FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Enrollment increases at Chicago State, despite MAP budget cuts

The Fall Semester has started at Chicago State University (CSU) where enrollment is up despite state education budget cuts.

According to the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) website, budget cuts have been made as a result of absent new revenues and a substantial state budget deficit. Consequently, the amount ISAC would annually receive to fund college scholarships and grants, including the Monetary Award Program (MAP), have been significantly reduced.

CSU stands to lose 3,000 students in the spring as a result of the MAP cuts, which is over half of the student population. The reduction means that approximately 3,000 Chicago State students will lose over $3.6 million in financial aid.

As students start a new era in their lives with a goal of earning their college degree and looking ahead to a bright future that promises financial and career success, the future looks bleak due to the Monetary Assistance Program cuts. “Preliminary reports state that enrollment is up by 6% for CSU but we’re afraid it will drop if the MAP funding is not restored,” said Dr. Erma Brooks Williams, Associate to the President for the Board of Trustees and External Relations. “If the funds are not restored, the educational future is not clear for many students. This is the time for all of us to join the fight to help CSU secure the funding we need to ensure that our students earn a higher education degree,” she added.

CSU senior, Leslie White, junior transfer from Howard University, says that students dependent on financial aid may be able to get full-time jobs, which will provide a source of income, but will interfere with their studies and classroom participation. “Our grades will drop, as working full-time will leave little room for studying. Retail jobs are not really an option because they do not take you far for a future of promise,” she stated. It’s a tough time right now as the struggling economy leaves no choice but to go back to school to get another bachelor’s degree in an industry that is not suffering,” says White. “The average student at CSU feels that they must stay in school to obtain better jobs to provide for their families,” she added.

CSU has launched an advocacy campaign to fight for the students’ education and the economic health of the community. The CSU MAP Advocacy Campaign Committee is enlisting the community’s support and assistance in calling, writing or e-mailing the Governor and legislators urging them to restore MAP funds.

“Clearly CSU is committed to expressing our concerns for the restoration of the MAP awards,” said Christopher A. Williams, Director of Legislative and External Relations. “An example of
our efforts include providing computer stations across campus so that anyone can send an email directly to the Governor. Other activities include a trip to Springfield on Thursday, October 15 from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. The community is invited to join us as we take several buses to Springfield to voice our concerns in person to the General Assembly,” he added.

The MAP Advocacy Campaign Committee encourages the community to talk to friends, family and neighbors to encourage them to contact Legislators on behalf of our students. Friends of CSU who want to help can visit the General Assembly website at www.ilga.gov to identify a legislator and find the contact information (click the “Legislator Lookup” link at the lower right side of the home page or “Members” for the name of the legislators).

For more information, please call (773) 995-3872.