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IBHE BOARD APPROVES HIGHER EDUCATION BUDGET REQUEST FOCUSED ON EQUITY

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Board of Higher Education today approved a fiscal year 2022 budget that increases funding to support its continuing efforts to help close equity gaps in higher education outcomes. The budget proposal is \$2.141 billion and would reflect a 4.5 percent (\$92 million) increase for general funds, excluding the State University Retirement System (SURS).

IBHE Chair John Atkinson said, “This budget recommendation reflects a down payment on the strategic plan, which will focus on equity, affordability, and attainment. The best way to make sure that students from underserved communities, students of color, and other underrepresented students can attend and succeed in college is to increase funding for the Monetary Award Program (MAP), our public universities and community colleges.

IBHE knows that increases in funding to community colleges and public universities is critical to the enrollment, retention, and attainment of this most underrepresented group of students. IBHE is proposing a \$5.3 million increase for community colleges and a \$23.2 million increase for public universities. “Despite this difficult time for the state budget, investing in higher education—and with a focus on equity—is essential to help the Illinois economy recover and to assist people in securing good jobs. Our higher education system will not only serve to prepare the workforce but will foster the innovation that spurs the economic recovery,” explained Atkinson.

The budget also includes \$1 million for the public universities to join the national Common App, which simplifies the college application process. “We applaud Gov. Pritzker’s commitment to making college more affordable and accessible. Providing funding to implement the Common App is another way to make his vision a reality,” said Ginger Ostro, IBHE Executive Director.

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Highlights that focus on equity include:

- \$50 million increase for MAP
- \$5.3 million (2 percent) increase for community colleges
- \$23.2 million (2 percent) increase for public universities
- \$1 million for roll-out of the Common App
- Maintained funding for AIM HIGH, which is a merit-based scholarship program
- \$10 million toward financial stability for College Illinois!

The budget recommendation next goes to Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker and the General Assembly for consideration.

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