

Educating Illinois 2000-2007

An Action Plan for Distinctiveness and Excellence

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Illinois State University...

A small college experience with large university opportunities

Our Heritage

The first public university in Illinois, Illinois State University was founded in 1857 as a normal university to prepare the state's teachers. Our institution has a rich heritage as the state's leader in all facets of teacher education, from classroom instruction to educational administration and statewide policy setting. Illinois State is now a comprehensive university offering more than 160 major/minor options in six colleges, but that early emphasis on education continues to shape the University, in particular our values-based commitment to creating an optimal learning environment for all Illinois State students, whether undergraduate or graduate, on campus, or off campus.

Our Values

Individualized Attention: Providing the supportive environment of a small college through an innovative General Education program, strong student-faculty connections, superior student services, and a focus on each student as an individual, with unique educational needs and potential. Illinois State is a campus dedicated to *placing the learner at the center of teaching and research.*

Public Opportunity: Assuring students access to the opportunities of a large university, including a wide range of high-quality programs, faculty mentors who are scholars and creative artists of repute in their disciplines, and the support of outstanding facilities and technology.

Active Pursuit of Learning: Educating the complete student inside and outside of the classroom, so that students come to appreciate learning as an active and lifelong process.

Diversity: Encouraging community and an informed respect for all differences among students, faculty, and staff by fostering an inclusive environment that prepares students to be engaged participants in global society.

Creative Response to Change: Facilitating personal growth of students, faculty, and staff through innovative applications in undergraduate and graduate study, pedagogy, research, creative activities, and public service.

Our Vision

By acting on our values, by creating, *in every respect*, a learning environment where students will benefit from “the small-school feeling they get from this large university, and the incredible opportunities they encounter,” (Yale Daily News *Insider's Guide to Colleges*) Illinois State will come to occupy a unique position of strength and visibility among the institutions of higher education in Illinois. By 2007 Illinois State University will be the first-choice public university in Illinois for high-achieving, motivated students who seek an individualized educational experience combined with the resources of a large university.

Introduction

In 2007, both Illinois State University and Illinois' public higher education system will celebrate their sesquicentennial. Throughout those 150 years, the state's universities have reflected and shaped the predominant societal trends of the time. As we enter the 21st century, the state's higher education system will be called upon to address the educational needs of an increasingly diverse, mobile, technologically complex, and global society. If our public universities are in a position to respond fully to that challenge, Illinois will reap the social benefit of attracting and keeping its most promising students.

Illinois ranked first among the states in "Measuring Up 2000: The State-By-State Report Card for Higher Education" published by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education.¹ A state in this preeminent position should retain its most talented students and attract the brightest students in the region. Yet looking at Illinois' higher education system as a whole, it is clear that the state needs to do more to keep its most academically motivated students from going elsewhere to attend college.² Illinois is a major exporter of its potential college freshmen; only New Jersey exports more high school seniors to attend universities in other states.³ Illinois' status as a "net exporter" of college freshmen suggests that there is a statewide need for a public university that focuses on attracting high-achieving, motivated learners.

A distinctive niche in the state of Illinois will be filled by the public institution that

- Makes an extraordinary commitment to undergraduate education;
- Makes explicit connections between graduate and undergraduate education in ways that enrich both experiences;
- Attracts students from throughout the state and beyond by virtue of reputation, location, and comprehensive programs; and
- Acts to meet statewide needs through innovative outreach and public service activities in high-demand areas.

Illinois State University will fill this niche. In doing so, Illinois State will distinguish itself from other institutions in the state and the region by providing a unique educational climate that will add a beneficial new dimension to the state's system of higher education.

This action plan outlines the steps that will give Illinois State a unique place among the state's public universities, enhancing the University's distinctiveness and excellence. Woven throughout are the following four institutional priorities that must be addressed in making the plan a reality:

¹ "Measuring Up 2000" is available on line at <http://measuringup2000.highereducation.org/>

² Data from the National Freshman Survey indicate that students who choose to attend more distant colleges and universities do so for reasons related to the perceived academic quality of the educational institution.

³ "Going Farther Away to College... Interstate Migration of College Undergraduates," *Postsecondary Education Opportunity* 70, pp. 1-12, April 1998.

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- Placing a high value on active, engaged learning in which students take responsibility for getting the most out of their university experience;
- Encouraging connections between faculty and students that extend beyond the classroom;
- Setting the high academic standards that will equip our students with the critical thinking, literacy, communication, and technological skills that every well-educated person should possess; and
- Providing strong support for the faculty and staff members who create the University’s public identity every day as they interact with students, peers at other institutions, and various other constituencies in the state, nation, and world.

Illinois State should have the goal of being clearly recognized as a university that has a statewide mission of education, research, and outreach. This action plan was entitled *Educating Illinois* to communicate that statewide sense of mission. The distinctive role that Illinois State can play in the state’s “mix” of higher education offerings was underscored recently when the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching released its new system for categorizing colleges and universities nationwide. Illinois State University was categorized as a doctoral/research university–intensive: “These institutions offer a wide range of baccalaureate programs and are committed to graduate education through the doctorate. They award at least 10 doctoral degrees per year across three or more disciplines, or at least 20 doctoral degrees per year overall.”⁴

As the only public university in Illinois to be so categorized, Illinois State’s designation as a doctoral/research–intensive university identifies the University with other universities such as Miami University of Ohio and the College of William and Mary that have chosen to focus on excellence and breadth in undergraduate education and on selective areas of strength in graduate education.

Universities that pursue this “quality niche” within their home states can also achieve national prominence. A long-term commitment to *Educating Illinois* will result in an institution with a higher profile, both in the state and nationally. The cumulative impact of implementing this action plan is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Institutional Aspirations of Illinois State University

| Characteristic | Illinois State University |
|------------------------|--|
| Student profile | Across every segment of its student population (undergraduate, graduate, on campus, off campus, 18–22 year-olds, 22 and older), Illinois State University seeks students who are academically talented, motivated learners |
| Institutional emphasis | The top priority is undergraduate education, but it is a given that a strong program of research and creative activity invigorates both undergraduate and graduate education |

⁴ *A Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2000 Edition* (preliminary version). Copyright © 2000, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Table 1. Institutional Aspirations of Illinois State University, *continued*

| Characteristic | Illinois State University |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Campus environment | Strong student support services, abundant out-of-class activities ranging from the fine arts to athletics to co-curricular programming spanning every academic major, high-quality library collections and services, and an attractive residential campus that create a complete living-learning environment |
| Graduate education | Scholarship is expected of all faculty members, and there are graduate programs in selected areas of strength; research, creative activities, and graduate education are valued for their own sake, but also for the enhancements they bring to undergraduate education |
| Selectivity | Increasingly selective while committed to crafting a diverse and broadly accomplished student body of active learners; the expectation is that the institution will increasingly become an institution of choice for motivated students |
| Comprehensiveness | A comprehensive university that offers its students a wide range of programmatic choices; responsive to the state’s workforce needs and to the goal of educating citizens by providing both in-demand major options and a strong liberal arts/General Education curriculum |
| Student-Faculty interaction | Committed to reducing the student-faculty ratio, keeping class sizes small both in General Education and upper-level major courses to strengthen student-faculty interaction |
| Instructional system | Course-based, but increasing emphasis on innovative out-of-class learning experiences that connect individual courses to larger educational goals and the world beyond the campus |
| Geographical draw | Students drawn from throughout the state by virtue of the University’s reputation, central location, and comprehensive programs; in selected programs that capitalize on the University’s areas of strength, the University provides off-campus learning opportunities |

Illinois State University strives for excellence, access, and comprehensiveness. Its chief virtues can be summed up in the phrase **“small college experience with large university opportunities.”** In his book *How to Get an Ivy League Education at a State University: Comprehensive Profiles of America’s Outstanding Public Colleges* author Martin Nemko noted that “ISU feels like a smaller college, thanks to a compact, residential campus, traditional campus activities, and a faculty that prides itself on accessibility to students.”⁵ He also lauded the rigor of the University’s Honors Program.

The recently published Yale Daily News *Insider’s Guide to the Colleges*, a college guide compiled by students, reached much the same conclusion in its assessment of Illinois State:

⁵ Pp. 229-235 in *How to Get an Ivy League Education at a State University: Comprehensive Profiles of America’s Outstanding Public Colleges* by Martin Nemko. New York: Avon Books, 1988.

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Students at Illinois State University praise the small-school feeling they get from this large university, and the incredible opportunities they encounter. As one student concluded, “Whatever you’re looking for, you can find it at ISU”....Students rate the student-faculty interaction as “very good.” One student commented that professors are “always willing to do what they can for students.”⁶

The values that are at the core of the University, that make (to quote again from the *Insider’s Guide*) “such a big place...feel like home,” are also the values that will guide our strategic planning for the future. If expanded (i.e., providing more individualized attention and attracting a diverse and broadly accomplished student body) and meaningfully supported (i.e., recognizing faculty mentors and developing distinctive research agendas) an Illinois State education will indeed be unique in the state:

- A “large university” commitment to a diverse student body and programmatic comprehensiveness as essential components of the educational experience; and
- A “small college” emphasis on strong student-faculty connections, active learning, high performance standards, and the development of critical thinking skills.

Together, these qualities define an institution that places the learner at the center of teaching and research. This action plan outlines the steps that must be taken to ensure that these qualities are evident on a university-wide basis throughout a student’s years at Illinois State.

⁶ Pp. 290-292 in *The Insider’s Guide to the Colleges 2001*. Compiled and edited by the staff of the Yale Daily News. New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 2000.

Part I. Defining a Distinctive Academic Environment

Recruiting According to Our Values

The profile of the undergraduate student body at Illinois State University should be one that reflects the diversity of our nation and, more specifically, our state. To attract a more diverse—and also more motivated—student body, the University must capitalize on its increasing popularity with prospective students.

Enrollment trends at Illinois State have been moving in a positive direction: Average ACT scores have been increasing each year, as has the “show rate” (enrolled students/admitted students). Prospective students’ increasing interest in Illinois State suggests that it is time for the University to adopt an even more aggressive application and acceptance process.

As an institution of choice, Illinois State University should pursue students who are high academic achievers. But even with an increase in the numbers of students with high ACT scores (27 and above), it is most likely that the majority of the University’s undergraduate population will be made up of students with ACT scores in the 22–27 point range. We must implement measures to improve the quality of these “mid-range” students. Merely looking at a student’s ACT scores and high-school standing is not enough to identify the kind of student that the University wishes to attract. The University’s goal should be to recruit students who are not only academically skilled but also motivated learners. This should be the key profile component of the kind of student that the University attracts.

The minimum test score for guaranteed admission to Illinois State University should be raised one to two points over a planned period of time. Students with lower ACT scores than required for admission will be accepted if their application materials provide evidence of their active desire to achieve academically. This dual admissions strategy recommits the University to our historic value of Public Opportunity, yet it is not incompatible with pursuing higher academic standards.

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Recruiting According to Our Values

| | Action | Completion⁷ |
|----|--|--|
| 1. | <p>Adopt a more aggressive application and acceptance process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively recruit students in the ACT range of 22-27. • At the same time, consider other activities in lieu of the higher ACT scores as evidence of high motivation and special skills. Such evidence can include extracurricular, cultural, service, and/or work experience; letters of recommendation; personal essays or writing portfolios. This strategy will enable ISU simultaneously to maintain its tradition of access while pursuing higher academic standards. • Provide mechanisms and support for faculty and staff to systematically evaluate additional application materials. • Investigate enrollment management strategies that would direct students to particular colleges and departments so as to better utilize the University’s academic resources. • Increase the minimum test score for guaranteed admission one to two points over a planned period of time. • Institute a \$30.00 application fee to offset the expense of a more comprehensive application process. This fee should be waived for students who can demonstrate financial hardship. • Involve faculty members to the greatest extent possible in developing recruiting strategies and materials, and assisting in admissions screening. Continue to involve faculty in recruitment efforts, in part through provision of travel funds and travel arrangements to attend area meetings. <p>(UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES⁸)</p> | <p>Short term</p> <p>Short term</p> <p>Short term</p> <p>Long term</p> <p>Long term</p> <p>Short term</p> <p>Ongoing</p> |
| 2. | <p>Endow scholarships for minority students and high-achieving students. Such scholarships should be a key goal of the comprehensive campaign. (PROVOST, UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT)</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |
| 3. | <p>Emphasize the importance of campus visits for prospective students, since there is a higher “show” rate among students who make such visits. Every department (and units that have contact with prospective students) should analyze its approach to campus visits, and recruiting in general. The Office of Admissions and departments should explore strategies to increase the number of one-to-one contacts between faculty and prospective students. (ADMISSIONS, DEPARTMENTS)</p> | <p>Short term</p> |

⁷ Categories are defined as follows: short term=less than 2 years to completion; mid term=2–5 years to completion; long term=5 years+ to completion; ongoing=implementation starts in less than 2 years but overall completion is long term.

⁸ The administrative units and committees charged with implementation are listed in capitals after each action.

Recruiting According to Our Values, *continued*

| | Action | Completion |
|----|---|-------------------|
| 4. | Develop an aggressive recruitment plan to attract out-of-state students by such means as lowering tuition for out-of-state students and exploring reciprocal agreements with neighboring states. (BOARD OF TRUSTEES, PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENTS) | Mid term |
| 5. | Develop a recruiting plan for attracting transfer students who have demonstrated potential as high achieving, motivated learners, by targeting students from community colleges who have earned an academic associate’s degree with a grade point average in excess of 3.0. Students who have completed an associate’s degree with a 3.0 GPA are more likely to succeed at a senior institution than are those who did not complete a program, or who did so with marginal grades. Additional application materials, such as evidence of extracurricular, cultural, service, life experience, and/or work activities; letters of recommendation; and personal essays would be considered in lieu of a 3.0 GPA or an associate’s degree as evidence of high motivation and special skills. The transfer student recruitment plan should also address how Illinois State faculty in specific disciplines could build relationships with community college faculty that would help in identifying and recruiting students who would thrive at Illinois State. (ADMISSIONS, DEPARTMENTS) | Short term |
| 6. | Increase the resource base for the first-year experience, to assist such mission-critical endeavors as ensuring small class sizes in the freshman Foundations of Inquiry course, financing more Presidential and Provost’s Scholars, and allowing for the expansion of the CONNECTIONS learning community program. (BOARD OF TRUSTEES, PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENTS) | Mid term |
| 7. | Strengthen the Honors Program by such means as increasing the number of honors students and enhancing the program’s visibility and academic standards. (HONORS PROGRAM) | Short term |
| 8. | Provide better facilities for the Honors Program. A more centrally located, attractive facility would express Illinois State’s commitment to recruiting and serving the needs of high-achieving students. (HONORS PROGRAM, VICE PRESIDENTS, PRESIDENT) | Long term |
| 9. | Develop integrated 5-year BA/MA (or BS/MS) programs in which students who are admitted to the undergraduate program and who maintain academic performance standards are automatically admitted into the master’s program. The presence of such programs would attract more high-achieving students; would enhance the intellectual caliber of the undergraduate experience for participating students; and would serve as a prestige marker for the institution. (DEPARTMENTS) | Mid term |

Successful Transitions

To get the most from the opportunities of a large academic community, students need individualized attention during crucial transition periods. The nature of academic life, university-level performance expectations, and community should be more strongly communicated to students during their transition experiences in order to prepare them for full participation in the university's learning community. To this end, the University should increase the participation of Academic Affairs in the policy decision-making for the Passages orientation program and increase the involvement of the Colleges and of the University College in Passages. Enhanced academic orientation would emphasize students' academic goals in attending Illinois State.

The University should also ensure that all students have the opportunity to participate in CONNECTIONS (at present, less than one-third of incoming freshmen are part of CONNECTIONS groups). Such participation can play an important role in fostering the development of community, enhancing academic performance, and improving retention. The promise of such participation could also be a valuable recruitment tool. Faculty, and especially Foundations of Inquiry faculty, should receive more information on the purposes and activities of CONNECTIONS so as to increase their level of support of and involvement in the program.

“Mid-point” transitions also deserve attention. During their sophomore year, students should start planning for internships, clinical experiences, and/or international study. Between the sophomore and junior years, students should start to integrate the skills acquired in General Education courses into their major course work. The University must find ways to ensure that transfer students possess these skills, too.

The senior year offers students the opportunity to test their disciplinary knowledge in a capstone experience. However, learning should be a lifelong pursuit, and so the University should encourage seniors to consider graduate or professional school options. Finally, seniors must prepare for their first job after graduation. Through its extensive network of alumni, internship and practicum placements, the advising system, and Student and Alumni Placement Services, Illinois State University will serve as a career-long resource for its graduates.

Successful Transitions

| | Action | Completion |
|-----|---|---|
| 10. | Increase the participation of the Office of Undergraduate Studies in the policy decision-making for Passages and other Student Affairs activities. (UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES, STUDENT AFFAIRS) | Short term |
| 11. | Design a first-year experience that integrates orientation, advising, the General Education Program (particularly Foundations of Inquiry), and residence hall living, to include the following possibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Inquiry” field trips led by faculty members and Student Affairs staff members. • More dining events that enhance faculty-student interaction or that facilitate the group project work that is a frequent component of General Education classes, in order to build on the success of the Faculty Mentors program. • Residence hall programming that involves student organizations as much as possible in creating the first-year experience. (DIRECTOR OF GENERAL EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY HOUSING SERVICES, PASSAGES AND CONNECTIONS STAFF, MECCPAC) | Mid term |
| 12. | Continue adding more lifestyle floors related to academic majors. (UNIVERSITY HOUSING SERVICES, DEPARTMENTS) | Mid term |
| 13. | Expand the CONNECTIONS program. (UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES) | Long term |
| 14. | Extend components of the CONNECTIONS program into the sophomore year, focusing on connections with faculty mentors, transitions into the major, and planning for international study, internships, clinical placements, and other Junior/Senior experiences. (UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES) | Mid term |
| 15. | Minimize any differences in academic experiences between transfer and four-year students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the currently optional Passages orientation program mandatory for all transfer students. • Establish a CONNECTIONS type of program for first-semester transfer students when they enter the university; • Make Foundations of Inquiry (or a specially developed transfer student course) a graduation requirement, to ensure that transfer students possess the critical thinking skills necessary for academic success. • Move toward a leadership position in the state to work with community colleges on the development of general education curricula, modeled on Illinois State University’s General Education program. (UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES) | Short term Short term Mid term Long term |

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Successful Transitions, *continued*

| | Action | Completion |
|-----|---|---|
| 16. | <p>Develop a comprehensive retention plan that would explore the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicit input from our students about their educational experience at Illinois State; use the data to provide even more effective support to help students succeed. (UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT OFFICE, STUDENT PHONE-A-THON) • Change the 5-week drop policy to 8 weeks (to establish a better link to the deadline, at 7 weeks, for the Academic Progress Alerts and to reflect state-wide norms). • Permit students to retake a failed course or courses (to a maximum of 6 credit hours), with the grades for the retaken courses to replace the original grades in the calculation of the GPA (although both course grades would appear on the official transcript). • Review all majors in relation to time to degree; each department should analyze its major options with the goals of managing access to high-demand majors and meeting the needs of students whose broad interests or academic progress precludes them from selecting a high-credit major option. • Create an alternative Interdisciplinary Inquiry major as a means of retaining students with broad interests. This major option would be somewhat flexible, providing students with broad training from a variety of disciplines. The major would feature upper-division coursework that would build on the General Education curriculum. • Collect data on graduate-level retention rates to assess whether the University should develop retention strategies specific to graduate students. <p>(DEPARTMENTS, COLLEGES, STUDENT AFFAIRS, ACADEMIC SENATE)</p> | <p>Short term</p> <p>Short term</p> <p>Mid term</p> <p>Mid term</p> <p>Mid term</p> <p>Short term</p> |
| 17. | <p>Expand professional practice opportunities and interaction with alumni for undergraduates and graduate students. (PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE COUNCIL, STUDENT & ALUMNI PLACEMENT SERVICES, ALUMNI SERVICES)</p> | Mid term |
| 18. | <p>Increase students' knowledge of graduate and professional school opportunities and develop programs to help our graduates make the transition to graduate school. (COLLEGES, DEPARTMENTS, STUDENT & ALUMNI PLACEMENT SERVICES)</p> | Mid term |

Successful Transitions, *continued*

| | Action | Completion |
|-----|--|-------------------|
| 19. | Use the University's Web presence as an effective tool for creating alumni access to the campus environment and campus life from any place and at any time, to maintain their bonds with fellow classmates and the University and to facilitate mentoring activities with current students. (ALUMNI SERVICES, INSTITUTIONAL WEB SUPPORT SERVICES, STUDENT & ALUMNI PLACEMENT SERVICES) | Short term |

A Commitment to General Education

The General Education curriculum is characterized by its multidisciplinary nature; it is also broad, well balanced, and very sequential. The fact that Illinois State has a higher credit hour requirement in its General Education program than any other public university in Illinois is a statement of the institution's belief in the importance of a liberal arts education, as well as the commitment to help students learn how to learn and to prepare students for the flexibility they will need in the marketplace of the future. Students in all majors must have foundational skills and a well-rounded educational background. General Education as a whole should also continue to develop and enhance the skills of critical thinking, analysis and competent writing begun in Foundations of Inquiry.

The Foundations of Inquiry (FOI) course is the introductory academic experience for freshmen and as such it sets the tone for the academic rigor and expectations of the environment. It should engage students from the outset and be well connected with their other experiences. In order to achieve this goal, Foundations of Inquiry must operate in conjunction with the Passages orientation program. The course should provide the initial opportunity to develop a strong, positive rapport between faculty and students. The range of experiences in the course should definitely include extracurricular activities. Foundations of Inquiry should address relevant social issues and reflect the diversity of people and views presented on-campus and in the world at large.

Foundations of Inquiry introduces students to the kinds of questions that get asked in different disciplines, to the various strategies that different disciplines use to address the questions they ask, and to examine the legitimate reasons that different disciplines can ask the same or related questions and develop very different—sometimes even contradictory—responses. In the broadest of terms, it should be a course about problem-solving and the nature of inquiry as these bear on what students will be exposed to and will have to do, not just during their remaining years at the University, but in their personal and professional lives beyond the University as well.

To achieve these objectives, it is essential that class sizes remain small in FOI and, where appropriate, in General Education classes overall. Fulfilling this goal would necessitate hiring more tenure-line faculty. It is also recommended that FOI be converted into a themed experience, with the choice of topic for a given section left to the instructor. This format would offer a number of advantages: it would, potentially, improve the focus of the

individual sections. By employing a format typically associated with smaller colleges, a themed FOI experience could also serve as a prestige marker and recruitment tool.

A Commitment to General Education

| | Action | Completion |
|-----|---|-------------------|
| 20. | Keep class sizes small in Foundations of Inquiry and in other General Education courses, where appropriate; encourage the use of tenure-line faculty to teach, particularly in Foundations of Inquiry. (DIRECTOR OF GENERAL EDUCATION, DEANS, PROVOST) | Long term |
| 21. | Focus each section of Foundations of Inquiry on the development of basic inquiry, argumentation, and critical thinking and information gathering skills in an interdisciplinary context, as applied to a specific topic or theme left to the choice of the instructor. Every effort should be made to enhance common experiences for each FOI cohort (i.e., integration with the campus theme program, Passages film, and additional out-of class experiences). (DIRECTOR OF GENERAL EDUCATION, FOI COORDINATOR & FACULTY, CHAIRPERSONS, DEANS) | Short term |

The Junior/Senior Experience: Disciplinary Mastery & Engagement with the World beyond the Campus

In developing Illinois State’s innovative General Education curriculum, faculty members strove to create a cohesive program that was emphatically *not* a smorgasbord of disparate courses. Like the General Education Program, the Junior/Senior Experience needs to adopt driving core values that stress academic rigor. Core values for the Junior/Senior Experience should aim to advance students by building on the skills derived from the General Education experience.

In support of “service” and “putting theory into practice” as core components of the Junior/Senior Experience, majors and minors should include the following elements:

- A sequential structure that includes options for engaging in some course work outside of the discipline; and
- A greater number of capstone courses and experiential learning opportunities, such as internships, laboratory research, clinical experiences in the laboratory schools or professional development schools, studio work, community service, and international study.

This approach encourages collaboration among departments, maximizes existing resources, and gives academic disciplines with fewer student majors the opportunity to play a broader role in the development of student success. Also, arguably, students engaged in learning experiences with both academic and professional approaches achieve a combined mastery of understanding theory and applied skills. This approach, in the final analysis, fosters students’

ability to put theory into practice and expresses the core value of the Active Pursuit of Learning. Furthermore, experiential learning opportunities, such as service learning, are an excellent means of encouraging human relation competencies in interpersonal, small group, and public domains. Service learning, an alternative method of instruction, acts as a bridge connecting education with service to the community by empowering students to apply the skills, knowledge, and information delivered in the classroom through acts of service within the surrounding community. As students fulfill experiential assignments allowing them to express classroom knowledge through a practical public service medium, our surrounding community receives valuable assistance. In the end, such opportunities add greatly to the distinctiveness of the educational experience.

The Junior/Senior Experience

| | Action | Completion |
|-----|--|-------------------|
| 22. | <p>Create a Junior/Senior Experience Taskforce charged with reinforcing the General Education curriculum and enhancing the curricular integration of the Junior/Senior Experience. The Taskforce should explore the following ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring an integrative experience for every Illinois State senior. Such integrative experiences might include internships; research; a capstone course; studio work; clinical teaching experiences, community service; or international study; all of which would be conducted under the supervision of faculty mentors. • Surveying departments annually to catalog current capstone offerings/practices to publicize such opportunities to present and potential students. • Increasing undergraduate student involvement in research and creative activities with faculty and graduate student mentors. <p>(PROVOST, UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES, COLLEGES, DEPARTMENTS, UNIVERSITY RESEARCH OFFICE, GRADUATE SCHOOL)</p> | Short term |

research/creative activities is the “clusters” model, in which departments direct hiring so as to enhance the likelihood of faculty interaction with respect to research/creative activities. While the cluster model may be most appropriate in disciplines that tend to be highly collaborative, such as the sciences and the arts, all departments should consider whether the pursuit of *interdisciplinary* research clusters would enhance the goal of departmental and university distinctiveness. Interdisciplinary clusters related to research on a particular region of the world, or a particular social formation such as the health care system, would strengthen the University’s overall intellectual climate and level of collegiality across the disciplines. The synergism that occurs when faculty members pursue similar interests has many benefits, including enhanced possibilities for senior faculty mentoring junior faculty, more opportunities for external funding, and the recruitment of a high-achieving graduate student body.

The anticipated wave of retirements that will occur over the next seven years will provide an unmatched opportunity for Illinois State to build a distinctive agenda for research/creative activities. Recruiting and retaining the talented faculty members who can achieve this **must be a high priority for the University**, evident in the time and resources devoted to the recruitment process and in an ongoing commitment to raising faculty salaries. The ultimate success of *Educating Illinois* depends on it.

If Illinois State University is to follow a unique path in its overall approach to graduate education and research/creative activities, then it must move beyond the “separate spheres” construct, which in essence splits each faculty member in two: scholar versus educator. The University must provide support for integrating faculty roles so that graduate education, faculty research interests, and undergraduate education are part of an interconnected single sphere of activity. In their role as scholar-educators, faculty members introduce undergraduates to research and creative activities by integrating their work into the classroom and by involving undergraduates in outside-of-class research projects, when appropriate. While many universities connect undergraduate and graduate education by employing graduate students as teaching assistants for undergraduate instruction, Illinois State University aims to connect the two by developing undergraduate-graduate-faculty research/creative teams that concretely illustrate active learning at all levels of intellectual pursuit.

Illinois State’s statewide mission is also a key feature of graduate education at the University. Graduate programs, particularly in education, business, and nursing, are made available throughout the state because of the University’s commitment to Public Opportunity. Across the state and region, the University is reaching out to place-bound professionals through distance education and off-campus instruction.

ACTION PLAN FOR ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Building a Distinctive Research Agenda & Strengthening Graduate Education

| | Action | Completion |
|-----|---|-------------------|
| 26. | <p>Enhance academic distinction throughout the University.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage each department, including the laboratory schools and Milner Library, to create its own unique identity with the goal of developing a national reputation or meeting a critical need in the state or region. The program review process should be directed toward achieving the goal of departmental distinctiveness. • Recruit and hire faculty, where appropriate, around areas of intended strength within or across departments to provide critical mass and the synergy that results from interactions with colleagues with similar interests. • Create at least one endowed chair for each college and Milner Library through the Comprehensive Campaign. • Seek external funds for new centers and initiatives that would promote the university's areas of excellence, such as a School Leadership project that would reflect Illinois State's position as the statewide leader in the art and science of education at all levels; a Center for Assistive Technology, and a Center for Human Health. • Investigate the feasibility and need for new professional schools and graduate programs that build on Illinois State's areas of strength. <p>(DEPARTMENTS, COLLEGES, PROVOST, UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT)</p> | Ongoing |
| 27. | <p>Raise faculty salaries to enable the institution to attract and retain top faculty. (PROVOST, VICE PRESIDENTS, PRESIDENT)</p> | Ongoing |
| 28. | <p>Allocate additional resources for faculty recruitment and retention. (PROVOST, DEANS, DEPARTMENT CHAIRS)</p> | Short term |
| 29. | <p>Raise the profile of the Office of the Associate Vice President for Graduate Studies, Research and International Studies so that it plays a more collaborative role in working with departments in the evaluation, creation, deletion, and promotion of graduate programming. (AVP RESEARCH, DEPARTMENTS, PROVOST)</p> | Ongoing |

Building a Distinctive Research Agenda & Strengthening Graduate Education, *continued*

| | Action | Completion |
|-----|--|--|
| 30. | <p>Adopt a more aggressive application and acceptance process for graduate admissions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a university-wide program for graduate student recruitment, identifying programs that could be recruiting nationally. • Increase the minimum grade point average for admission to graduate programs to 3.0 and identify criteria that might be used in lieu of that GPA to gain admission to graduate programs. Philosophically, graduate student recruitment should parallel the University’s efforts to recruit undergraduate students according to our values (i.e., seeking high-achieving, motivated learners, valuing diversity and the life experiences that each student can add to the student population). • Make graduate stipends more competitive with peer institutions. • Expand the development of graduate student cohorts in programs that serve working professionals such as education, business, and nursing. Such cohorts could be created through nominations from “the field” for talented part-time students and through intentional partnerships with business, medical, and educational organizations (i.e., school district-based cohorts, industry-specific cohorts). Such cohorts, which tend to be based off campus, play an important role in fulfilling the University’s statewide mission. <p>(ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR GRADUATE STUDIES, RESEARCH, AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES [AVPGS], GRADUATE COUNCIL, COLLEGES, DEPARTMENTS, PROVOST)</p> | <p>Mid term</p> <p>Long term</p> <p>Long term</p> <p>Ongoing</p> |
| 31. | <p>Encourage undergraduate-graduate-faculty research/creative teams and the integration of the teams’ research into graduate and undergraduate classrooms, laboratories, studios, and the laboratory schools. (DEPARTMENTS, CENTERS, GRADUATE SCHOOL)</p> | <p>Mid term</p> |
| 32. | <p>Support graduate programs that have the potential to establish a national reputation. In such programs, faculty with substantial responsibility for graduate education should have teaching loads commensurate with disciplinary national norms to support the demands of supervising graduate students and conducting an ongoing program or research and/or creative activities. ASPT guidelines in these programs should reflect the expectations of graduate programs nationally. (PROVOST, COLLEGES, DEPARTMENTS)</p> | <p>Mid term</p> |
| 33. | <p>Evaluate the University Research Grant Program in relationship to funding levels and distribution processes. (AVPGS, COLLEGES)</p> | <p>Short term</p> |

Mission-Driven Public Service & Outreach

Illinois State University’s public service and professional outreach mission should benefit the nation, the state and surrounding communities. These activities also benefit students through out-of-class experiences that connect and complement in-class curricula. The intellectual resources of the University’s faculty, staff and students are best utilized in a public service capacity when a societal need matches one or several of the University’s distinct competencies. Sufficient resources need to be committed to these programs to assure high quality and to assure that the public service activity can make a meaningful difference.

Public service is a significant communicator of the University’s identity and can be an early identifier of students with the potential of attending the institution. However, available resources for worthwhile programs vary. An assessment of current and potential future programs is necessary to prevent duplication and lack of coherence with the University’s mission.

Mission-Driven Public Service & Outreach

| | Action | Completion |
|-----|--|-------------------|
| 34. | <p>Produce an inventory and analysis of public service and professional outreach activities across campus to clarify how they are critically linked to the core values and mission of the University.</p> <p>Under the direction of the Office of the Extended University, the Mission-Driven Public Service & Outreach Report would</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify public service/outreach opportunities, duplication of effort, and barriers to effectiveness. • Develop strategies to ensure the long-term survival of successful public service/outreach activities after the originator ends her or his association with the project. • Recommend the most effective means of offering support services for departments (i.e., helping departments identify potential sponsors). • Identify which units and programs are best positioned to develop off-campus professional outreach programs that serve a statewide audience. • Identify which public service activities could best incorporate a service learning component. • Develop pre-recruitment strategies for academic programs targeted to youth, such as competitions, camps, or conferences, which would potentially attract the type of motivated learner that the University seeks as students. <p>(EXTENDED UNIVERSITY, CONFERENCING UNIT, DEPARTMENTS, COLLEGES, PROVOST)</p> | Short term |

Mission-Driven Public Service & Outreach, *continued*

| | Action | Completion |
|-----|---|-------------------|
| 35. | <p>Publicize student, faculty, and staff public service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce an annual “Impact” report detailing local, regional, and national service activity. • Create an “Impact” award for extraordinary public service. • Build a Web site to increase awareness and utilization of public service and professional outreach activities at Illinois State University. <p>(EXTENDED UNIVERSITY, UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING, INSTITUTIONAL WEB SUPPORT SERVICES)</p> | Short term |

Student-Faculty Connections

Many of the numbered items in this action plan will help faculty members establish and maintain connections with students that extend beyond the classroom, and even beyond graduation (see, for example, Actions 11, 20, 22, 31, 48, and 71). The single most important factor in establishing strong connections, though, is simply *the amount of time a faculty member can devote to each student*. Given sufficient time to interact with individual students, faculty mentors have a lasting, positive influence on their students:

- Faculty mentors help students synthesize the material covered in a particular course with each student’s larger educational goals;
- Faculty mentors motivate students to realize their potential by setting closely monitored, high standards for performance and through involvement in research projects and other out-of-class activities; and
- Faculty mentors guide students as they make crucial decisions regarding internships, graduate programs, and possible career paths.

Illinois State University must increase the essential time faculty members spend with each student by lowering its ratio of credit hours per instructional staff year. At the present time, Illinois State has the highest ratio of any public university in the state. Of course, as a public institution, the University is responsible to the citizens of Illinois concerning the productivity and cost-effectiveness of its programs. However, if the University is to hold students to even higher expectations for learning, and if it commits to providing the individualized attention that produces real mastery of a discipline, then the University should change the way it addresses productivity issues. Illinois State’s key productivity measure should shift from the current “bottom-line” focus on maximizing the credit hours/staff year ratio to an emphasis on assessment activities that will demonstrate the extent to which students learn, and thrive, at the University. (Illinois State’s new assessment plan, “Assessing Student Outcomes: A Plan for Continuous Development,” is available on line at <http://www.assessment.ilstu.edu/uwac/>.)

Student-Faculty Connections

| | Action | Completion |
|-----|--|-------------------|
| 36. | Reduce the credit hours per staff year ratio. (PROVOST) | Long term |
| 37. | Identify opportunities for restructuring academic administrative units to assure strong student-faculty connections and the development of intellectual communities. (ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, PROVOST) | Mid term |

A Supportive Environment That Promotes Understanding

To construct a new freshman class that is as broadly accomplished and diverse as possible, Illinois State must ensure that its campus environment welcomes students with divergent life experiences. This “campus welcome” should be in evidence every day of a student’s career at Illinois State, from outstanding support services that ease the transition into college life to the mentoring relationships nurtured by a diverse faculty and staff. Students learn from one another, as well, and so the University must explore ways to connect students from different backgrounds.

We all benefit from a supportive environment that honors difference. Can we say that our students are truly educated, prepared for their responsibilities as citizens and for careers in a complex society, if they leave the University without developing empathy for others’ viewpoints? The Horizons short course diversity experience is intended to address this need.

Junior/Senior Horizons short courses would add a crucial workforce preparation component to the undergraduate experience at Illinois State, connecting the academic content of the major with real-world diversity issues. It is vitally important that graduates are aware of, understand, and appreciate others’ perspectives. Horizons courses would cover a variety of topics, including, for example,

- American deaf culture and its relationship with the medical community;
- How theatre companies and museums in Chicago have addressed diversity issues;
- Cross-cultural practice and receptivity to alternative medicine;
- The gendered use of technology in the workplace;
- Teaching across cultures;
- Racial profiling as it relates to law enforcement; or
- The challenges faced by entrepreneurs as they compete in the global marketplace.

Special short-course opportunities for personal growth and academic integration, while a much-touted feature of a small liberal arts college education, are rare among four-year public institutions. Junior/Senior Horizons would be unique among public universities in Illinois and, by design, it would convey the institution’s commitment to its core values.

Beyond these short-course opportunities, we must prepare our students for personal and professional lives in a profoundly changed society, one that increasingly participates in a

global economy and embraces a diversified citizenry. The trends of internationalization and globalization have transformed the occupational landscape for our graduates: most will need to function competently in social and work environments that are international and intercultural in nature. To that end, we need to internationalize our curriculum by such means as:

- Enhancing course offerings that focus on an international subject; that broaden a traditional/original subject area via an internationally comparative approach; that prepare students for defined international professions; that form part of interdisciplinary programs such as region and area studies;
- Funding a competitive stipend program to support international study; and
- Increasing the percentage of students who study a foreign language.

We must also enhance efforts to diversify our campus by actively recruiting more international students and faculty, and we must ensure them our support as vital members of our community.

A Supportive Environment That Promotes Understanding

| | Action | Completion |
|-----|--|--|
| 38. | Establish an Office of Minority Student Services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phased-in start with one staff member to assess and track students and provide academic reinforcement and to offer students a designated location to which they can look for assistance and advisement. • Establish an academically focused bridge program for minority students. • Expand the First Look Pre-College Program, in which minority high school students are invited to spend a weekend on campus. • Sponsor a student-faculty-staff organization that would serve as a forum for racial and sensitivity issues. This organization should have a broad base of participation from all segments of the campus community; it should also seek input and build relationships with community organizations in Bloomington and Normal. (UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, STUDENT AFFAIRS, ADMISSIONS) | Short term Mid term Short term Short term |
| 39. | Develop a Horizons program for juniors and seniors. This unique diversity experience would consist of special short course offerings on a selected topic relating to diversity as encountered in the workplace, U.S. society, or other countries. The for-credit Horizons short courses would take place either during winter break or during a special summer session. Faculty members who teach Horizons short courses should be encouraged to involve professionals working in their fields. (UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES, STUDENT AFFAIRS) | Long term |

ACTION PLAN FOR ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

A Supportive Environment That Promotes Understanding, *continued*

| | Action | Completion |
|-----|--|--|
| 40. | <p>Increase students' awareness and appreciation of other cultures by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a plan for enhancing the recruitment and integration into the University community of international students and faculty. • Increasing the percentage of students studying a foreign language. • Funding a competitive stipend program to support international study. • Increasing the number of Fulbright scholars. • Creating new virtual forums for students to interact with peers at other institutions, especially culturally diverse, global arenas for learning. <p>(INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE, DEPARTMENTS, PROVOST, ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY)</p> | <p>Short term</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Long term</p> <p>Long term</p> <p>Mid term</p> |
| 41. | <p>Implement the Plan for Diversity, benchmarking progress made on its goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement diversity planning, budgeting, and assessment with annual reports on accomplishments. • Increase access to information on diversity. • Implement and assess the degree to which the concepts of diversity are included in the formal curriculum and academic support processes. • Implement and assess the degree to which the concepts of diversity are included in co-curricular programs and events. • Implement and assess strategies that are designed to increase the enrollments of students from traditionally underrepresented groups. • Implement and assess strategies that are designed to increase the retention and achievement of students from traditionally underrepresented groups. • Implement and assess strategies that are designed to increase the recruitment and retention of faculty and staff from traditionally underrepresented groups. <p>(COMMITTEE FOR DIVERSITY, OFFICE FOR DIVERSITY & AFFIRMATIVE ACTION)</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |

Academic Culture

One of Illinois State’s greatest assets is its campus. Compactly arranged around a verdant central arboretum, the campus provides classrooms, laboratories, studios, laboratory schools, offices, and common spaces for 20,000 students (7,500 of whom live on campus) and 3,500 faculty and staff. In an era when higher education is facing increasing competition from nonresidential alternatives such as distance education and for-profit universities, the community that is constituted by an actual campus must be treated as a prized resource. A campus makes an academic culture possible.

“Academic culture” is extracurricular academic activities: a keynote speech by noted physicist Murray Gell-Mann; an intellectually challenging theatre experience such as *Angels in America*; an interdisciplinary Border Subjects conference on the theme of “Growing Up Postmodern”; a University Galleries exhibit of works by Russian artists from Bloomington-Normal’s sister city of Vladimir; an undergraduate research symposium that initiates students into the community of public scholarship.

“Academic culture” is also the purely social: a Homecoming celebration; Festival ISU on the Quad; a student organization-sponsored Saturday-night concert at the Bone Student Center.

“Academic culture” is spatial: the University’s new Performing Arts Center, Shakespeare Festival Theatre, and the InExchange outdoor sculpture project are all examples of how campus land use planning can set the stage for meaningful interaction outside of the classroom.

Together, these elements create a vibrant academic culture that can draw people to campus in the evening and on weekends. Such a culture will bring students, faculty, and staff together as a fully engaged learning community, and it will help maintain those connections long after students graduate.

ACTION PLAN FOR ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Academic Culture

| | Action | Completion |
|-----|--|-------------------|
| 42. | Support the comprehensive campaign’s Learning Community Initiative for out-of-class university programming by providing additional internal university resources. (UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT, PROVOST) | Long term |
| 43. | Conduct a campus-wide survey to identify and create support for deserving co-curricular programs. (PROVOST, ACADEMIC SENATE) | Mid term |
| 44. | Reallocate facility space to create a larger, more centrally located University Club that would promote collegiality across the disciplines, intellectual community and acculturation of new faculty and staff, and provide a place for hosting co-curricular programs. (VICE PRESIDENTS, UNIVERSITY CLUB) | Long term |
| 45. | <p>Develop social and intellectual university traditions that engender a sense of belonging and community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop more college- and department-specific traditions such as colloquia and alumni presentations to students. • Hold more university-wide events such as a Homecoming Dance and Saturday brunches for students. • Expand the “Points of Pride” theme to raise campus awareness of the unique features of Illinois State. • Find ways to foster community among graduate students—including both on-campus graduate students and those working toward degrees at off-campus locations. • Develop a plan for boosting student attendance at athletic, fine arts, and other co-curricular events. <p>(COLLEGES, DEPARTMENTS, STUDENT AFFAIRS, UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT, MECCPAC, ATHLETICS)</p> | Ongoing |
| 46. | Use campus Web resources to enhance the scholarly community by showcasing student and faculty work and provide virtual opportunities for student-to-student and student-to-faculty interaction. (ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY) | Short term |

Part II. Supporting a Distinctive Institutional Environment

Essential Support for Faculty and Staff

Illinois State University can only achieve a distinctive identity to the extent that it provides strong support for the faculty and staff members who create the University’s identity every day as they interact with students, peers at other institutions, and the general public. The University’s reward systems (i.e., ASPT, staff performance evaluations) must value activities that help implement this action plan. The University’s professional development offerings will also play a significant role in the action plan’s success or failure. If, for example, departments are called upon to build a distinctive research agenda through cluster hiring, then those new faculty members will need more professional development support for conducting research, and department chairpersons will need additional support relative to hiring in research clusters. If faculty members are encouraged to involve undergraduates in their research and creative activities, then the University must reward the time faculty members spend outside of class mentoring students. If staff members are asked to incorporate the University’s values into their daily work, then professional development offerings must be retooled or specially created to communicate the values and to inspire organizational change.

Essential Support for Faculty and Staff

| | Action | Completion |
|-----|--|------------|
| 47. | Create a Faculty Professional Development Center (integrated support for faculty in their research, teaching, and service roles). (PROVOST, CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF TEACHING, UNIVERSITY RESEARCH OFFICE) | Long term |
| 48. | Encourage each department and college to examine its ASPT or other professional assessment document and reward structures (i.e., research, teaching, and service awards, university research grants) to determine how they can be aligned to support the action plan and its values. In particular, the University’s reward structure should recognize the time faculty members spend mentoring students in out-of-class experiences. Departments should explore the concept of faculty work cycles; i.e., that at different points in a faculty member’s career, research or service might receive more emphasis than teaching, or vice versa. (UNIVERSITY REVIEW COMMITTEE, PROVOST) | Ongoing |
| 49. | Establish competitive pre-tenure faculty sabbaticals. (PROVOST, DEANS, CHAIRS) | Long term |

ACTION PLAN FOR ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Essential Support for Faculty and Staff, *continued*

| | Action | Completion |
|-----|--|-------------------|
| 50. | Raise staff salaries to enable the institution to attract and retain top staff members. (PROVOST, VICE PRESIDENTS, PRESIDENT) | Ongoing |
| 51. | <p>Enhance new faculty and staff orientations, training sessions, and other professional development activities related to research, teaching, and support functions, with the following goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help faculty and staff make meaningful connections between their work and the University’s strategic goals. • To help faculty members integrate their research, teaching, and public service activities. • To help faculty and staff further develop the welcoming environment that expresses the Diversity value at Illinois State. • To help faculty and staff develop computer and Internet skills that are critically related to fulfilling the University’s mission. <p>(ACADEMIC PERSONNEL, HUMAN RESOURCES, CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF TEACHING, FACULTY TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT GROUP, UNIVERSITY RESEARCH OFFICE, PROVOST, A/P COUNCIL, CIVIL SERVICE COUNCIL, ACADEMIC SENATE)</p> | Short term |
| 52. | Provide improved training and incentives for teaching assistants involved in General Education instruction. (COLLEGES, DEPARTMENTS, CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF TEACHING) | Mid term |
| 53. | Implement the recommendations of the Child Care Task Force Report and begin planning for the construction of an on-site child-care facility for the children of students, faculty, and staff. (PROVOST & VICE PRESIDENT FOR FINANCE & PLANNING) | Mid term |
| 54. | Develop a philosophy of appropriate employment of non-tenure-track faculty, carefully considering the best ways to utilize such faculty across the institution. (FACULTY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, CHAIRS, DEANS, PROVOST) | Mid to long term |
| 55. | Give faculty and (where applicable) staff the option of spreading the current 9-month pay cycle over a 12-month period, providing a more convenient method of budgeting, plus having pre-tax insurance deductions instead of after tax payments when insurance is billed to the employee. Receiving a pay check during the summer months also enables the 9-month faculty member to take advantage of the Medical Care Assistance Plan (MCAP) over the summer months and pay for qualifying medical expenses with pre-tax money instead of after tax money. | Mid term |

Integrated Services that Work for Students

Every staff member at Illinois State University has an impact on the quality of the educational experience. Services should be offered in a way that frees students to focus on learning. The logic of a bureaucratic structure that works internally to accomplish diverse tasks (i.e., separate offices for financial aid, student accounts, advising, etc.) is not necessarily clear to a student who simply needs to “do what it takes” to enroll in classes. Implementing a “one-stop-shop” approach to student services will meet students’ needs for easy-to-access and responsive services.

The campus should also emphasize a “leadership through service” model for the provision of support services. In a “leadership through service” model support services exist to serve the academic mission of the institution, but the various support units themselves also play an appropriate leadership role in planning and budgeting at the unit and university levels.

Integrated Services that Work for Students

| | Action | Completion |
|-----|---|------------|
| 56. | Initiate a “one-stop shop” approach to undergraduate and graduate student services such as registration, student accounts, and the financial aid office. Improve service, focusing on respect and understanding for students’ needs and enhanced accessibility by means of extended hours of operation or alternative methods of service delivery. | Mid term |
| | Extend student “one-stop shop” services to the Web with interactive, real-time activities for admission, registration, academic planning and advising, placement, and news and events. This would allow staff members to work in depth with individual students where needed. Web-based student services should also meet the needs of off-campus students, who would particularly benefit from enhanced services and the greater sense of being part of the Illinois State community that such services would convey. (UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES, ASSOC. VICE PRESIDENT INFORMATION TECH.) | Mid term |
| 57. | Adopt a “leadership through service” model for the provision of support services, based on operating principles that clearly articulate how such services contribute to the University’s academic mission. (VICE PRESIDENTS, SUPPORT UNITS) | Ongoing |

A Technology-Friendly Campus

Illinois State uses technology in ways that support the institution’s core values. We believe not in technological advance for its own sake, but in using technology to enhance teaching, learning, communication and creativity. Pedagogically driven uses of technology can enable all learners to explore new opportunities for expanding their knowledge and creativity. Illinois State’s distinctive degree programs in Arts Technology, Applied Computer Science, Industrial Technology and Instructional Technology, and such initiatives as the State Farm

ACTION PLAN FOR ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Teaching-Technology Fellows Program demonstrate the university’s commitment to strong technology pedagogy.

On a technology-friendly campus, students, faculty, and staff can expect accessible, state-of-the-art technology services that perform reliably and efficiently. A key component of our approach to technology is a commitment to providing easy access to technological resources for students, faculty, and staff. A portion of all student tuition money contributes directly to the maintenance of our computing labs, for instance, because all students benefit from a technologically capable student body, whether students can afford their own computers or not. Equally important is putting into place an effective support system to ensure that members of the University community have a high comfort level when using technology.

Campus technologies should be employed so that learning is not bound by time, location, or departmentally scheduled offerings (i.e., much learning occurs in the library, residence halls, and elsewhere on and off campus). Instructional technology is changing the way that we think about teaching and learning. Most current instruction is delivered synchronously—activities take place on a regularly scheduled basis conforming to class schedules and semester timing. Asynchronous learning can benefit students by offering active experiences outside of scheduled class periods, including interactive homework and quizzing, participatory tutorials, course discussion groups, and on-line collaboration and review. Similarly, such experiences can be offered outside of the regular semester schedule to meet the needs of nontraditional students, distance education students, or workshop and short course participants.

A Technology-Friendly Campus

| | Action | Completion |
|-----|--|-------------------|
| 58. | Promote a campus mobile computing laptop initiative for instructional activities from the classroom, to the labs, to the library, to the office, and to the residence halls through a combination of faculty laptop loaners, student laptop purchase or lease programs, laptop smart classrooms and labs, and laptop access in Milner Library, campus food courts and other areas where students congregate. (ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY) | Short to mid term |
| 59. | Expand access to University and Internet electronic services through residence-hall wiring, library technology upgrades, increased dial-in and ADSL capacity for off-campus access, campus computer lab enhancements, access to Internet services and e-mail in key student areas, fast Ethernet to the campus desktop, and wireless solutions. Ensure that the technology infrastructure is in place to support distance education activities and meet the needs of off-campus students (i.e., technology help questions, requests for ULIDs, library access, and interactive television and desktop conferencing). (ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY) | Mid to long term |

A Technology-Friendly Campus, *continued*

| | Action | Completion |
|-----|--|----------------------------|
| 60. | Enhance the University’s Web presence by creating an educationally rich environment of on- and off-campus resources that supports all facets of its academic mission and services operations. (ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY) | Ongoing |
| 61. | Expand computer support for students by increasing the number of student Residential Computer Consultants for off-campus as well as on-campus residence areas, providing walk-up computer support in the food-court areas, and by providing walk-up e-mail and Web access stations in key meeting and academic areas. (ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY) | Mid to long term |
| 62. | Ensure that departmental ASPT guidelines use the same standards for evaluating faculty development efforts for instructional technology, Internet teaching, and peer-evaluated electronic publication (i.e., Web journals, CD-ROMS) as are employed in evaluating traditional research/creative activities, teaching, and publications activities. (DEPARTMENTS, COLLEGES) | Ongoing |
| 63. | Continue to encourage faculty instructional technology efforts through reassigned time, development stipends, instructional technology grant programs, the State Farm Technology Fellows program, and greater recognition and showcasing of the products of faculty efforts. (DEPARTMENTS, COLLEGES) | Ongoing |
| 64. | Create a student technology scholars program that identifies technologically sophisticated students to serve as mentors for faculty, department, and programmatic Web and instructional technology projects. (ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, DEPARTMENTS) | Mid term |
| 65. | Ensure that all students acquire essential technological competencies at two critical points in their academic careers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon completion of their first year, students should know enough about information technology to perform at the college level (the University should investigate the applicability of existing national standards that might be used to benchmark student outcomes). • Upon graduation from the University, students should have a sufficient level of computer expertise appropriate to their chosen academic area that prepares them with computer applications and skills needed for the workforce, as well as an understanding of the corresponding ethical issues associated with their use. (DIRECTOR OF GENERAL EDUCATION, ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, DEPARTMENTS) | Short term Mid term |

Best Practices in Advising

The following excerpt from the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA)'s Statement of Core Values of Academic Advising describes the impact advising can have on students:

Through regular contact with students—whether face-to-face, through the mail, on the telephone, or through computer mediated systems—advisors gain meaningful insights into students' academic, social, and personal experiences and needs. Advisors use these insights to help students feel a part of the academic community, develop sound academic and career goals, and ultimately be successful learners.

Because of the nature of academic advising, advisors often develop a broad vision of the institution. Advisors can therefore play an important interpretive role with administrators, faculty, and staff, helping them further understand students' academic and personal development needs. Advisors can teach others to identify students who, with additional attention from academic support staff, may achieve their goals to succeed academically and personally.

Students place a great deal of trust in their advisors. That trust warrants quality programs and services.

A hallmark of Illinois State's small college atmosphere is the individualized attention each student receives from faculty and staff. Good advising is all about attention: students who are well informed make better decisions about their academic careers.

Best Practices in Advising

| | Action | Completion |
|-----|---|-------------------|
| 66. | Develop appropriate centralized and departmental advising standards and benchmarks, incorporating, where appropriate, the NACADA Statement of Core Values. Expand program review criteria to include an assessment of each department's academic advising procedures, resources, and student load. (UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, DEPARTMENTAL ADVISORS) | Short term |
| 67. | Develop a resource allocation plan to equalize advising loads across campus. (DEANS, PROVOST) | Long term |
| 68. | Develop strategies to involve and reward faculty mentors in the advising process, particularly in the areas of graduate/professional school options and career exploration. (COLLEGES, DEPARTMENTS) | Mid term |

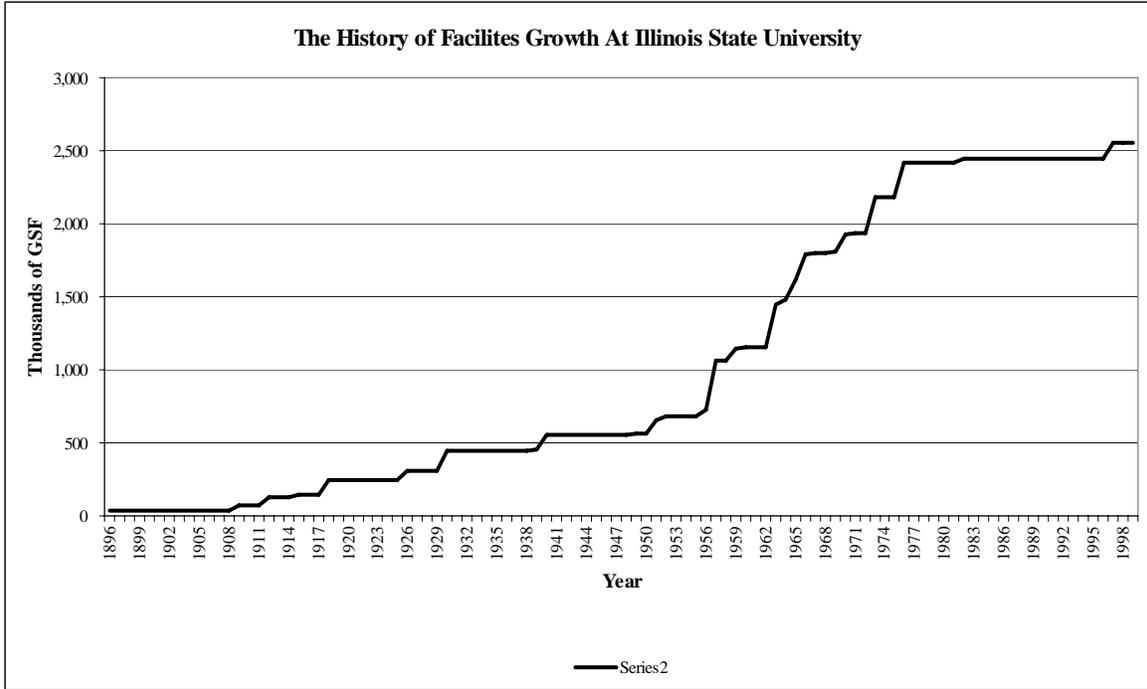
Best Practices in Advising, *continued*

| | Action | Completion |
|-----|--|-------------------|
| 69. | Explore information technology applications that would integrate the Web with student information systems, guided by the goal of freeing up advisors to spend more time on student development. (ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, REGISTRAR) | Mid term |
| 70. | Review the University’s course scheduling patterns to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that students can obtain the courses they need to progress toward graduation. • Better utilize classroom space. (UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES, DEANS, DEPARTMENT CHAIRS, DEPARTMENTAL ADVISORS) | Short term |

Facilities for the Twenty-First Century

Put simply, Illinois State University’s facilities are aging and in need of serious improvement. Critical needs such as the enhancement of facilities’ access for persons with disabilities and the configuration of space to encourage student-faculty connections must be addressed. The graph below shows the growth of space at the University over the last 100 years: The majority of space was added to the campus between 1957 and 1977—23 to 43 years ago. It is at these ages that serious maintenance and remodeling needs arise.

The accumulated deferred maintenance of Illinois State’s general revenue facilities alone is in excess of \$100 million. Facilities built with the proceeds from the sale of bonds have similar maintenance needs. These needs will continue to grow at an increasing rate if not addressed more directly. Programmatic changes that render existing space inadequate are accelerating faster than the University is able to either remodel existing space or build new space. In addition, the campus is quickly becoming “land-locked” as the Town of Normal surrounds the main campus on all four sides. Expansion beyond the main campus will require continuous interaction and joint planning with the Town of Normal.



One key facility on any campus is the library. No university can call itself distinctive without a first-class library that serves the intellectual needs of students and faculty. The Provost and the Dean of University Libraries should actively assert the primacy of the academic library in the academic environment. Milner Library and the Provost should publish widely the findings and recommendations that result from both the recent facilities study and the user survey for campus discussion and debate.

By the end of the 2000-01 academic year, Milner Library, working in concert with the various campus planning bodies, should have a comprehensive, long-range plan developed that includes reliable and realistic cost estimates and targeted sources of funds to meet the costs.

Facilities for the Twenty-First Century

| | Action | Completion |
|-----|--|---|
| 71. | <p>Conduct a thorough audit of all university facilities to identify use, condition, and alignment with the University’s goals and values, generating the following planning documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new capital and land-use master plan that would prioritize facility remodeling and rehabilitation needs, and address infrastructure maintenance, and the impediments of a land-locked main campus. The capital and land-use master plan should put a high priority on the creation/renovation of common spaces for informal interaction. • A long-range master plan for renovating or building new residence halls. This long-range plan would be focused on both residential and cultural uses of the buildings and would be guided by the following goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Making residence hall living an integral part of an Illinois State education through such means as expanding the number of lifestyle floors or creating a residential college system; ▪ Bringing on-line access to information resources into every residence hall by completing the residence hall wiring project and wiring the residence hall dining rooms to encourage group work; ▪ Enhancing student-faculty interaction by including areas for some faculty offices and seminar rooms (particularly in the lifestyle floors and the Honors House); ▪ Considering the unique needs of graduate students; and ▪ Ensuring adequate space for individual and group study by adding suites, larger single and double rooms, and more common areas. <p>(FINANCE AND PLANNING, STUDENT AFFAIRS)</p> | <p>Short term</p> <p>Short term</p> <p>Mid term</p> <p>Short term</p> <p>Mid term</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Long term</p> |

Facilities for the Twenty-First Century, *continued*

| | Action | Completion |
|-----|---|---|
| 72. | Implement the Milner Library long-range renovation plan and seek donor support for the expansion of the Library. (DEAN OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES, VICE PRESIDENTS, PRESIDENT, UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT) | Long term |
| 73. | <p>Identify and address the University’s most pressing facilities needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earmark at least two percent of the University’s annual operations and grants budget to a special fund for the most serious deferred maintenance needs on campus. • Initiate a more aggressive approach to seeking capital funds from the State for the remodeling of Schroeder Hall, life safety improvements to Stevenson Hall and Turner Hall, and the improvement of Centennial East and Centennial West. • Build a new student recreation center on campus. The responsibility to address the health, fitness, and wellness needs of our students, staff, and faculty is imperative. Most state universities have on-campus access to facilities to serve constituents’ needs. Academic ties (e.g., HPER , FCS, HSC, and Nursing) should be investigated that could help support this initiative. <p>(PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENTS)</p> | <p>Long term</p> <p>Short term</p> <p>Long term</p> |

Communicating Our Identity

Raising Illinois State’s profile cannot be accomplished without a communications effort that will involve every member of the University community. Public perceptions change slowly over time. Even very costly marketing initiatives can fail due to the difficulty in truly capturing an audience’s fractured attention in our complex, information-dense society. In communicating both Illinois State’s identity as a large university that feels like a small college and the core values that shape our learning environment, we must rely on the following strategies:

- Message consistency—everyone at the institution communicating the same basic shared understanding of what makes Illinois State University distinctive and excellent.
- Message clarity—everyone at the institution focusing action to express our institutional mission and values.

Seven years of focused, consistent action can remake an institution. By 2007, Illinois State University will have a distinct identity as the state’s first-choice public university for high-achieving, motivated students who seek an individualized educational experience combined with the resources of a large university.

Communicating Our Identity

| | Action | Completion |
|-----|---|---|
| 74. | Incorporate the values, vision, and actions of Educating Illinois into the University’s integrated marketing plan. (UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING, PROVOST) | Short term |
| 75. | For marketing purposes, combine related areas of academic excellence in publicizing the University to prospective students (for example, focusing on “technology at Illinois State,” or teacher education, or the arts, etc). (UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING, DEANS,) | Ongoing |
| 76. | Encourage grant seekers to budget an outreach component such as a Web site into their grant requests. (UNIVERSITY RESEARCH OFFICE, DEPARTMENTS) | Ongoing |
| 77. | Provide a mechanism for faculty, staff, and alumni to share strategies for enhancing the University’s reputation. (EDUCATING ILLINOIS COORDINATING TEAM, MEDIA RELATIONS, UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING) | Short term |
| 78. | Recognize the influence that college rankings systems wield in establishing the University’s reputation by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a concerted strategy to advance the University to the next level in the U.S. News & World Report rankings. • Participating in other ranking systems such as the Student Engagement Survey that better address student outcomes. • Coordinating all ranking systems’ requests for institutional data through the Office of Institutional Research and have that data regularly reviewed by other constituency areas. • Publicizing positive reviews of the University in other college and university guides. (OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, MEDIA RELATIONS, UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING, PROVOST) | Mid term Short term Short term Ongoing |
| 79. | Review departmental Web sites, brochures, and newsletters to ensure that they fully communicate university values, departmental distinctiveness, and areas of excellence. (UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING, INSTITUTIONAL WEB SUPPORT SERVICES, PROVOST) | Short term |

Conclusion

Implementing the actions outlined in this plan will take Illinois State University to new levels of institutional distinctiveness and excellence. By the year 2007, Illinois State University will occupy a unique niche among the state's universities, combining the qualities of a small college with the comprehensiveness, diversity, and national scope of a large university.

Getting us to that point is a shared responsibility for all members of the University community: faculty members, administrators, board members, students, staff members, alumni, friends of the University, state legislators and the Illinois Board of Higher Education. It is in everyone's interest to ensure that the state's educational resources can meet the challenges of a new century; an educated citizenry is the best guarantor of our future well-being.

The success of *Educating Illinois* rests upon a multiyear commitment to the plan that will include the creation of implementation teams (to be drawn, where possible, from existing committee structures already in place, such as the Academic Affairs Committee of the Academic Senate, the Executive Committee for Academic Technology, and the Council for General Education), the wide communication of *Educating Illinois* accomplishments (and challenges), and the establishment of a university-wide planning process rooted in this action plan.

Planning and budgeting for *Educating Illinois* must be coordinated across all vice-presidential units, utilizing student, faculty, and staff input. *Educating Illinois* is not intended to be a document that sits dormant on a shelf. The following recommendations will help ensure that it is a living, dynamic driver of the University's planning and budgeting processes:

- Each division will assess the programs and services provided and enumerate how each contributes to the academic mission of the institution and the stated goals of this action plan;
- Each division's planning and priority setting process will include representation or involvement from other divisions. Faculty, especially, should be encouraged to participate in the planning and priority setting of essential support services;
- Illinois State University's budget enhancement process will be revised so that priority decisions reflect the values and actions of *Educating Illinois*;
- Illinois State University's annual *Results Report* to the Illinois Board of Higher Education will assess institutional progress toward full implementation of the action items in *Educating Illinois*; and
- At the action plan's midpoint in 2003 the University community will formally reexamine *Educating Illinois* to determine whether the plan should be modified to respond to changing circumstances.

Every strategic plan must strike a balance between idealism and pragmatism, between an alluring vision and present-day challenges. **Unquestionably, the implementation of this action plan will require an infusion of new resources, both public and private, and it will necessitate making some crucial but difficult choices regarding existing resources.** This document is intended as an indispensable guide in that decision-making process, focusing all of the myriad activities that are encompassed by Illinois State University to create a distinctive, socially beneficial, and productive identity for the University.

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