

Announcement: SGA Lobbies State Legislators in Springfield to Support Monetary Award Program (MAP)

On Wednesday, April 22nd, the DePaul Student Government Association brought students to Springfield to lobby state legislators to support funding to the Monetary Award Program, or MAP. Advocating for the MAP grant has been a priority for SGA for a few years now.

Background:

- The Monetary Award Program (MAP) is a financial aid awarded to Illinois residents attending a college or university in Illinois.
- More than 140,000 Illinois students rely on the MAP grant to attain a college degree, including more than 5,400 DePaul students (the highest of any private university in Illinois).
- Over the last 5 years, the MAP budget has decreased by more than \$40 million, preventing many Illinois students the opportunity to attend college.

SGA's Efforts to Advocate for MAP:

- SGA created the #MAPmatters campaign which included thousands of postcards calling on Illinois legislators to support funding for the MAP grant (See attached postcard).
- SGA hosted 3 MAP Advocacy Days in Lincoln Park and the Loop where students signed postcards to their legislators and talked about how MAP helps them.
- Postcards were also distributed to more than 128 academic departments and offices to encourage faculty and staff involvement.
- SGA collected 2,451 postcards from members of the DePaul community including students, staff and faculty.
- Matthew C. von Nida, SGA President, also wrote a formal letter to Governor Bruce Rauner asking for his support of MAP grant funding (See attached letter).
- A series of student governments from across the state adopted DePaul SGA's #MAPmatters campaign to enhance a consistent campaign.
- The Illinois Board of Higher Education- Student Advisory Committee (IBHE-SAC) adopted a motion made by President von Nida to call on state legislators to support the MAP grant and increase MAP funding by \$50 million.

DePaul Students Go to Springfield:

- On April 22nd, SGA brought DePaul students to Springfield to hand-deliver postcards to Illinois legislators.
- Students were joined by DePaul Vice President for Student Affairs Gene Zdziarski, Associate Vice President for Community and Government Relations Peter Coffey, and Associate Vice President for Student Development Peggy Burke in Springfield.
- Matthew von Nida and Cristina Vera (SGA Vice President) met with members of the General Assembly including Representative Ann Williams, Representative Jaime Andrade, and Senator John Mulroe, all of whom actively support MAP grant funding.

- DePaul students also met with Representative Elaine Nekritz, Representative Rob Martwick, Representative Laura Fine, Representative Ken Dunkin, Senator Donne Trotter, and Senator William Haine.
- On top of that, DePaul students delivered 2,451 postcards to nearly every member of the Illinois General Assembly.
- Senator Mulroe and Senator Haine specially recognized DePaul students with an announcement to the Senate about SGA's MAP advocacy efforts and support of this initiative.
- Representative Jaime Andrade specially recognized DePaul students with an announcement to the Illinois House of Representatives about SGA's MAP advocacy efforts and support of this initiative.

Additional notes about SGA's MAP Advocacy Efforts:

- The MAP grant is a need-based financial aid awarded to Illinois students.
- To receive the MAP grant students must file their FAFSA by the MAP deadline.
- This year, students saw the earliest deadline to apply for MAP grant financial aid in Illinois History in early February.
- SGA pushed a "Keep Calm and Do the FAFSA by February 1st" campaign to inform MAP recipients at DePaul to file their financial aid in time.
- 70% of DePaul MAP recipients filed their FAFSA by this year's deadline, virtually all returning students who required the grant, and a 10% increase over last year.
- 1,750 computers across campus displayed SGA's "Keep Calm and Do the FAFSA" campaign graphics (89% of all campus computers).
- SGA featured a 30 second advertisement on Radio DePaul for the month of January.

Conclusion:

One of SGA's top initiatives this year has been pushing for educational affordability through our efforts advocating for the MAP grant. With more than 5,400 DePaul students relying on the MAP grant to attend college, it is essential DePaul creates dialogue with state leaders to emphasize that MAP matters. After collecting nearly 2,500 postcards, SGA brought DePaul students to Springfield to hand-deliver the cards and talk with legislators about why MAP matters. SGA members met with various members of the General Assembly, a few of whom announced their support of this initiative to their fellow legislators. The Illinois budget for MAP grants is expected to be maintained at \$373 million in 2015-2016, and SGA believes DePaul's efforts will impact an eventual increase of MAP funds in the near future.