MAP grants slated for more cuts
CSU and other Illinois public university students can act to save critical education grants

CHICAGO, Sept. 27, 2011 — Illinois students have a narrow window to voice concerns over proposals to cut Illinois Student Assistance Commission MAP grants, according to ISAC officials. Cuts are guaranteed — but how deep is up to the state Legislature.

During a legislative session starting Oct. 25, ISAC officials will seek to tap $33.5 million already set aside for student financial assistance. This special fund won’t require any more money from general revenues.

“While society continues to debate the soaring cost of higher education, today’s college students are actually bearing the brunt of tighter state and federal budgets,” says Angela Henderson, vice president of enrollment management at Chicago State University. “This presents an opportunity for students to plug into the political process by calling their state legislators to indicate how important these grants are.”

Ideally, second- and third-term grants could be reduced by as little at 2 percent or 5 percent, if the set-aside money is tapped. For example, a 5 percent decrease for a semester college would show a reduction of $2,124 in the second term. However, if the General Assembly doesn’t grant any additional spending authority, ISAC says the drop could hypothetically go as low as 9 percent. That means a semester-based state institution such as Chicago State could see a grant decrease of $1,935 in the second term.

“A college education still makes the long-term difference in health and wealth,” Henderson says. “That’s why protecting access to higher education, even in a weakened economy, is critical.”

Student voices count: Look up legislators’ numbers at www.ilga.gov. Click on the “legislator lookup” link in the lower right side to see which legislators cover which areas. In the meantime, check collegeillinois.org for updates.

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