

ICCB Press Release

Contact: Steve Morse, Illinois Community College Board
Phone: 217/785-7411

401 East Capitol Avenue
Springfield, IL 62701-1711

September 20, 2007

Community college: good for students, good for the community study shows

SPRINGFIELD— Need a remedy for an ailing state or local economy? Community college could be just what the doctor ordered, according to a recently completed study prepared by the Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies for the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB).

The study, called “The Economic Impact of Illinois Community Colleges,” finds that more than 80 percent of Illinois employers have hired a community college student over the last ten years and that nearly 30% of Illinois employees have completed a credit course at a community college in that same time period.

“Our community colleges play a significant role in the health of our state’s economy and the economies of their local districts,” said ICCB Chairman Guy Alongi.

Taking courses at an Illinois community college pays off in the students’ work lives. On average, all students who complete their Illinois community college education experience a double-digit percentage increase in earnings over their pre-enrollment wages. According to the study, Illinois community college graduates employed full-time averaged more than \$30,000 statewide in annual earnings after completing their programs of study.

“One of the biggest benefits for the state’s economy is that community college graduates stay within Illinois after they graduate,” noted Geoff Obrzut, ICCB president and chief executive officer. “This helps eliminate ‘brain drain’ and further boosts the investment that Illinois and local college districts make in community colleges.”

Nearly two-thirds of undergraduate students enrolled in Illinois colleges and universities are attending community colleges. A majority of minority students pursuing a postsecondary education are also enrolled in community colleges.

“Certainly the diversity and accessibility of our community colleges gives Illinois an advantage throughout its population,” said Alongi.

The ICCB contracted the NIU Center for Governmental Studies to conduct the research for the study.

“We are required by statute to conduct studies about the effectiveness and vitality of Illinois community colleges. We feel that periodic research on economic impact is one of the essential guides we can employ in policy-making decisions,” said Obrzut.

The full study can be accessed on the ICCB website at www.iccb.org.

The Illinois Community College System is the third largest community college system in the nation and comprises 48 community colleges in 39 districts covering all of Illinois. Illinois community colleges annually serve approximately a million students in college transfer courses, workforce development, continuing education, and adult education programs.

The Illinois Community College Board is the state coordinating board for community colleges. It comprises a chairperson and ten other members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate, and a nonvoting student member appointed by the ICCB Student Advisory Committee.

###