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## **FYI- Apr. 4, 1983**

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DEVELOPMENT & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

## Memo From the President

April 4, 1983

### NORTHEASTERN RESPONDS TO NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY'S PROPOSED ISSC CHANGES

At the March 24 meeting of the university assembly, I shared with the Northeastern community my concerns about proposed changes in the Illinois State Scholarship Commission (ISSC) as suggested by William Ihlanfeldt, Vice President for Institutional Relations at Northwestern University.

In a letter dated March 4 to Larry Matejka of the Illinois State Scholarship Commission, Mr. Ihlanfeldt suggested the following changes in the ISSC's current policies:

- \* that all multipliers be eliminated;
- \* that no family with an adjusted income in excess of \$40,000, and indexed to inflation, be eligible for an ISSC grant; and
- \* that a priority be given to students who have graduated in the top ten percent of their high school classes, that a minimum grade point average of at least a "C" be required to retain an ISSC grant, and that no student dismissed for academic reasons can re-enroll and receive an Illinois State Grant for at least one term.

As I explained at the Assembly, the suggested changes made by Mr. Ihlanfeldt work to the benefit of certain private institutions such as Northwestern. At the same time, they impose hardships and limitations on the many students attending public universities and some private colleges and universities. If the changes in ISSC awards proposed by Northwestern University were ever enacted, thousands of college students--primarily those students attending institutions like Northeastern--would find their access to higher education blocked.

In a letter to Mr. Ihlanfeldt (which was shared with state higher education officials), I strongly contested his recommendations. Following are some of the points I made against the changes recommended by Northwestern University's administration.

I argued that one of the primary thrusts and commitments of public and private higher education in this country and in this state has been to offer access to students who meet individual institutional requirements. The strength of all colleges rests in their individual autonomy to determine their own admission requirements.

While Northwestern's ten percent solution does not directly assault that prerogative, it gives top priority for ISSC funding to a select few. In effect,



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what is being said to the other matriculants is that while they may meet admission requirements, they may not have performed well enough to receive an ISSC award.

The Northwestern proposal seems to assume a very strong correlation between success in school and future success in the professions and vocations. This correlation was found to be weak in studies done by Professor Christopher Jenks--ironically of Northwestern University.

Thus it appears that the current method of awarding ISSC grants recognizes, either as a result of deliberation or accident, that we do not know what it is in our educational program that makes for success. And since we don't know that, it behooves us to be as circumspect as possible in restricting access to monetary awards.

I argued that it is essential that the ISSC multipliers should not be eliminated and that the family adjusted income should remain at the current level. Both of the Northwestern suggestions would allow many more individuals to become eligible for ISSC grants. While this increase is not inherently bad, it would nevertheless greatly lower the level of individual grants if no significant additional funds were to be allocated to the Commission--and it appears quite certain that no significant additional funds will be forthcoming. An elimination of the multiplier and an increase in the income ceiling would, in essence, reduce the level of support for low income students and further reduce their access to higher education.

In closing, I wrote Mr. Ihlanfeldt the following:

"I join you in your concern about the continued viability of both public and private higher education. However, with limited available resources, the question to be answered is broader than the assurance of student choice. The concern of everyone must be not only where we will educate but also whom we will educate. The answers to the questions of choice and access, in my opinion, should be decided after deliberations open to public view and not as you suggest by a private gathering; for those answers will have grave implications about the nature of our society for years to come."