

October 16, 2009

## EDUCATION LEADERS SALUTE STUDENTS FOR MAP ADVOCACY

*Students from across the state rally in Springfield to restore \$200 million in financial aid*

SPRINGFIELD – The chairs of the three state higher education boards congratulated students from across Illinois today for their potent advocacy for restoring \$200 million in funding for the state’s need-based financial assistance program.

More than 2,000 students from public and private, community colleges and four-year institutions rallied in Springfield to urge the General Assembly to fill a hole in the Monetary Award Program (MAP) that jeopardized grants for nearly 138,000 students for the spring semester. The General Assembly voted today to approve a supplemental appropriation of \$205 million to cover the MAP grants for the spring semester.

“This unprecedented outpouring of concern of students from across Illinois is a powerful testament to the need for and value of the Monetary Award Program,” Carrie J. Hightman, chairwoman of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). “Thousands of students traveled to Springfield today to rally for the MAP program. This support for MAP funding has been evidenced over the past several weeks as students visited their legislators, wrote letters, called their legislators, and attended hearings to make the case for MAP funding. We are pleased that the General Assembly has listened to the voices of students from throughout the state and voted to restore the funding so vital to the continued educational opportunity for thousands of students.”

“On behalf of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, I am grateful to the thousands of students who have championed the cause of MAP funding,” Donald McNeil, chairman of ISAC, said. “They have put a human face on the issue of college affordability, and their stories have poignantly illustrated the vast need for the state to honor its promise to help finance their college education.”

“Community college students represent more than a third of all recipients of MAP grants and I am very proud of the way in which they have responded in this effort to restore funding and make their voices heard,” said Guy H. Alongi, chairman of the Illinois Community College

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Board. “The need for MAP funding is critical and the ICCB wholeheartedly supports the students’ cause.”

The chairs of the agencies also expressed gratitude for the support provided by key stakeholders for the rally and other initiatives to inform the public and the state’s elected leaders about the importance of the MAP program, including Dr. John Peters, president of Northern Illinois University and convener of the public presidents and chancellors; Dr. John Erwin, president of Illinois Central College and chair of the Community College Council of Presidents; Dave Tretter, president of the Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities; and the IBHE Student Advisory Committee, and Faculty Advisory Council.

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