and our role as a land-grant institution for communities across Illinois with a similar focus of promoting education, health and welfare, minority business enterprise, and job creation.

Chicago City Council Black Caucus - August 2021 and September 2021

President Killeen met with CCCBC Chair Alderman Ervin and Vice-Chair Alderman Coleman to learn about the caucus priorities, access and affordability in the communities they represent as Chicago City Council Black Caucus, and to share more about U of I System's role in serving as a resource beyond higher education in Illinois with a focus on Chicago.

Illinois Legislative Black Caucus - September 2021

President Killeen, UI Health Mile Square CEO Henry Taylor and the Office of Community Engagement and Neighborhood Health Partnerships met with the ILBC leadership, Senator Peters and Representative Buckner to learn more about the ILBC priorities and to highlight crucial programs and resources in the communities they represent.

Discovery Partners Institute - October 2021

The University of Illinois System's Office of Governmental Relations and Discovery Partners Institute leaders hosted a tour of the Chicago River and the future headquarters of DPI. Guests were provided with a DPI overview, its latest initiatives in workforce development, and a highlight of the life-changing generational impact of opportunities from DPI programming. They also heard from President Killeen, Bill Jackson and a current student/participant. Participants and invitees included legislative members of the general assembly of Illinois, Cook County Commissioners, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Commissioners and Chicago Aldermen and staff. The Governor's office and Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity staff were also in attendance.

Illinois House Democratic Women's Caucus - March 2022

In alignment with the Discovery Partners Institute's shared goal of diversifying tech talent in Illinois, the University of Illinois System hosted the first-ever "Promoting Hope Through Women in STEAM," a Women's History Month celebration with the Illinois House Democratic Women's Caucus (IHDWC). The event celebrated Women's History Month and the need to promote women in the fields of science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM). The program featured a diverse panel of women, including panelists from DPI and Illinois Innovation Network. They shared their career pathway stories and opportunities designed to build and diversify the talent tech pipeline and workforce development across communities in Illinois.

Special guest participants included the Office of the Governor Chief Equity Officer Dr. Sekile M. Nzinga; poet, activist, and author Leslé Honoré; and vocalist and therapist Cerita Brown. This event was co-moderated by IHDWC Chair Representative Camille Lilly and Representative Dee Avelar, the IHDWC represents 35 current Illinois state representatives. You can watch it [here](#).

Chicago Latino Caucus Foundation and Chicago Public Schools - April 2022

The University of Illinois System sponsored the Chicago Latino Caucus Foundation Leadership Academy's (CLCFLA) Cafecito Series at Kelly High School with Chicago Public Schools CEO Pedro Martinez, an alumnus of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. U of I System Local Relations provided an overview of the U of I System's impact in Chicago, and CEO Martinez provided an update on the state of education in Chicago and engaged current CLCFLA fellows and alumni, many also alumni from across the U of I System. The CLCF mission is to create opportunities for Chicago's Latino youth by further advancing "a pathway of Chicago's next generation of Latino leaders through its leadership academy and scholarship program."

Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce - May 2022

In alignment with IHCC's mission to cultivate knowledge, connections and collaboration to effect transformational social change and achieve sustainable economic impact through entrepreneurship, the University of Illinois System served as a sponsor for the IHCC breakfast event and many representatives from across the system participated, including alumni. The event was followed by a meeting with the U of I System's Procurement team and CEO Jaime Di Paulo and their teams to discuss collaborations to review tangible ways and including research and policy to remove barriers for diverse and small business owners across Illinois.

Meetings with Cultural Houses, Departments and Alumni Networks - ongoing

In order to help elevate the voice and experiences of under-resourced communities, our team leads listening meetings with programs that serve diverse populations across the U of I System to learn first-hand about diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. In addition to meeting with UIUC's La Casa Cultural Latina and Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center, Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations, the Illinois Latina/o Alumni Association, Black Alumni Network, UIS Diversity Center, UIC Institute for Race and Policy, Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement, the UIC Hispanic Center of Excellence and UIC Urban Health Program, our office recently met with the UIUC Office of the Vice-Chancellor for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and UIUC Disability Resources & Educational Services.

Federal Relations

The following section provides an overview of ERC's federal achievements and milestones from July 2021 - June 2022.

FEDERAL ENGAGEMENT & PROFILE-RAISING ACTIVITIES

In January 2022, President Killeen was joined by nearly 180 alumni and Illinois Connection advocates for a virtual town hall where he shared the U of I System's federal accomplishments and priorities. Video of that town hall is now available [here](#).

Demonstrated U of I System Leadership in the Nation's Capital

In 2021, three U of I System experts provided Congressional testimony during committee hearings.

1. UIUC's Andrew Leakey [testified](#) before the House Science Committee's Subcommittee on Energy during a hearing that focused on bioenergy research and development. He testified in his role as director of the Center for Advanced Bioenergy and Bioproducts Innovation (CABBI), a DOE-funded Bioenergy Research Center. Illinois Rep. Sean Casten served as chair for the hearing.
2. UIUC's Dr. Kevin Leicht served as a witness during a House Science Oversight Subcommittee [hearing](#) about disinformation and social media.
3. UIUC's Chancellor Robert Jones testified before the U.S. House Higher Education and Workforce Subcommittee at a hearing about "Keeping the Pell Grant Promise: Increasing Enrollment, Supporting Student Success." Chancellor Jones was praised for UIUC's efforts to attract and support Pell students. His written testimony, in which he advocated for doubling Pell, is available [here](#), and a recording of the hearing is available [here](#).

Supported Virtual "Fly-Ins" of Various U of I System Stakeholders

While fly-in days and association events in D.C. were ultimately cancelled in the spring of 2022, a few administrators and faculty were still able to advocate virtually. ERC helped coordinate and staff congressional meetings for U of I System faculty taking part in virtual "fly-ins," including advocacy days for:

1. UIUC faculty and graduate students participated in the annual "Fusion Day on the Hill" to discuss the importance of fusion energy research and highlight funding needs for the upcoming fiscal year with congressional staff.
2. Faculty from UIUC's Department of Nuclear, Plasma & Radiological Engineering met with Illinois delegation offices to discuss our nuclear engineering programs and funding requests for FY23.

3. Three UIUC faculty members and an undergraduate student affiliated with the Humanities Research Institute [participated](#) in virtual meetings with Illinois delegation offices as part of the annual Humanities Advocacy Day.
4. Two UIUC Title VI Center associate directors participated in a virtual advocacy day to ask Illinois delegation offices for increased funding for international education programs, including Title VI and Fulbright-Hays.
5. UIUC College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences leadership had virtual meetings with Rep. Rodney Davis and staff from the offices of Senators Durbin and Duckworth and Rep. Mike Bost to discuss the importance of competitive and capacity funding sponsored by USDA.
6. UIUC's Grainger College of Engineering Dean Rashid Bashir took part in virtual meetings with congressional staff on issues relating to defense and health research.

Several faculty members participated in virtual panel discussions or spoke at briefings. For example:

1. Kevin O'Brien, director of the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center, took part in a [panel discussion](#) on direct air capture, hosted by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute.
2. UIUC Executive Associate Chancellor for Public Engagement Wanda Ward took part in briefings of administration officials and congressional staff about a [report](#) by the NASA-sponsored NASEM Committee on Increasing Diversity and Inclusion in the Leadership of Competed Space Missions.
3. Anne Craig, senior director of the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI), gave a presentation on the positive impact that our U of I System-led open textbook project is having on students as part of a congressional briefing on the Department of Education's Open Textbook Pilot grant program.

President's Executive Leadership Program DC Seminar

1. In lieu of an in-person visit to Washington, D.C., the federal team coordinated virtual meetings for the 2021-2022 fellows in the [President's Executive Leadership Program](#). The fellows, joined by President Killeen and Executive Vice President Avijit Ghosh, met virtually with Department of Education Under Secretary of Education [James Kvaal](#), National Science Foundation Senior Advisor for Translation, Innovation and Partnerships [Erwin Gianchandani](#), and [Sen. Tammy Duckworth](#) to discuss pressing issues in higher education.
2. In mid-June of 2022, the 2021-2022 and 2020-2021 cohorts combined to visit Washington, D.C. They met with representatives from numerous federal agencies (NIH, DHS, NSF), Illinois delegation members, and higher education associations (ACE, APLU). The federal team organized the visit in conjunction with the Office of the Executive Vice President.

Campus/In-District Activities

The federal team supported and arranged key events and visits by legislators and federal agency officials on our campuses to highlight U of I System's work on important issues.

1. US Department of Education Under Secretary James Kvaal visited UIC to discuss the university's efforts to raise graduation rates and close equity gaps. He met with UIC and System leadership and took part in two student roundtables, one focused on student loan forgiveness and the other on student voting.
2. The director of the National Science Foundation (NSF), Dr. Sethuraman Panchanathan, [visited](#) UIUC to see the significant impact that NSF funding is having on campus and beyond. ERC worked closely with UIUC's OVCRI to facilitate the visit, which included [Senator Dick Durbin](#) in several of the events. The visit included a [meeting](#) with NSF-funded investigators, a [media event](#) announcing \$40M in new NSF awards, a roundtable in the Research Park focused on agtech, and an interactive meeting with a startup.
3. Sen. Dick Durbin, chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, [met with UIC Law students](#) to discuss the nomination of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to be an associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.
4. Sen. Tammy Duckworth and Rep. Brad Schneider [visited](#) SHIELD 451, one of SHIELD Illinois' network of labs that's located in North Chicago. Click [here](#) to see a short video of the visit, which ERC arranged.
5. US Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen [joined](#) Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker and Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot at UIC's Innovation Center. The group toured some of the Innovation Center's laboratories and heard from students about their work before holding a press conference.

PROMOTED U OF I SYSTEM LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The federal team continued to advance the U of I System's [priorities for the 117th Congress](#).

Below are some highlights of the major issues the federal team worked on:

1. Student Financial Aid

- a. The federal team continued strong advocacy efforts to double the maximum Pell Grant award. For instance:
 - i. President Killeen joined the state's other public university presidents in a call with [Sen. Dick Durbin](#) to discuss funding for Pell Grants and research.
 - ii. ERC held meetings with staff from the offices of Sen. Dick Durbin, Rep. Marie Newman, and Rep. Lauren Underwood to discuss ways to boost Pell Grant funding in the budget reconciliation bill.
 - iii. President Killeen led a [letter](#) from Illinois' public universities urging Congress to provide a larger increase to the Pell Grant maximum award than the \$500 proposed in reconciliation legislation.

- iv. The U of I System led a [letter](#) from all of Illinois' public universities to the Illinois congressional delegation urging Congress to double the maximum Pell Grant award to \$13,000 and endorsing the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities' [proposal](#) for \$48 billion to support state investments in university infrastructure.

2. Science/Research

- a. Competitiveness packages/NSF authorization (*Endless Frontier Act/U.S. Innovation & Competition Act/America COMPETES Act/NSF for the Future*)
 - i. The federal team regularly engaged Illinois delegation offices on U of I System priorities for these packages.
 - ii. U of I System President Killeen sent a [letter](#) to the Illinois delegation detailing priorities as Congress resolves differences between S. 1260, the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act and H.R. 4521, the America COMPETES Act.

3. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- a. The federal team continued to provide a leading role in providing government relations support the Alliance of Hispanic Serving Research Universities, a consortium of Hispanic-Serving Institutions with R1 classification. UIC is a founding member of the consortium.
 - i. ERC worked with Rep. Chuy Garcia's office to lead a Dear Colleague letter to House appropriators requesting \$20M in funding for a new pilot program at the Department of Education to increase Hispanic PhDs. The final letter garnered 35 signatures.

4. Infrastructure & Transportation

- a. ERC engaged Illinois delegation staff on U of I System [priorities](#) in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which was ultimately signed into law in fall of 2021.

5. Immigration

- a. Throughout the year, federal relations participated in regular immigration-focused calls and strategy sessions with our higher education associations (AAU, APLU) to stay informed and strategize on advocacy. ERC was in communication with our Illinois peer institutions about joint efforts and worked with IL Congressional delegation offices to raise concerns.
- b. ERC organized a meeting between higher ed associations and staff from Sen. Dick Durbin's office to discuss immigration provisions and proposed visa fee increases in the Build Back Better Act.
- c. In the wake of a federal district court decision blocking new DACA applications, President Killeen signed on to a [letter](#) spearheaded by the American Business Immigration Coalition urging Congress to pass the Dream Act of 2021. You can find the full [list of signatories](#) here.

6. Budget/Appropriations

- a. As part of the U of I System's advocacy for the annual appropriations process, ERC develops programmatic requests, appropriations plus-ups and report language to advance specific line items in the federal budget that support our missions. Throughout March and April 2022, ERC submitted the [U of I System's FY 2023 programmatic requests](#) to the Illinois congressional delegation.
- b. The federal team developed and submitted FY22 and FY23 requests for funding and/or report language. For FY22, the U of I System was successful in securing up to \$16M in plus-ups for four U of I requests and \$5.22M for five U of I congressionally directed spending/community project funding requests. We are still awaiting the results for FY23.
- c. Additionally, ERC encouraged members of the Illinois delegation to sign onto "Dear Colleague" letters supporting some of the top agencies that fund our campuses—the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Energy Office of Science, and the Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Several Illinois members sent their own letters to appropriators expressing support for funding and report language.

Advocacy In Action

January 19: Call-to-Action to U of I System faculty, staff, and students

Illinois Connection launched the first Call-to-Action of the year, asking alumni, faculty, staff, students and Illinois Connection Advocates to write Gov. J.B. Pritzker and state legislators asking for support for higher education in this year's budget. More than 800 advocates answered the call, and Illinois Connection thanks you.

The University of Illinois System launched #ReinvestIllinois, a campaign in solidarity with all Illinois public universities with the goal of asking lawmakers to support our state by increasing the budget for public higher education.

January 21: Joint meeting of the U of I System Caucus and NIU Caucus

To kick off the legislative session, University of Illinois System President Tim Killeen and Northern Illinois University President Lisa Freeman hosted a joint meeting of the U of I System and NIU caucuses. The meeting provided an update on the universities' collaborative research initiatives, including Illinois Innovation Network progress, legislative priorities designed to drive economic growth across the state, and the importance of continued investment in higher education.

January 28: "Coffee with Killeen-Federal Priorities" Zoom Webinar

Illinois Connection hosted another "Coffee with Killeen: Federal Priorities," which was a conversation about how the system's federal agenda fared in 2021, and what priorities remain for Congress and the administration in 2022. The town hall also included a Q&A session where people can submit questions for President Killeen to answer.

"Coffee with Killeen: State Priorities" was a conversation about the system's "Reinvest Illinois" campaign where President Killeen discussed why it is time for our state to reinvest in Illinois public universities and answered questions from attendees. More than 560 people joined. In case you missed it, a link to that recording can be found [here](#).

February 10: Call-to-Action to U of I System faculty, staff, and students for the state budget

Second call-to-action asking Illinois Connection advocates and allies reached out to their state elected officials on behalf of the University of Illinois System and Illinois state public universities.

February 25: "Coffee with Killeen-State Priorities" Zoom Webinar

Illinois Connection hosted another virtual effort to drive home the importance of reinvesting in Illinois public Universities. The "Coffee with Killeen: State Priorities" was a conversation about the system's "Reinvest Illinois" campaign where President Killeen discussed why it is time for our state to reinvest in Illinois public universities and answered questions from attendees. More than 560 people joined. In case you missed it, you can view that recording on [YouTube](#).

March 1: Call-to-Action to U of I System faculty, staff, and students for the state budget

Third call-to-action. Overall, more than 2,000 Illinois Connection advocates and allies reached out to their state elected officials on behalf of the University of Illinois System and Illinois state public universities.

March 9: U of I System Leadership Day in Springfield

The U of I System held an in-person U of I System Leadership day in the capitol (the first in-person event we hosted since the COVID-19 pandemic). We started the day with our first in-person U of I Caucus breakfast in two years where we had a very productive conversation that included our Presidential Executive Leadership Program Fellows and our U of I caucus members. We then hosted an alumni panel for the PELP fellows that included three of our alums working in state government, followed by a lunch conversation with the Deputy Governor of Education. After lunch, President Killeen, the chancellors, and the vice presidents spent the afternoon in the capitol and met with all four legislative leaders. It was a productive day and great to be back in person.

March 7 -25: “Conversations with U of I System Students-Virtual State Lobby Days”

Illinois Connection partnered with the Student Advocacy Coalitions in a student-led effort to meet with select legislators and advocate on behalf of the U of I System. This virtual student lobby day highlighted that U of I System students are at the heart of all that we do and we highly value their voices, their unique perspectives, and the stories they share as they promote why the state should fund public universities. Students from all three universities gathered to share their experiences and voice support for why the state should reinvest in the U of I System. These student-led meetings were held with State Sens. Michael E. Hastings, Chapin Rose, Doris Turner and Celina Villanueva; and State Reps. Scott M. Bennett, La Shawn Ford, Sandy Hamilton and Katie Stuart.

April 20: “Thank you for a budget increase” campaign on social media

Immediately after the state budget was signed, Illinois Connection launched a thank you campaign on social media, praising each ILGA member, 106 in total, who voted to pass the state budget, as well as Gov. Pritzker for his efforts in it passing. Our state leaders have demonstrated that they recognize the immeasurable value the [U of I System](#) and all of Illinois' public universities contribute to the health and wealth of the state while serving at the heart of thriving communities.

OTHER EFFORTS

“Conversations with Constituents” meetings

Throughout the past year and into this year's legislative session, Illinois Connection continues efforts to host virtual in-district meetings with every member of the Illinois General Assembly. From July 2021 to today, around 352 advocates participated in more than 34 meetings.

Meetings with UIAA Clubs and Networks

ERC Staff joined the UIAA Clubs Zoom call to present our legislative initiatives and upcoming advocacy efforts. Club members were encouraged to join Illinois Connection and to participate in the current "share your story" campaign.

Meetings with Cultural Houses, Departments and Alumni Networks

ERC initiated meetings with programs that serve a diverse population across the U of I System to learn more about overall diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, including UIUC's La Casa Cultural Latina and Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center, Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations, the Illinois Latina/o Alumni Association and the Black Alumni Network, UIS Diversity Center, UIC Institute for Race and Policy, Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement, the Hispanic Center of Excellence and Urban Health Program. As a result, our advocacy and state teams were able to advocate for resources and will continue to hold these meetings to ensure the system continues to keep the experiences of under-resourced communities at the forefront.

Illinois Connection By the Numbers

Below is a profile of currently coded Illinois Connection advocates. This list breaks down registered advocates by various demographics.

Advocate Profile

Total Unique Advocates Coded in TED (Active in the past five years): 27,867

Advocates by:

- **Locations**
 - **Illinois** – 21,964
 - **Outside Illinois** – 5,908

- **University affiliation**
 - **University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign** – 15,052
 - **University of Illinois Chicago** – 11,035
 - **University of Illinois Springfield** – 1,095
 - **University of Illinois System** – 300

- **Gender**
 - **Male** – 12,837
 - **Female** – 14,940
 - **Blank** – 89

- **Age bracket**
 - **15-29** – 4,958
 - **30-39** – 8,346
 - **40-49** – 3,717
 - **50-59** – 3,514
 - **60-69** – 3,173
 - **70-79** – 1,920
 - **80-89** – 573
 - **90-99** – 106
 - **100+** – 4
 - **Blank** – 1,532

- **Race/ethnicity**
 - **Asian or Pacific Islander** – 2,908
 - **Hispanic or Latino** – 1,898
 - **White/Non-Hispanic** – 10,155
 - **Black/African American** – 1,566
 - **American Indian/Alaskan Native** – 26

Illinois Connection Engagement Overview

Illinois Connection had an incredibly successful year in terms of engagement. Despite major disruptions to in-person events due to COVID-19, Illinois Connection successfully pivoted advocacy tactics to embrace remote engagement. Zoom has provided unparalleled accessibility for advocates to participate in Illinois Connection programming – specifically in-district meetings – and has allowed Illinois Connection to advocate for the U of I System efficiently and effectively.

Zoom Webinars

- U of I System Federal Government Update with President Killeen
 - Spring 2022 – 290 attendees
- U of I System State Government Update with President Killeen
 - Spring 2022 – 545 attendees
- SAC Internship Panels
 - Approximately 100 students and seven panelists

In-district Meetings

- 34 meetings with elected officials in FY22

Virtual Student Lobby Day

- Students State Virtual Lobby Day
 - 50+ students over the course of two weeks met with members of the ILGA

New Advocates since October 2020

- 1,688

Newsletters and Regular Communications

- ERC monthly newsletter
 - 345 stakeholders monthly, 12 issues annually
- Illinois Connection newsletter
 - approximately 20,000 advocates monthly, 12 issues annually
- U of I System and ERC Good News!
 - 287 legislators and state government personnel receive a good news roundup weekly

Social Media

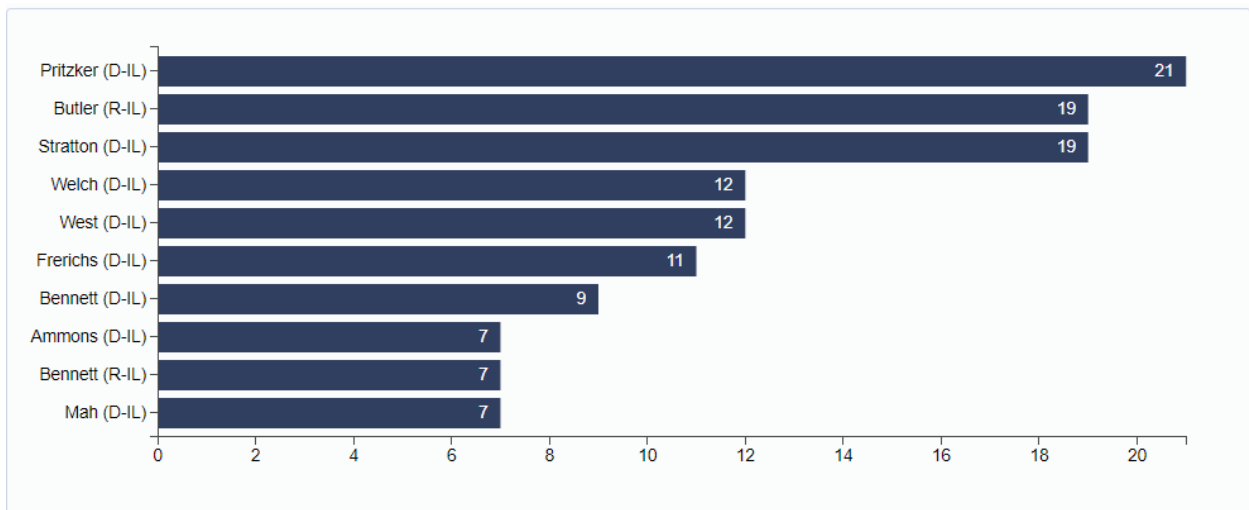
Who Mentioned Us?

Between July 2020 and June 2021, legislators shared and/or mentioned the U of I System on Facebook 382 times ([Click here to review complete list of post](#) and [here to see total numbers](#)).

U of I System Mentions

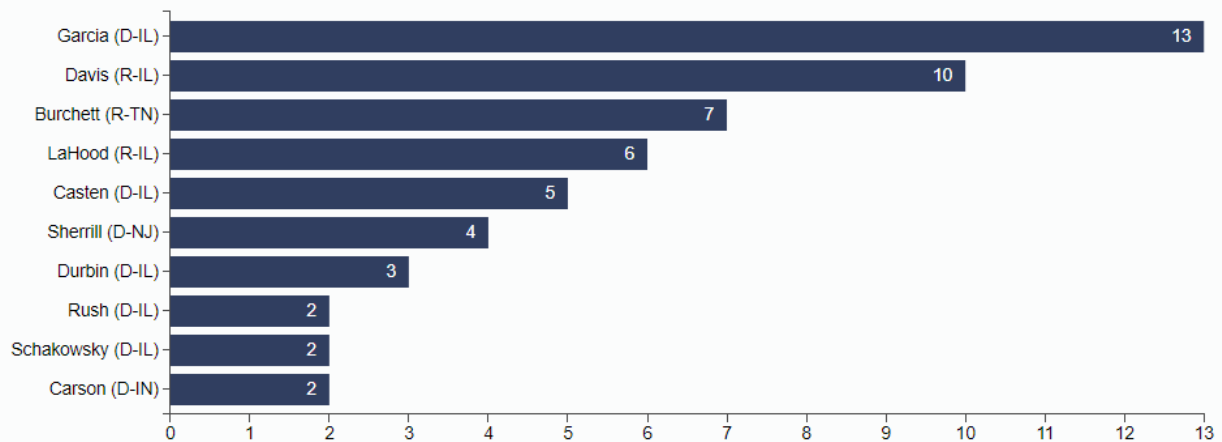
Illinois General Assembly (State)

- Over the past year, state legislators mentioned the U of I System 236 times. Gov. Pritzker tops the list having referenced the U of I System 21 times, followed by Rep. Tim Butler (19), Lt. Gov. Stratton (19) and Speaker Welch (12).



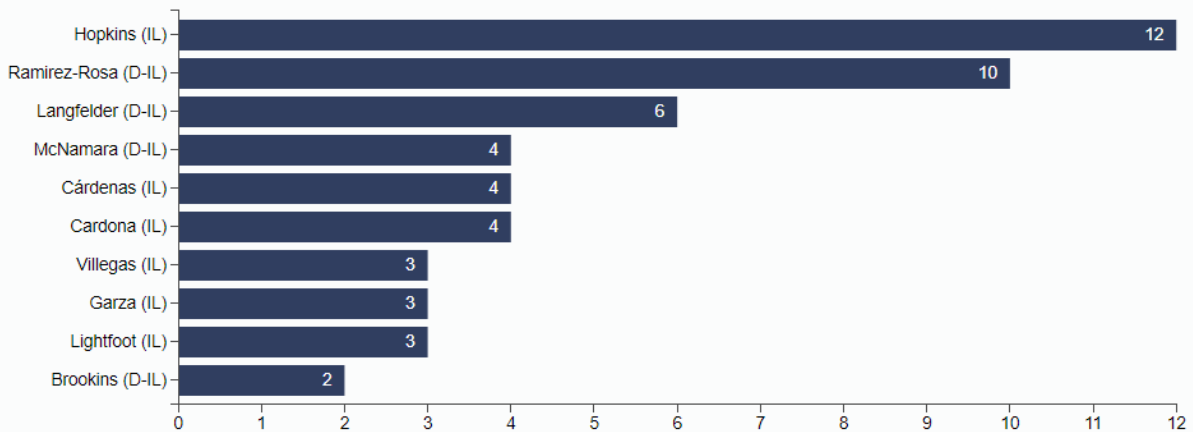
U.S. Congress (Federal)

- Federal legislators referenced the U of I System 70 times. Congressman Jesus “Chuy” García (13) and Congressman Rodney Davis (10) were top sharers.



Illinois Local (Local/Chicago)

- In the past year, Chicago local officials referenced the U of I System 105 times. Alderman Brian Hopkins (12) shared/referenced us the most, followed by Alderman Carlos Ramirez-Rosa (10) and Springfield Mayor Jim Langfelder (6).



Yearly Analytics: ERC Twitter, OGR and Illinois Connection Facebook pages

ERC worked to increase its reach and engagement on its three social media accounts: the [OGR Twitter page](#), [OGR Facebook page](#), and the [Illinois Connection Facebook page](#). We also added an Instagram presence to our social media portfolio. Our followers on all three accounts increased this year.

ERC followed a weekly social media plan that involved regular posting on the OGR Twitter page and the Illinois Connection Facebook page three times per week. On Mondays, ERC creates an original graphic to honor an alumni legislator. On Wednesdays, ERC features specific research going on at our three universities (#ResearchWednesday). On Fridays, ERC features federally funded projects at our three universities (#FederallyFundedFriday). ERC also creates social media plans for events throughout the year. ERC uses social media to highlight current events and meetings with Illinois legislators. Virtual advocacy events, fly-ins, district meetings, and Calls-to-Action are featured on all three of our pages. In addition, our U of I Caucus Monday Highlights regularly performed well and earned attention from Illinois legislators.

Followers/Likes July 2021-present

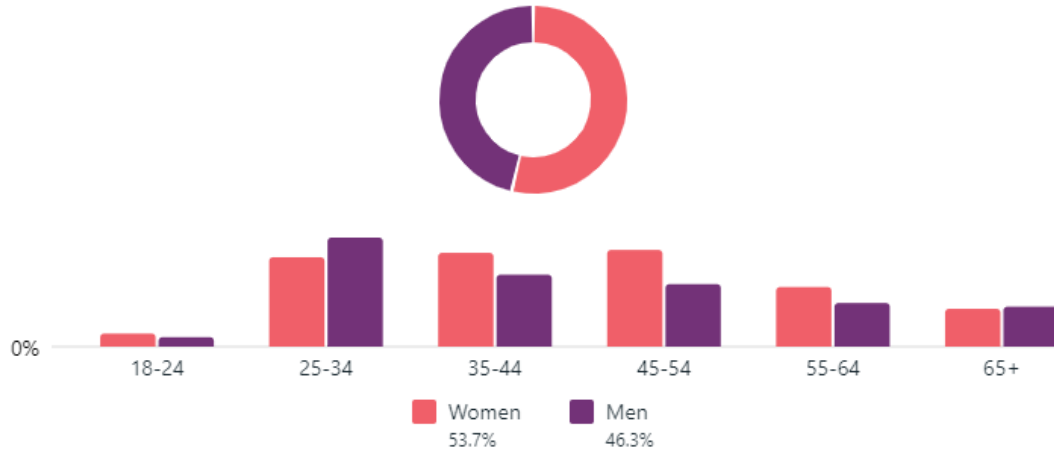
- Twitter 1,640 followers (up 635 from last year)
- OGR Facebook 562 likes and 626 followers
- IL Connection, 1,065 followers
- Instagram, 217 followers
- LinkedIn, 488 connections

IC Facebook

Facebook Page followers ⓘ

1,065

Age & gender ⓘ



IC Instagram

Instagram followers ⓘ

217

Age & gender ⓘ

