

ILLINI SCIENCE POLICY PROGRAM

2021 PROJECTS

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LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

[Illinois Legislative Black Caucus Foundation](#)

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EXECUTIVE BRANCH

[Illinois Board of Higher Education](#)

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HOST: ILLINOIS LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS FOUNDATION

Location: 1 N. Old State Capitol Plaza, Suite 333, Springfield IL

Scholar Supervisor: Sen. Omar Aquino or Executive Director of the IL Legislative Latino Caucus

Project Description:

Help promote, organize and staff legislative events, such as annual meetings, government events, letter-writing campaigns, in-district meetings and Illinois Legislative Black Caucus Foundation events.

Attend committee hearings held by the state legislature, help with press conferences.

Research legislative issues for members of the General Assembly or for upcoming articles including but limited to U of I Extension critical issues such as food, economy, environment, community, and/or health.

Create and upload content for social media networking sites and websites.

Help develop and oversee the relationships with members and advocacy groups.

Help create a plan to effectively engage constituents.

Administrative duties such as answering phones, filing and assisting with mailings.

Assist with various committee assignments, for example: Economic Opportunity & Equity (Chairperson); Appropriations-Public Safety; Agriculture & Conservation (Chairperson); Elem Sec Ed: School Curric Policies; Energy & Environment; Human Services; Environmental Justice Subcommittee (Sub-Chairperson); Public Benefits Subcommittee (Sub-Chairperson); Revenue & Finance.

In addition, the scholar will work with the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus Foundation (ILBCF) with a focus on the following:

- Empower the Illinois black community and increase access to federal, state and community programs in critical issue areas;
- College access for black youth who need assistance to further their education. Since its inception in 2005, the ILBCF has been dedicated to protecting, developing and advancing black communities around Illinois. To ensure our community is aware of legislative changes, the ILBCF regularly holds legislative forums where we inform residents about changes in state government, the ISP scholar will assist with events such as legislative forums.

In addition, the scholar will work directly with joint chair of the ILBC and the executive director of the ILBCF. The scholar will benefit tremendously by their expertise and mentorship.

This Illini Science Policy Scholar position receives partial support through PepsiCo and the U of I Office of Government Relations. The Scholar will have the opportunity to engage with PepsiCo's corporate leadership and Employees Resource Groups, which are aimed at sustaining a culture of inclusion and diversity to achieve the company's mission.

HOST: ILLINOIS LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS FOUNDATION

Location: TBD due to COVID-19

Scholar Supervisor: Tiffany Hightower, Executive Director Illinois Legislative Black Caucus Foundation

Project Description:

Help promote, organize and staff legislative events, such as annual meetings, government events, letter-writing campaigns, in-district meetings and ILLCF events.

Attend committee hearings held by the state legislature, help with press conferences, take video and photo at events.

Research legislative issues for members of the General Assembly or for upcoming articles including but limited to critical issues such as food, economy, environment, community, and/or health.

Create and upload content for social media networking sites and websites.

Help develop and oversee the relationships with members and advocacy groups.

Help create a plan to effectively engage constituents.

Administrative duties such as answering phones, filing and assisting with mailings: internal and external

Assist with various committee assignments, for example: Appropriations I; Appropriations II; Committee of the Whole; Education; Government Accountability/Pensions; Higher Education; Licensed Activities; Subcommittee on Capital (AP); Subcommittee on Charter Schools; Labor (Chairperson); Opioid Crisis Abatement Spec. Com.

In addition, work with the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus Foundation with a focus on the following:

- empower Illinois Latinos and increase access to federal, state and community programs in critically important areas;
- provide college scholarships for young Latino men and women who need assistance to further their education; and
- support research and the widespread distribution of policy reports through the Illinois Latino Public Policy Institute.

This Illini Science Policy Scholar position receives partial support through PepsiCo and the U of I Office of Government Relations. The Scholar will have the opportunity to engage with PepsiCo's corporate leadership and Employees Resource Groups, which are aimed at sustaining a culture of inclusion and diversity to achieve the company's mission.

HOST: ILLINOIS BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Location: 1 N. Old State Capitol Plaza, Suite 333, Springfield IL

Scholar Supervisor: Dr. Eric Lichtenberger, Deputy Director of Information Management and Research

Project Description:

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) is currently in the middle of a developing a strategic plan for higher education that will guide Illinois over the next decade in efforts to achieve the following vision: Illinois will have an equitable, accessible, innovative, nimble, and aligned higher education ecosystem that ensures individuals, families, and communities across the state thrive. To fulfill the vision, Illinois will implement a set of strategies and an accountability system aligned with the Core Principles that:

1. Increase postsecondary credential/degree attainment and develop talent to drive the Illinois' economy.
2. Close equity gaps as too many students are left behind by our current higher education system—particularly students who are African American, Latinx, low-income, first generation, rural, adults, or have disabilities.
3. Improve affordability, increase access, and manage costs as college affordability is too often seen as a barrier to access and attainment.

The Higher Education Strategic Plan will be completed in late spring/early summer of 2021 and therefore before the ISP scholar would likely begin at IBHE. However, establishing the strategic plan is only the first step in transforming the Illinois Higher Education landscape. There would be several opportunities for an ISP scholar to contribute to policy-focused research relating to the Illinois economy and communities. Coinciding with the development of the new strategic plan, IBHE is beginning to more fully utilize its component of the Illinois Longitudinal Data system to develop accountability metrics for the higher education system, the sub-systems, and the individual colleges and universities. We envision the ISP scholar to be directly involved in using IBHE's robust information systems to identify potential equity gaps in enrollment and completion and in throughput measures such as retention and class advancement. IBHE exists to serve students and want to use student-level data to make equity-driven decisions.

The ISP scholar will actively learn about higher education in Illinois as well as the ways higher education reinforces the P-20 education continuum. The ISP scholar will learn how to analyze multi-variate student-level data while tying the analysis to pertinent policy issues. There will also be an emphasis on developing data visualizations tied to key components of the strategic plan that will allow others to interact with and better understand the information. Through this work, the scholar will gain a better understanding of various analytical techniques and will be provided the opportunity to present their work to a variety of stakeholders, both through presentations and via the development of reports and/or research briefs.

Another bucket of core work for the scholar will include helping IBHE to consolidate and modernize some of its current public-facing data tools, while developing new ways to let others interact with the information.

IBHE feels that higher education is a public good that enriches life through preserving, expanding, and transmitting knowledge. Also, learning is enhanced when students participate in research and hands-on experiences. Through the ISP program IBHE staff hope to transmit knowledge and provide a real-world learning opportunity for a scholar.

As COVID-19 has shaped and will continue to reshape IBHE's working environment, the scholar will be provided

with a lot of flexibility regarding their location, as most of the work could be accomplished remotely. Through electronic means, the scholar will be provided the opportunity to interact with state education leaders and not only learn about important and current higher education issues, but also help drive change in the state.

HOST: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, BUREAU OF MARKETING

Location: 801 E. Sangamon Ave., Springfield, IL 62701

Scholar Supervisor: Kim Hamilton, Acting Bureau Chief, Bureau of Marketing

Project Description:

The Bureau of Marketing, Promotion, & Grants is diverse with oversight and responsibility for the marketing of Illinois food and agribusiness products.

The Bureau manages an active schedule of promotional events each year benefiting the state's food and agribusiness sectors which include sponsoring an Illinois section at domestic and international trade shows, organizing trade & buyers' missions, coordinating educational seminars, processing trade leads, offering one-on-one marketing assistance, managing the Illinois product promotional programs (with IL retailers & IL Products Expo), coordinating the Illinois agricultural industry tours (grain, dairy, and swine), local foods, logo programs (Illinois Product, Homegrown By Heroes), federal grant programs (Specialty Crop), Centennial/Sesquicentennial/Bicentennial farm programs, Illinois Ag in the Classroom, promoting Illinois products at the Illinois & DuQuoin State Fairs, Farm Progress Show, organizing the commodity elections, & the Illinois Products Farmer's Market.

The Bureau works in cooperation with the USDA Ag Marketing Service to monitor and report daily livestock and grain markets. Thru the Bureau's membership with Food Export-Midwest and the U.S. Livestock Genetic Export Corp. (USLGE), the agency can help Illinois food and agribusiness companies access federal marketing dollars for export promotion.

The mission is to expand Illinois domestic and international markets by providing marketing assistance to food and agricultural companies. The bureau provides essential marketing and promotional assistance to small and medium sized food and agribusiness companies that often can't afford marketing assistance otherwise.

Position Duties

- Work with IDOA staff to organize/plan IDOA trade missions, trade shows, industry tours, IL & DuQuoin State Fairs, Farm Progress Show and other events such as the Illinois Products Farmer's Market and Illinois Products Expo for Illinois companies; develop communication tools for recruiting, i.e. recruitment packets, fact sheets, flyers, information for electronic newsletter, etc.
- Work with IDOA staff on local foods and urban agriculture initiatives, including attending meetings on behalf of the Department and developing a comprehensive spreadsheet of all engaged groups within the state.
- Educate and inform food/agribusiness companies about programs and services available to them.
- Contact Illinois food and agricultural companies to update current database of Illinois companies.
- Contact Illinois food retailers and food distributors/brokers to create a new database of Illinois buyer contacts.
- Work with IDOA staff to train in Market News Office to monitor and report daily livestock and grain markets.

HOST: ILLINOIS DEPT. OF COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, OFFICE OF BROADBAND

Location: 100 W Randolph Street, Chicago, IL *or* 500 E Monroe Street, Springfield, IL

Scholar Supervisor: Matt Schmidt, Director, Illinois Office of Broadband

Project Description:

The Illinois Office of Broadband is administering the \$400 million Connect Illinois broadband infrastructure grant program - a competitive matching grant fund that is currently accepting applications for the second round of funding. The Office also launched multiple programs in 2020 to move further toward the state's goals of achieving ubiquitous broadband access and adoption.

The Digital Equity Package consists of three additional programs that offer related programming in the areas of community planning and capacity building and digital literacy, adoption, and inclusion. The Illinois Connected Communities program engages a cohort of communities to drive community planning for broadband access, adoption, and use implementation through best practice curriculum and expert consultation. Digital Navigator Collaboration is a partnership with the National Digital Inclusion Alliance and PCs for People to establish digital navigator capacity within communities and work to assess residents needs and connect them to resources that match their households' lifestyles. The Broadband READY Program will provide funds to qualified regional entities to explore opportunities for equitable advances in broadband access, adoption, and utilization. Program participants will identify current digital inequities in their regions as well as next steps in creating a digitally inclusion ecosystem.

Additional programming includes the Connect Illinois Computer Equity Network, a first of its kind initiative to deploy refurbished computers, digital literacy programming and workforce development through a statewide network of public and private partners. Operated by PCs for People, the program will put computers and other mobile devices into the hands of Illinois residents. A fellow would be invited to participate in each of these programs, particularly with regard to grant administration, community engagement, and program planning and execution. All of these programs would allow the fellow to contribute to and learn the execution of state administered programs, be exposed to program partners, and gain real-world skills.

The Office serves as a resource to the Illinois Broadband Advisory Council, which has contributed to development of a state broadband strategic plan articulating the Connect Illinois vision, strategy, and approach. This council has formed several working groups focused on broadband access, technology and infrastructure, economic development, education, and telehealth. The working groups will reconvene during the latter half of 2021. A fellow would be invited to contribute to the work of the Broadband Advisory Council and could take a lead role in supporting the work of the working groups. This would include the opportunity to develop some degree of policy expertise in one or more of the subject areas listed above per the fellow's academic interests and/or professional goals. This work could include contribution to the council's annual report to the General Assembly or related intermediate deliverables, as well as direct interface with various state agencies, private businesses, and/or nonprofit public policy organizations.

In an effort to be a useful resource to individual consumers, local communities, policymakers, various state agencies and broadband providers alike, the Office has expanded its outreach efforts to keep the public informed and engaged in statewide broadband activities. This includes the Illinois Broadband Connections newsletter, a collaborative effort between the Office of Broadband and the Benton Institute for Broadband and Society, to bring

subscribers Illinois specific broadband news, and the Office of Broadband webinar series, that provides timely briefings on activities of the Office of Broadband, technical assistance webinars, and a series of expert conversations. A fellow would be invited to work with the Office of Broadband and the Benton Institute on outreach efforts, external communications such as newsletter contributions, and setting webinar programming.

Finally, the Office of Broadband serves as a one-stop shop for all things broadband. From infrastructure to utilization, public funding to private deployment, the Office is a useful resource to individual consumers, local communities, various state agencies, and broadband providers alike. The Office of Broadband seeks to make meaningful connections – including through thoughtful public-private partnership, innovative cross-sector collaboration, and increased efficiency within state agency and across all levels of government. Combined with the opportunity for progressive policy and programming research and development, the Office of Broadband is laying the pillars for ubiquitous broadband across Illinois. A fellow would be invited to play a critical, versatile, and flexible role with a team of experts that is setting the standard for state-based broadband investment and programming.

The Illinois Office of Broadband has staff in Chicago and Springfield; a fellow would have the choice of working from either location or splitting time between the two.

HOST: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

Location: 120 West Jefferson, Springfield IL

Scholar Supervisor: Mary Reynolds, Education Group CIO, DoIT

Project Description:

Background on DoIT

DoIT's mission is to empower the State of Illinois through high-value, customer-centric technology by delivering best-in-class innovation to client agencies fostering collaboration and empowering employees to provide better services to residents, businesses, and visitors. The Department of Innovation & Technology (DoIT) became an agency by statute on July 20, 2018 being charged with responsibility for the information technology functions of agencies under the jurisdiction of the governor.

DoIT is leading a digital transformation toward an enterprise approach to technology at the State of Illinois to gain efficiencies and improve service delivery for customer agencies who in turn, serve the residents of Illinois. This transformation is resulting in improved security and data protection, fewer redundant systems, more efficient technology spending and greater interagency collaboration.

The Department of Innovation & Technology (DoIT) delivers statewide technology, innovation and telecommunication services to state government agencies, boards and commissions as well as policy and standards development, lifecycle investment planning, enterprise solutions and privacy and security management.

DoIT manages the Illinois Century Network (ICN), a service that creates and maintains high speed telecommunications networks providing reliable communication links to and among Illinois schools, institutions of higher education, libraries, museums, research institutions, state agencies, units of local government and other entities that provide service to Illinois residents.

Goals and objectives for DoIT Illini Science Policy Scholar

- Scholar will provide professional contributions to inform research, policy, and management of issues within the Illinois Department of Innovation & Technology related to Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (STEAM) initiatives.
- Help guide development of STEAM policies for the State of Illinois.
- Collaborate with other state agencies and organizations to promote STEAM activities statewide and coordinate opportunities, including support for the DoIT STEAM Newsletter.
- Assist in development and maintenance of web resources on DoIT STEAM website
- Assist in gathering resources and developing model STEAM curriculum and activities for K-12 educators as well as connections with postsecondary education. Audience will also include students, parents, and youth organizations such as 4-H.
- Share employment opportunities in STEAM fields through potential development of improved pathways into government.
- Assist communications for DoIT through social media, website support, and outreach activities.

Mentorship and Engagement @ DoIT

DoIT intends to help guide the development and awareness of STEAM educational opportunities throughout Illinois through collaborative work with state agencies, K-12 schools, advocacy organizations, colleges and universities, business, and industry. This engagement work aligns closely with the Illinois Extension projects related to STEM 4-H youth development and will require coordination with Extension STEM Specialists. Development of expanded STEAM resources will cultivate opportunities through the U of I's public outreach and engagement network to expand educational programs throughout the state.

The UI Science Policy Scholar will be engaged directly with projects related to education technology coordination efforts and those initiatives specifically related to STEAM fields that integrate all five Extension critical issue areas. Active engagement with anticipated initiatives includes a STEAM event at the Illinois State Fair, coordination of online STEAM resources and activities for multiple audiences, and expansion of STEAM opportunities for youth throughout Illinois. Professional growth opportunities will enable the fellow to actively engage in public policy development, collaborate with a variety of advocacy organizations, focus on creative resource development, and explore innovative ways to communicate activities.