

The Illinois Report 2009

Chapter 6: Exploring a New Paradigm for Higher Education

Transcript of video interview with authors Robert Rich and Lally Gartel

Robert Rich: “In this year’s higher education chapter, we decided to focus on a dimension that is different from higher education funding or access to higher education or affordability. What we focused on was the area of P through 20 and the formation of P through 20 councils. And, the reason for this is because we’re hearing more and more that the transitions from pre-school to elementary school, elementary school to middle school, middle school to high school, high school to college, these are not smooth transitions, and more and more, the higher level, meaning higher education or high school, are telling us that students are not coming to them well prepared.

“And so, the state of Illinois has passed a piece of legislation calling for a P through 20 council. And the chapter focuses on the need for a P through 20 council and for what we can do to make this effective in our state.

Lally Gartel: “The chapter outlined the fact that currently there are 38 active P-20 or P-16 councils throughout the United States, and there are some best practices associated with that, and so the chapter outlines what kinds of things a new P-20 council, like the one the legislation in Illinois calls for, needs to do. These include things like setting very concrete goals with ways to assess the success, so that if the goal is to increase the amount of students graduating from high school, that the council has accessible research to assess whether or not more people have graduated from high school in the years they’ve been active.

“And the chapter goes to outline things like that that other states have done, and in particular there are states like Georgia, Arizona and California that have had P-20 councils for quite a while that provide grounds for assessing what good strategies might be for the P-20 council in Illinois.

Robert Rich: “And this chapter is also important in light of the fact that the Illinois Board of Higher Education has just something called the public agenda process. And the public agenda process is trying to develop a master plan for higher education in Illinois, and the master plan calls for not the formation, but the implementation of the whole P through 20 concept.”