

AGENDA ITEM 11.

REVISED MISSION STATEMENT

Submitted for: Information

Summary: The primary source of guidance for the Illinois Student Assistance Commission is its enabling act, the Higher Education Student Assistance Act. Through this act, the Illinois General Assembly has declared that

“(1) the provision of a higher education for all residents of this State who desire a higher education and are properly qualified therefor is important to the welfare and security of this State and Nation and, consequently, is an important public purpose, and (2) many qualified students are deterred by financial considerations from completing their education, with a consequent irreparable loss to the State and Nation of talents vital to welfare and security.”

Accordingly, one of the core values serving as a foundation for ISAC is that higher education serves not just the individual but also the public good. This sentiment is reflected in the Commission’s most recent statement of mission: *To benefit society by enabling individuals to develop to their fullest potential through access to quality education.*

Since the development of this mission statement by staff in the early 1990’s, ISAC has undergone significant change, as has the environment in which it must operate. In the last year alone, ISAC has seen the appointment of a new Executive Director, an expanded Public Service Division, a renewed focus on Illinois students, agency downsizing, deteriorating credit markets and stringent new federal regulations. In this rapidly changing environment, the Commission’s staff can benefit from clear, concise direction to guide day-to-day operations and policy decisions. It is fitting that ISAC revisit the agency’s mission statement given these circumstances.

The Higher Education Student Assistance Act makes it clear that ISAC’s primary mandate is to combat the “irreparable loss” that results when financial considerations deter qualified Illinois residents from further education. With this in mind, staff have adopted a simple and direct expression of ISAC’s mission as it enters its next fifty years of service to Illinois and its students and families: *To make college affordable for Illinois students.*

Action requested: None