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## **Coalition of Illinois College Presidents Meets with Quinn; Urges Restoration of MAP Funding**

*Sep-03-2009*

College leaders representing Illinois public and private higher education conveyed an urgent message as they met with Governor Pat Quinn Wednesday: Find a way to restore funding for the Monetary Award Program (MAP) for the upcoming spring semester and avert the very real possibility that thousands of Illinois' neediest college students will not be able to continue their education.

Presidents meeting with the governor included John Erwin, president of Illinois Central College in Peoria, representing the Illinois Council of Community College Presidents; Michael Garanzini, president of Loyola University Chicago and past chairman of the Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities; Charles Middleton, president of Roosevelt University and chairman of the Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities; and John Peters, president of Northern Illinois University and the designated convener of the group of Illinois public university presidents.

The rare multi-sector alliance of higher education leaders is united in its support of the state's oldest need-based student aid program on behalf of all students, and advocated the restoration of \$200 million for MAP for the remainder of the state fiscal year. The FY2010 state budget provided for only half of the necessary funding for the current academic year, leaving a devastating shortfall in MAP funding that would eliminate state funding for more than 137,000 Illinois students, nearly half of whom have an annual family income of less than \$20,000, as reported by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission.

"On behalf of the neediest students in Illinois, we urged the governor to quickly find a way to restore the \$200 million that has been cut from the Monetary Award Program," said Middleton.

"The governor clearly understood that this cut must be restored, and it must be restored this fall so that returning students can stay in school," according to Peters. "If these funds are not restored, we risk losing an entire generation of hard-working low-income students. This issue cannot wait, as students enrolled for the fall semester are making decisions now about whether or not they can afford to return to school in January for the spring semester."

"In this economy, our state must recognize that student financial aid is a necessity, not only for traditional-age students, but for many displaced adults returning to college to upgrade their skills. The MAP grant is an investment in the neediest of Illinois students, and in the future health of Illinois' economy. I was encouraged to hear the governor recognize this need in our meeting with him," said Erwin.

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