

**STATEMENT TO THE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF
THE ILLINOIS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY
PRESIDENT Z SCOTT**

HOUSE RESOLUTION, HR-1017

NOVEMBER 14, 2018



**9501 S. KING DRIVE
CHICAGO, IL 60628
(773) 995-2400**

Chicago State University
Zaldwaynaka Scott, Esq.
President

9501 S. King Drive
Chicago, IL 60628
T 773.995.2400
F 773.995.3849

Dear Chairman Welch and Members of the Higher Education Committee,

I applaud you for raising the importance of closing statewide racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps in higher education institutions. At Chicago State University, we work toward closing this gap every day. Our student population is unique among public institutions in Illinois – nearly 80% of our students are students of color, and nearly 80% of our students qualify for the Monetary Award Program (MAP). Our students are closing the achievement gap with their success.

At Chicago State, we make closing the achievement gap a priority – and we are making progress. The University of Southern California evaluated all public universities across the country, and found that CSU is the Number 1 public university in Illinois for serving the needs of African-American students, and tied for Number 2 among all public universities in the country. While CSU enrolls less than 2% of the population of public university students in the state, during the past 5 years, CSU has awarded the second highest total cumulative number of bachelor's degrees to African American students among Illinois public universities (an average of nearly 500 bachelor's degrees per year). At the graduate level, we produced 70% of the black doctoral pharmacy degree candidates in Illinois in 2014.

We are able to serve this community well because of the dedication and hard work of our first-class faculty, staff, and administration, as well as our cultural competency. We understand that providing wrap-around services is crucial for increasing retention and persistence for low-income students. That is why we were awarded a grant from the United States Department of Health and Human Services to provide these services to students in the Health Sciences fields.

We also provide tutoring services, counseling, and support services that can help students dealing with challenges that are unique to low-income populations, such issues related to trauma. Since some of our students face issues related to housing and food insecurity, we work with students to resolve their housing issues, and we are opening a food pantry in the spring semester.

In our constant effort to improve, Chicago State has reviewed best practices nation-wide and found there are initiatives that are proven to increase student success among low-income and diverse populations. For example, Georgia State University, using grant funding, studied factors influencing student retention. Implementing their findings, they integrated technology into their enrollment management and academic advising, using predictive analytics to identify at-risk students and intervene early. They also provided “micro-grants” that gave emergency funding to students having trouble making ends meet. While the average “micro-grant” was only \$900, it often made the difference between the student dropping out and staying enrolled. Implementing these and other initiatives, Georgia State University has seen significant increases in student retention, completion, and overall success.

We are encouraged by this resolution, and hope that the State does support higher education institutions in

implementing student success efforts that improve outcomes. To help Chicago State make greater progress in closing the achievement gap, we would suggest that the State increase funding for support services and counseling, and fund the integration of technology into enrollment management and academic advising. Finally, funding micro-grants can have a substantial impact on a student's ability to complete their degree, and is well worth the investment by the State.

As aforementioned, Chicago State prioritizes closing the achievement gap. We applaud the House Higher Education Committee for taking the issue seriously. CSU has demonstrated our ability to serve minority and low-income students in Illinois, and we look forward to working closely with the legislature as the State focuses on student equity and improved outcomes for low-income students and students of color.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Zaldwaynaka Scott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Zaldwaynaka Scott, Esq.
President