

## *Overview of the State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana*

Since 1965, the State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana (SSACI) has been helping Indiana students and families meet the cost of a college education. It is the agency's mission to make college affordable through need-based grants and to allow choice by granting awards to those attending public, independent and proprietary colleges. SSACI has also been effective in the initiative to increase college preparation through its Twenty-first Century Scholars program and by giving increased grant amounts to those graduating from high school with Core 40 and Academic Honors Diplomas.

The State Student Assistance Commission facilitates multiple different need-based grants, merit-based scholarships, and early intervention and outreach programs.

- *Frank O'Bannon (FOB) Grant Program* is comprised of the *Higher Education Award (HEA)* and *Freedom of Choice (FOC) Grant*. For full-time students, it is the largest program administered by the Commission. It is a need-based grant with a merit based component.
- *Twenty-first Century Scholars Program*. The program is designed to support and encourage middle-school youth from lower-income families to enter college through early intervention strategies and grants.
- *Indiana National Guard Supplemental Grant Program (NGSG)*. This program provides tuition assistance at public colleges to eligible members of the Indiana Air and Army National Guard. It was created to increase the ability of the Indiana National Guard, Army, and Air Force to recruit new members and retain present personnel.
- *Child of Veteran and Public Safety Officer Supplemental Grant Program (CVO)*. This Fee Remission Program is an entitlement program providing tuition and fee assistance at public colleges for eligible children of disabled Indiana veterans and certain public safety officers killed in the line of duty.
- *Part-time Grant Program*. The award is designed to encourage degree-seeking part-time undergraduates to complete their degrees by subsidizing part-time tuition costs.
- *The Twenty-first Century Scholars GEAR UP Summer Scholarship*. This program allows Scholars to take summer classes not covered by other state grants.
- *Minority Teacher and Special Education Services Scholarship Program*. This program was created to provide renewable scholarships for African American and Hispanic students preparing for a teaching career, and was later expanded to include other types of applicants.
- *Nursing Fund Scholarship Program*. This program is designed to encourage students to pursue a career in nursing.

- *State Work-Study Program.* The program is designed to help students gain work experience and earn money towards their college expenses.
- *Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program.* The scholarship for new college students is designed to promote and award outstanding academic achievement. It is a federal program.
- *Hoosier Scholar Program.* This scholarship is a one-time \$500 grant given to outstanding high school seniors entering their first year at an Indiana college. This program has been suspended for the 2010-11 academic year.
- *Reciprocity Agreement Program.* This program provides out-of-state college assistance to Hoosier students residing in a six county area of southeastern Indiana.

Over the last two years, the State Student Assistance Commission had met multiple challenges but in spite of the country's economic state, we have seen many successes too. The Commission has seen an unprecedented rise in on-time and eligible applicants for financial aid over the past two years. Indiana was able to increase the number of students receiving need based aid to support access to postsecondary education. While the amount of individual aid awards have varied over the past two years, due to the increases in eligible students and tuition rates, Indiana has still been able to serve it's residents in continuing their education.

21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholar enrollment has also increased dramatically in the last two years as students in more grade levels became eligible and the program becomes widely recognized and understood. The administrative budgets (both federal and state) have not increased as the program has increased; therefore, as resources have been directed at increasing awareness and enrollment, the percentage of graduating high school students affirming that they have kept their pledge has decreased. Although the program as a whole has seen a decline in affirmations, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century sites (hosted by colleges and universities) have seen much success in communications with the student scholars. These successes have lead to statistics such as: Scholars who have an attachment to a site have much higher affirmation rates (up to 75% for some sites) than the overall average shows; Scholars who do not participate with a site after signing up have affirmation rates around 16%.

Due to the agency's commitment to servicing Indiana to the best of our ability while being fiscally responsible, the State Student Assistance Commission has gone through a reorganization of staff and positions, as well as automating and modernizing procedures, and reducing costs by going paperless with student communications. These changes did not come without challenges and hard decisions but we are now functioning in a more efficient way without sacrificing service.

As the Commission looks toward the future and plans for the next biennium, our objective is to continue to support the progress of Indiana through assisting the population with costs associated with gaining a postsecondary education and bringing educational opportunities to communities in need.

## COMMISSION ADMINISTRATION

### **Commission Members:**

1<sup>ST</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Mr. Robert E. Johnson, III  
Crown Point, IN  
Term: 2011

2<sup>ND</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Mr. Richard Dilling  
Logansport, IN  
Term: 2009

3<sup>RD</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Mr. Thomas K. Borne, *Chairman*  
Fort Wayne, IN  
Term: 2009

4<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Mrs. Sue Scholer, *Secretary*  
West Lafayette, IN  
Term: 2011

5<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Mr. Ronald Reese  
Indianapolis, IN  
Term: 2010

6<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Mr. Jeff Jenness, *Vice Chairman*  
Anderson, IN  
Term: 2011

7<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Mr. Tomas Morales  
Indianapolis, IN  
Term: 2010

8<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Mr. T.J. Brink  
Vincennes, IN  
Term: 2011

9<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Mrs. Christine Drake  
Huntingburg, IN  
Term: 2009

STUDENT MEMBER  
Mr. Bruce Cooley  
West Lafayette, IN  
Term: 2010  
*Purdue University, West Lafayette*

### **Commission Staff:**

#### ***Administrative Division***

Claudia Braman, *Executive Director*  
Dennis Obergfell, *Deputy Director*  
Laurie Gavrin, *Director of Policy Analysis & Research*  
James J. Zheng, *Policy Analysis & Research Assistant*  
(Vacant), *Executive Secretary*

#### ***Accounting Division***

David Highfill, *CFO/Office Manager*  
(Vacant), *Assistant Controller*  
Elizabeth Woods, *Accountant*

#### ***Grant Division***

Kathi Graves, *Director*  
Eugene Johnson, *External Operations Manager*  
Sara Greiwank, *External Operations Coordinator*  
(Vacant), *Internal Operations Manager*  
Yvonne Heflin, *Auxiliary Programs Coordinator*  
Robert Simpson, *Intern, Grants Division*

#### ***Information Technology***

David Falls, *Senior Systems Analyst and Developer*  
Padmaja Ayodhyala, *Systems Analyst and Developer*  
Gopendra Bhattra, *Software Developer*  
Basu Maharjan, *Senior LAN Administrator*

#### ***Twenty-first Century Scholars Division***

Seana Murphy, *Director*  
Allison Knox, *Scholars Coordinator*  
Ada Sparkman, *GEAR UP Coordinator*  
Brooke Bradley, *Administrative Support*  
Joy Day, *SEAS Enrollment Specialist*  
Charles Garrett, *SEAS Enrollment Specialist*