

HCAA Legislative Report

July 18, 2022

Respectfully submitted by Linda Kolbusz and Jim Edstrom

- **May 17, 2022:** “At a time when organizations are increasingly expected to take a stand on contentious sociopolitical issues, institutions of higher education are no exception. And a prime example could line up with students returning from summer break—after the U.S. Supreme Court is likely to issue its final ruling on *Roe v. Wade*. If a majority of justices decide to overturn the landmark abortion rights case—as a leaked draft opinion suggests—protests, pressure campaigns and student activism could erupt on campuses. While the case outcome won't change the status quo in Illinois, where strong abortion rights protections are on the books, it could fuel students to campaign for broader improvements to reproductive health care on campus, especially at Chicago's Catholic universities, where fewer resources are provided due to religious ideology.”

From Elyssa Cherney, [“Roe ruling puts universities under pressure,”](#) *Crain's Chicago Business*, May 17, 2022.

- **May 22, 2022:** In urging Congress to pass the Domestic Terrorism Act, the National Education Association quoted Willie Carver, 2022 Kentucky Teacher of the Year, in his testimony about the efforts to restrict discussion of LGBTQ+ issues: “Political attacks are exacerbating teacher shortages, harming our democracy and, above all, hurting our children,” he said. “We need you to pass the Equality Act, to make discrimination against LGBTQ people illegal. We need you to pass the Safe Schools Improvement Act, to protect all students from harassment.”
- **June 16, 2022:** “Enrollment declined 10% each of the past two years at Carl Sandburg College, and other community colleges have seen seeing similar decreases due to the pandemic. A broader look shows that community colleges across the nation have seen enrollment losses. College leaders are working to reverse those numbers by navigating the breakdown of online vs. in person courses to return students. . . . Matt Berry, chief of staff for the Illinois Community College Board, said many factors contributed to the enrollment declines at community colleges, but the pandemic has been the primary driver. Shifting to remote learning made it difficult for students to learn certain career technical programs in a virtual environment, such as welding, and Berry said the pandemic created additional challenges to students who needed to work to provide for themselves or their families. “

From [“Pandemic drops enrollment at most Illinois community colleges as students joined workforce”](#), *Galesburg Register-Mail*, June 16, 2022.

- **June 21, 2022:** “As part of the Pritzker administration’s hallmark commitment to make college more affordable for students in Illinois, Governor Pritzker and the General Assembly added \$122 million in funding for the Monetary Award Program (MAP) for Fiscal Year (FY) 23, bringing the total funding for this state grant for low-income college students to a historic high of approximately \$601 million. Each year the Commissioners on the Board of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) approve a framework for distributing MAP grants to eligible students (the MAP eligibility formula), taking into

account the amount of funding available and college tuition and fee costs—balancing meaningful grant size with the goal of serving more students. In FY22, the program was able to offer grants to essentially every eligible student who applied through the end of the academic year—effectively leaving no one on a waiting list for the first time in 20 years. With the new MAP eligibility formula approved by ISAC’s Board last week, it is estimated the additional funding for FY23 will allow ISAC to provide grants to virtually every eligible student, while significantly increasing grant size.”

From [“Illinois Student Assistance Commission Approves Plan To Improve Equity And Affordability For Students Through Additional Map Funding.”](#) Illinois Student Assistance Commission press release.

- **July 6, 2022:** “Developmental courses are just like any other college class. They cost money, and they often take a full semester. The only difference is that developmental classes don’t earn students any college credit. It’s not just a few students. Around 40% of high school graduates who start at community colleges are put in at least one developmental education course. And when students enroll in these courses, it can be really hard to advance, move on and graduate. In Illinois, only 1 in 5 community college students put in developmental ed will graduate.” Community colleges are addressing the issue under the provisions of the state “Developmental Education Reform Act” (110 ILCS 175/100), which states:

“Community colleges are called upon to use 3 measures to determine the placement of a student in introductory college-level English language or mathematics coursework:

1. A student's cumulative high school grade point average.
2. A student's successful completion of an appropriate high school transition course in mathematics or English.
3. A student's successful completion of an appropriate developmental education or introductory college-level English language or mathematics course at another regionally accredited postsecondary educational institution.”

“Community colleges shall also consider the standardized test scores provided by the student for placement in an introductory college-level English language or mathematics course . . . [A] community college may accept a lower score on individual placement measures or accept lower scores in combination with other placement measures than those set forth in the recommendations.”

From [“Many college students get stuck in "developmental" courses for no credit and don't graduate. Here's what new state-mandated reforms could look like.”](#) Northern Public Radio, July 6, 2022

- **July 6, 2022:** Gov. JB Pritzker recently signed three bills into law designed to close equity gaps and expand access to higher education for underrepresented students. One of them was House Bill 5464, which requires state public universities and community colleges to develop and implement equity plans and practices.” “There were two other bills signed into law with similar goals of increasing equity in higher education. Senate Bill 3991 amends the Illinois Higher Education Savings Program, allowing the State Treasurer to increase the college savings deposit amount to the Treasurer’s 529 fund for children in financially insecure households.”

From [“Three new Illinois laws aim to improve equity in higher education.”](#) WGLT.

- **July 15, 2022:** Kevin Bessler of The Center Square reported that: “After huge investment returns in 2021, the Reason Foundation reports several states' pension systems most likely will experience financial losses for this year, including Illinois, as the stock market experiences significant declines. The forecast found that Illinois’ unfunded pension liability could grow from \$121 billion in 2021 to \$142 billion if the state's major pension plans report -6% investment returns for 2022. Only five other states, California, New York, Texas, Ohio and Florida, are expected to see their unfunded pension liabilities jump over \$20 billion compared to 2021.”

From Kevin Bessler, [The Center Square](#).