

June 22, 2017

Dear the Honorable Governor Rauner, Senate President Cullerton, Senate Minority Leader Radogno, House Speaker Madigan, and House Minority Leader Durkin:

The public universities of the State of Illinois would like to acknowledge the legislators who engaged in difficult budget negotiations this session. In recent weeks, there have been numerous viable options supported by members of the General Assembly. The budget standoff is becoming increasingly disruptive to the operations of the State, including the 12 public university campuses that currently enroll over 200,000 future Illinois tax payers, employees and employers. The state universities are longstanding economic anchors and engines for every region of Illinois and a budget agreement is needed before the end of this fiscal year.

University of Illinois  
President Timothy L. Killeen

Chicago State University  
Interim President Rachel  
Lindsay

Eastern Illinois University  
President David M. Glassman

Governors State University  
President Elaine P. Maimon

Illinois State University  
President Larry H. Dietz

Northeastern Illinois University  
Interim President Richard J.  
Helldobler

Northern Illinois University  
President Doug Baker

Southern Illinois University  
President Randy J. Dunn

Western Illinois University  
President Jack Thomas

The impasse casts a shadow of uncertainty over the campuses. University leaders have reduced spending dramatically to cope with inadequate appropriations. However, without any confidence that appropriations are even forthcoming - let alone whether they will be timely or adequate - students and their families are understandably alarmed. Decisions must be made now about financial aid, staffing, academic offerings and student services for the upcoming school year. Until the impasse ends, we are at a competitive disadvantage with our peers in other states and serious reputational and operational damage continues to occur, perhaps most notably evidenced by the significant enrollment declines at many of our institutions. It is tragic how Illinois has fallen since being recognized as the top higher education system in the nation only 15 years ago.

Although the universities we lead have different combinations of resources and revenues depending on our respective missions, we all have a crucial reliance on state appropriations to operate our institutions and serve our hundreds of thousands of Illinois students. The state appropriation is a fundamental tenet of the partnership between the State and public universities, enabling us to deliver affordable, accessible, high-quality education to large numbers of Illinoisans.

We appreciate the efforts of those legislators who have crafted and supported the various budget proposals offered this Spring. As you now reconvene in the Special Session, we implore you to bring this horrific and destructive budgetary impasse to final resolution by enacting a state budget. At this juncture, it is our fiduciary responsibility to our boards, our employees, our state's residents and most importantly - our students - to state publicly and unequivocally that the General Assembly and the Governor must together enact a balanced budget, including adequate revenues, by the close of the fiscal year. Such a resolution would be a significant first step in providing your public universities with sustainable and predictable levels of support and regaining confidence by the public in the state's commitment to supporting higher education for its citizens.

Sincerely,



University of Illinois  
President Timothy L. Killeen



Northeastern Illinois University  
Interim President Richard J. Helldobler



Northern Illinois University  
President Doug Baker

Chicago State University  
Interim President Rachel Lindsay



Eastern Illinois University  
President David M. Glassman



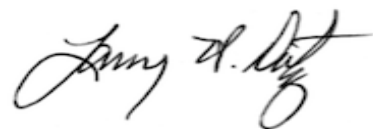
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