

Illinois Public University Presidents and Chancellors

February 8, 2010

The Honorable Pat Quinn
Governor
207 State House
Springfield, Illinois 62706

The Honorable Dan Hynes
Comptroller
201 State House
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Dear Governor Quinn and Comptroller Hynes,

The presidents and chancellors of Illinois' public universities write today to urge your commitment to a reliable schedule for the payment of the state appropriation and swift action to resolve the state's financial crisis that now threatens our long term viability. In the first weeks of a new decade we face an unprecedented crisis: our public universities have received only a fraction of the state payments needed and promised to keep our operations going this fiscal year. Across Illinois, our institutions remain more than three quarters of a billion dollars behind in state payments.

We have done what we can to forestall this crisis by enacting countless measures to save resources and postpone payments until the last possible minute. We have drawn down our available resources, and we are now counting on tuition dollars to keep our doors open for students beginning the new spring semester. Still, no amount of cutting and sacrifice can make up for the absence of hundreds of millions of dollars in State Appropriation payments.

Without full funding of our appropriations in a timely manner, we will be forced to take even more drastic actions that will diminish the educational opportunities of our students and our service to the people of Illinois. We are currently past the halfway point in our fiscal year, but have received only a fraction of our state funding. Ongoing financial commitments on all our campuses must be met. Faculty and staff must be paid, buildings must be heated, classes must be taught, and students must be supported. Especially in these difficult times we must be able to rely on the State of Illinois as our partner.

For more than a century our public universities have been engines of economic growth, raising the standard of living for countless Illinois citizens and at no time has that capacity been more crucial. Students, parents, communities, the economy and the very future of our State depend on quality education at every level, but especially in our universities. Every dollar spent on higher education is repaid many times over in job-creating activity at all levels. During periods of economic recession universities help set the stage for recovery through investment in human capital and discoveries that create new industries and transform existing ones. In short, Illinois' public universities are keys to sustained job growth and economic recovery. Historically, the state of Illinois has recognized the importance of its public universities by investing scarce resources in higher education even when dollars were tight. The people of Illinois and the state as a whole need the Illinois public universities to help shape our state's future, including our economic recovery, and drive the next generation of technology and opportunity.

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We understand any solution to the fiscal crisis faced by our state will be difficult and painful but the more quickly the state embarks on the difficult path to recovery the less the damage. We are eager to help craft such a solution and develop support. In the meantime we urge the state to honor its commitments by fully funding public university appropriations for FY 2010. To that end, we request a reliable appropriation payment schedule be set and agreed to that will allow us to manage our respective cash flows for FY2010 and thereafter and sustain orderly operations.

Respectfully,

Dr. Paula Allen-Meares, Chancellor
University of Illinois at Chicago

Dr. Elaine Maimon, President
Governors State University

Dr. C. Alvin Bowman, President
Illinois State University

Dr. William L. Perry, President
Eastern Illinois University

Dr. Robert Easter, Interim Provost/Chancellor
University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

Dr. John G. Peters, President
Northern Illinois University

Dr. Alvin Goldfarb, President
Western Illinois University

Dr. Glen Poshard, President
Southern Illinois University

Dr. Samuel Goldman, Chancellor
Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Dr. Richard Ringeisen, Chancellor
University of Illinois at Springfield

Dr. Sharon K. Hahs, President
Northeastern Illinois University

Dr. Vaughn Vandegrift, Chancellor
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

Dr. Stan Ikenberry, President
University of Illinois

Dr. Wayne D. Watson, President
Chicago State University

cc: The Honorable Michael J. Madigan, Speaker of the House
The Honorable John Cullerton, President
The Honorable Christine Radogno, Senate Minority Leader
The Honorable Tom Cross, House Minority Leader