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Furloughs, hiring freeze in store for all U of I campuses

By **CHRIS DETTRO**

THE STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER

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Most University of Illinois employees — including more than 460 at the University of Illinois Springfield — face furlough days this spring as part of the university system's response to a growing appropriations shortfall.

The drastic cost-cutting measures, including furloughs and a hiring freeze, are designed to trim \$82 million from the U of I's operating budget and ease a \$436 million backlog of unpaid state of Illinois appropriations to the university.

President Stanley Ikenberry, in an e-mail message to faculty and staff members Tuesday, called the state's financial picture "grim and worsening."

The measures apply to all three U of I campuses, including UIS.

Faculty members and academic professional staff will take four furlough days — a temporary leave of absence without pay — between the four pay dates of Feb. 16 and May 16. Monthly pay will be reduced through automatic payroll deductions by one day for each of the four payroll periods.

The president, chancellors and other senior administrators will take 10 furlough days between February and June pay dates. Their pay will be reduced by two days each month during the five-month period.

Furloughs inevitable

Keith Burton, chairman of the psychology department at UIS and secretary of its faculty senate, said he is "very saddened and frustrated that it has come to this," but he saw no alternatives.

"I think most of us understand this was going to happen," he said, noting that the University of Illinois system has held off longer on furloughs than other states in dire financial straits, such as California.

"They need to find some way to fix the budget," he said of state officials.

"The simple hard fact is that the state of Illinois cannot pay and isn't paying its bills, UIS Chancellor Richard Ringeisen said in a separate message to UIS personnel. "That includes money owed to the University of Illinois. So we must enact measures to assure that we will be able to meet our payroll obligations.

"If we are unable to do that, we would not be able to keep our focus on our essential mission: to provide an excellent education and college experience to our students."

Ikenberry said the furloughs are designed to meet short-term needs — not necessarily to prevent layoffs.

"We've experienced some layoffs this (fiscal) year, and next year isn't any more comforting," he said in a conference call with reporters.

Next year could be worse

Ringeisen said UIS has had a "hard" hiring freeze for a few weeks.

"It is the next fiscal year that concerns us," Ringeisen said, adding that many positions require advance notice before layoffs can take place — as much as six months to a year.

The state's new fiscal year begins July 1.

"I've said before that layoffs are the last thing I want to do and furloughs are next-to-last," Ringeisen said. "I don't believe we have extra people at UIS. We're very thin.

"But I would suspect that (layoffs) will be going on."

Even if layoff notices go out to academic professionals, however, they could be reversed if in June UIS discovers it has a better budget, Ringeisen said.

"That's the only good part about it," he said, but "the probability of us getting a windfall of money is very low. We expect to finish the fiscal year without getting all the funds due us from the state.

"Sometimes pessimism is just realism."

More than 70 percent of the university system's budget is spent on personnel. The furlough program will affect more than 11,000 employees and is expected to save \$17 million. About 100 senior administrators are among the 11,000 employees.

At UIS, spokesman Derek Schnapp said 240 full-time academic professionals and 215 full-time faculty members will take four furlough days each.

The nine senior administrators who will take 10 furlough days include: Ringeisen; the provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs; the vice chancellor for student affairs; five deans; and the executive director of the Center for State Policy and Leadership.

State 7 months behind

Civil service employees are covered by layoff provisions of the Civil Service System. Ikenberry said cost reductions for civil service employees will be carried out accordance with civil service rules and bargaining obligations.

Ikenberry said U of I officials have discussed the crisis with state officials and legislative leaders. He said they've been understanding, but have offered no solid way of fixing the problem.

"In the long term, education needs to be placed on the state's priority list," Ikenberry said. "And some very tough judgments are going to have to be made on state spending, and there must be an increase in state revenue of some sort."

In addition to the \$17 million saved through the furlough program, a 6 percent reduction in expenditures saved an additional \$45 million, the U of I said. A 2.5 percent reserve resulted in \$20 million saved, bringing the total to \$82 million.

The U of I has received only 7 percent — \$51 million — of its state appropriation since the start of the 2010 fiscal year in July 2009, Knorr said. The amount owed to the university is \$436 million as of Dec. 31 and is increasing each month, he said.

In fiscal 2009, the state ran about five months in arrears, Ikenberry said.. It is about seven months behind now, he said.

Chris Dettro can be reached at 788-1510.

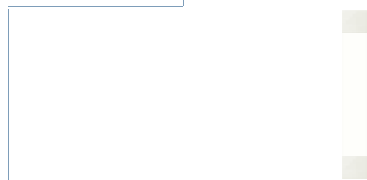
Exceptions to U of I furlough-day policies

- * Employees whose base salaries are \$30,000 or less
- * Graduate assistants and fellows
- * Employees with agreements to retire no later than Aug. 15, 2010
- * Individuals paid 100 percent from grant or contract funds as of Dec. 16, 2009.

Civil Service employees aren't included in the mandatory furlough program.

Comments (36)

joeschmoo
24 hours ago
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Report Abuse

The program will impact more than 11,000 employees and is expected to save \$17 million'

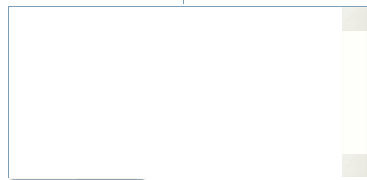
Really?!?! 11,000 employees?!?!...that number is pretty high for that school. Dont get me wrong, Im sure everyone of those jobs helps each student but 11,000!! WOW...

The average tuition cost for a U of I Student is \$12,000+ per semester.

Now I realize all those cost go to paying professors salaries, maybe U of I should conduct a study on how OVERPAID the president of U of I are, as well as all the employees there.

Then relay to the public how much cutting OVERPAID salaries would save not only Alumni but parents and taxpayers as well

mythoughtis
24 hours ago
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Report Abuse

so, does that mean that 4 days of tuition will be returned to the students? Ha, Ha

ash
24 hours ago
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Report Abuse

It all comes back to the state's inability to pay its bills. Universities budget for the year based upon what they expect to receive from the state. Tuition, endowments, etc. are then used to fill the holes in what it takes to run the operation. When the state fails to live up to its obligation, things fall apart. Universities, health providers, contractors, etc. are all being hurt by the inability of the General Assembly to get their act together. We need greater transparency in the budgeting process, most likely some severe cuts, and most certainly increased taxes or at least a restructuring of the way state revenue is generated. We have had a structural deficite for years and it is now hitting home in a big way!

taxed2009

23 hours ago

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joeschmoo...

with all do respect the tuition of \$12,000 represents the current average ANNUAL in state rate and not per semester. No debate regarding salaries... your comment regarding 11,000 employees doesn't make sense, the University has multiple locations with an enrollment in excess of 70,000 full time students....somebody has to teach them, provide food, housing security etc...you get the idea...i'm sure there are opportunities to save money...no question, however it remains to be seen what employee levels are needed to accomplish the primary tasks of higher education.

just saying...

I R 8

23 hours ago

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These so-called 'public' universities will soon be a thing of the past. They are too expensive and deliver too little return. Private colleges and universities offer a better education value and a better experience overall. (All without one dime of taxpayer money). Eliminate the funding for Illinois 'public' universities TODAY!

SuperSean62704

23 hours ago

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Report Abuse

Obamanomics on display for all to see.

DRB

23 hours ago

Report Abuse

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Report Abuse

Ash, now that we are in the beginning of tax season, since you want to pay higher taxes, how much extra do you plan to send into the State Dept of Revenue this year?

ash

23 hours ago

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[Redacted report area]

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SuperSean,

I'm not sure how you can drag Obama in on this one. The state has had a structural deficit in place far longer than Obama has been involved in politics at ANY level, and he isn't a state official now. This is a state issue -- not a federal issue (although federal tax cuts do reduce state income taxes which are generally a percentage of fed taxation). Are you saying that Obama needs to raise federal taxes?

Desperado

23 hours ago

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[Redacted report area]

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It's amazing how everything that's happening because of the economy is being blamed on President Obama, yet he's been in office less than 1 (that's ONE) year. I think people need to look back and see what happened the 8 - 16 years BEFORE President Obama took office. You may not like what you see.

dave

22 hours ago

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[Redacted report area]

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The issue here is not the U of I system it the fact that the state legislature and governors of late have not done their job. They have run the State into the ground through their inability to function. What this article failed to include from Ikenberry's letter to U of I staff was the following - 'The states credit rating has been recently downgraded and among the 50 states only California is worse.' I personally find this to be pathetic. Our elected officials need to step up to the plate and do the job we elected them to do instead of play their petty political games.

springfieldres

22 hours ago

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[Redacted report area]

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Well said dave. This has nothing to do with the product the U of I turns out. Could the U of I system do a cost analysis, sure; but the more pressing issue is the failure of our state's elected officials.

I R 8, you could not be more wrong. Without public universities only those families wealthy enough to afford private college would be able to have their children earn degrees. The U of I graduates a number of our teachers, doctors, police officers, engineers, small business leaders, and a immensity of other productive citizens in an wide array of professions to vast to list. To not offer public secondary education would be a catastrophe for the future of our state/nation. While you are at it I R 8, why not do away with community colleges too, surely they dont serve any educational purpose. Our public universities must be well funded to bolster our states present and future.

Little Miss Muffet

22 hours ago

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[Redacted report area]

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Civil Service employees are not included in the mandatory furlough program.

Isn't that special. Wonder if any of these people will volunteer to help out by taking furlough days or if they will take the selfish route and let OTHERS make the sacrifices. I'm gonna guess they will only look out for themselves and shaft their fellow non-CS workers. Sorta like what Unions always do.

ME ME ME ME ME

Vet

22 hours ago

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Maybe start by getting rid of the overpaid coaching staff on both the Football & Basketball teams.

SuperSean62704

22 hours ago

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ash - you mean a couple TRILLION dollars of 'stimulus' funds BORROWED from my children wasn't enough for President B. Hussein Obama?? Look up Illinois share of that boondoggle and educate yourself.

Only the socialists that now comprise the democrat party advocate foisting higher taxes on Americans.

p.s...the Illinois 'structural deficit for years coincides with Obama's service in the Illinois legislature and total democrat control of Illinois politics...but don't let facts get in your way.

jprscrprs

22 hours ago

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Report Abuse

Ir8 - who paid for your tuition? Did you go to a private school?

Illinois State Universities help the disabled, the single parents, those with low incomes, etc. attend college, graduate and attain (hopefully) a job out of which they pay taxes to help support the state and it's universities.

I attained a graduate degree supporting two children on my own with a little help from my friends at Illinois public universities...and I worked full-time and held a part time job as well. Couldn't have done it at a private u niversity - not to mention the fact that there are no private universities with my major within driving distance.

So, if you want to do away with public universities, then prepare to live in a state where only the wealthy attain degrees and hold most of the high paying positions--hmm is that the case in third world countries??

nashes

21 hours ago

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Report Abuse

Go Prairie Stars!!!!

jjpscrprs

21 hours ago

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Joeschmoo - 11,000 employees probably refers to all of the employees in the U of I system - there are three campuses. So, although UIS has about 5,000 students, I'd bet that UIUC has about 25,000 and UIC has another - what? 5,000? So, a total of approximately 40,000 students? Doesn't seem like 11,000 jobs is a lot.

Also, if you notice, the cut is being taken by those who make more than \$30,000 in certain groups---my guess is that there are a fair amount of administrators in that group.

And, just in case you don't know, I'd bet that the UIS tuition is a whole lot less than \$12,000 per semester! Not to mention, th at when I was in college, and now that I have a daughter in college, I've found that the books cost more than the tuition in most cases....and the bookstores are generally privately owned.

wiyakato

21 hours ago

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Report Abuse

The base rate tuition at UI is \$12,660 per year for an in-state student, and it goes up from there for various majors.

For those of you that don't like the 'socialist' concept of public-supported education --- any first year economics students can show you that public investment in higher education pays returns back to society that far exceed the tax dollars consumed.

Plus -- if you only had private universities, the college attendance rate would plummet due to cost, creating an uneducated workforce unable to compete in the world market.

I would suggest that some of you take advantage of our socialist public education system so you can get some small clue about how the world really works.

dave

21 hours ago

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Some information from the U of I website - seems to me the investment is reasonable and an excellent investment of state funds.

'More than 71,000 students are enrolled at our campuses and thousands more take classes off campus and online.'

'The University also has an impressive impact on the state's economy. The University system produces more than \$13 billion in direct and indirect economic impact on the state, including the creation of more than 150,000 jobs. For every dollar the state spends on the University, the system generates more than \$17 into the Illinois economy. And the increased earning power of hundreds of thousands of alumni living in Illinois results in additional tax revenue for our state.'

Bookworm

20 hours ago

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'Private colleges and universities offer a better education value and a better experience overall. (All without one dime of taxpayer money).'

Excuse me, but where do you think students get the financial aid they need to attend these schools? That's right, from the TAXPAYERS. Where do you think things like Pell Grants, G.I. Bill benefits, MAP Grants, etc. come from? They sure don't grow on trees!

If only people who could pay their own way 'without one dime of taxpayer money' were allowed to attend college, you probably would not like the results. For one thing it would probably only accelerate the trend of outsourcing everything to India or China or wherever, since there would be fewer U.S. citizens capable of doing those jobs.

IR 8

20 hours ago

Report Abuse

You must be logged in to report abuse.

Report Abuse

College isn't supposed to be for everybody. Public funding of higher education dilutes the value of college degrees. I attended Augustana and Purdue btw. And not a dime of taxpayer money was spent of either my BA or my MBA.

ash

19 hours ago

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Report Abuse

DR8 -- I'll send what I owe, how much do you plan on sending? That said, I do hope to be sending more, along with everyone else using state services -- taxes buy civilization.

SuperSean -- actually the structural problem predates Obama's service in Illinois, but don't let that fact get in your way. It seems like anytime we can toss in the 'Hussein,' it's okay. We know your hatred toward the president is clouding your ability to see that this is a STATE issue. The stimulus money only bought the General Assembly a year -- we are now back to where we would have been without it (broke and in need of a fix).

Mscgrl

18 hours ago

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IR8- I don't know where you attended school, but I went to a public university. I went to ISU for teaching and, in case you didn't know, that PUBLIC university is one of the TOP educator of teachers in the NATION. I would not only put my education up against any private school, but also my teaching abilities in the classroom.

joeschmoo

18 hours ago

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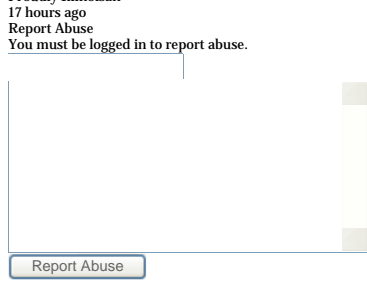
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Report Abuse

Jprscrprs-thank u for touting ur horn before u look at the facts....tution I said. Nothing about books.

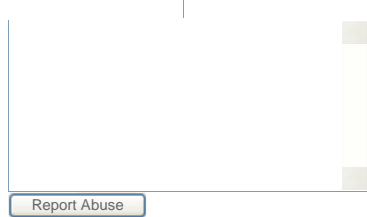
Wiyakato-thank u for being intelligent in seeing the annual tution of \$12,660 I currently said \$12,000+ so it was a pretty fair assumption. Thank u!

Jprscrprs-not to be rude but ur acting as if I'm wrong and ur disagreeing with me.....what is ur point in ur argument?!?!
Proudly Illinoisan
17 hours ago
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It is quite obvious that many people here commenting are so far out of touch with reality that they could USE a PUBLIC university education.

Proudly Illinoisan
17 hours ago
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I R 8 - - Good for you. I bet you're in debt up to your eyeballs or you got full ride scholarships that were given by foundations and possibly the university, that same university that survives on students going there on FEDERAL Stafford Loans and Pell Grants.

Not a dime? Think again. It all trickles down, pardon the expression. I know that the RIGHTNUTS like to use that term to describe their EXCELLENT economic system.

That system calls for the rich having all, and the bottom 80% of us living in ratholes.

jprscrprs
16 hours ago
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JoeSchmoo - If there's a horn to toot it should be for students who attend public Universities by sacrificing a lot in their personal lives for the duration of their academic career and for however long it takes to pay off their loan after graduation.

Let me try to clarify my point/s:

You said: 'The average tution cost for a U of I Student is \$12,000+ per semester..' That's inaccurate for UIS at least, and if you were averaging, I didn't see that information in your note. If you were referring only to UIUC...or UIC, it was also unclear. Could you please direct me to the source for your tuition quote, I'd like to do some research for myself.

You contradicted yourself when you agreed with Wiyakato who stated that ANNUAL tuition (not per semester as you quoted originally) was 12,660.

In re: UIS tuition rates, the rate for on-campus students (as opposed to online; international; out of state, etc. students) is around \$250/hour (summer 2009) or based on a 12 hour semester, about \$2,500/semester - which is roughly \$9500 less than you quoted. It also varies by the year you enrolled (UIS has guaranteed tuition - it's a state law now.

My point is that your information is inaccurate - or your 'assumptions' are inaccurate.

1. in re: tuition. (see above for UIS or go to: <http://www.uis.edu/search/google.html?cx=013341582354443854947:uycnhxmey&cof=FORID:11&sa=Search&q=tuition#979>)

2. Also inaccurate or perhaps merely overstated, is your comment that: 'all those costs go to paying professors salaries'. If you thought about it, you'd would realize that there are multiple occupations on a campus that support professors, administrators, students and other aspects required to run a University.

If you want to talk about employee salaries, please compare them with other comparable jobs, you'll find that they do not have competitive salaries, but they do have good benefits for now anyway. I'd also like to see what other University Administrators you compared with University of Illinois (I refer to all three campuses here) be able to make that statement. If you can provide that information I'll have my hat for dinner. My best guess is t hat it was a statement you made off t he top of your head without any facts, if I'm wrong, please correct me and let me know your references.

rnakr
15 hours ago
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If the university is typical it has a bloated athletic payroll as has recently been pointed out regarding numerous other institutions.

And yes the federal budget does impact the state budget. \$1.9 billion per day for a Defense Department which should more properly be renamed the War Department since the twin tower attack proved we have no defense but, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan show we have a war department.

SuperSean62704

13 hours ago

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ash - let's get this straight - I don't hate President B. Hussein Obama - I'm his biggest fan - he's done what no republican has been able to do since Newt Gingrich - 1994 is gonna look like low tide compared to the tsunami that washes away the democrats in Novemeber.


All y'all obamapologists are very good at blaming the ghosts of the past - man up - he IS the problem.

denmac

12 hours ago

Report Abuse

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IR8 you said: 'I attended Augustana and Purdue btw. And not a dime of taxpayer money was spent of either my BA or my MBA.' Last time I checked Purdue is a State University and Indiana state taxes help pay the bills there.

obscureknight

5 hours ago

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ah, I R 8 ?

have you ever heard of the Pell grant? this is a Federal grant of money for a year's worth of tuition for a student and EVERY college in the USA (both public and private) eagerly accepts Pell money;

have you heard of the various G.I. Bills that provide tuition money for veterans to attend college? the G.I. Bills are also funded by Federal taxes

obscureknight

5 hours ago

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jprrscrprs -

the guaranteed tuition is the law at all, repeat ALL, public universities in Illinois;

the law says.....

if a student is admitted to the university as a degree seeking, full-time, undergraduate, first year student, then that student's tuition will remain the same each term that he/she remains a degree seeking, full-time undergraduate, until he/she graduates with the B.A. or B.S. degree

please note: if the student is admitted as a graduate student (intention of attaining a master's or a doctorate), if the student is admitted as a non-degree seeking student, if the student ever shifts to part-time status, then the guaranteed, level tuition rate no longer applies

obscureknight

5 hours ago

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Report Abuse

I R 8 -

Does public funding of elementary and secondary education, then, diminish the value of an elementary school diploma and a high school diploma?

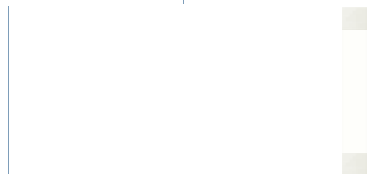
Are you suggesting that the federal military academies of West Point, Annapolis and Colorado Springs ought to be closed down so that public funds are not wasted upon potential military officers!?

ash

3 hours ago

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Report Abuse

Sean,

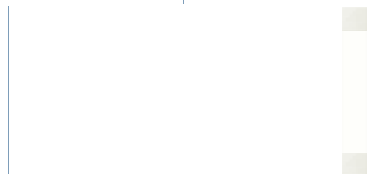
In some ways the feds may have been the problem because the stimulus money delayed the inevitable until an election year. That said, when will you get it that this is a STATE issue? Even if all the Democrats in Washington disappear, this will still be a STATE problem. What part of that do you not understand? The U.S. has a federalist system -- have you heard of it or know what it means?

joeschmoo

2 hours ago

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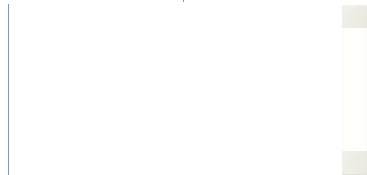
The average tuition cost for a U of I Student is \$12,000+ per semester'---did i ever say one thing about UIS in these quotes?? pretty sure i didnt.....have a good day

libertyville

23 minutes ago

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I wonder how many political patronage jobs are hidden in the university system. The payroll is certainly higher than needed for the tasks at hand. Of course this is Illinois, land of the skim. We have a lot of politicians with their hands out getting a piece of any university action.

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