

## INTRODUCTION

This document serves as an introduction to the types of questions that may be asked by the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) Visit Team.

The questions are drawn from Criterion 1 through Criterion 5. Within this document are guiding questions that could be asked of each individual campus criterion writing team.

Members of the staff and the faculty should review their specific criterion and the questions listed in order to prepare the campus for the possible questions that may be asked during the campus visit.

The lists of questions are not all-encompassing; they are categorized only to act as helpful questions used to prepare criterion writing teams and the campus prior to the meetings with the HLC visit team.

When preparing answers to the criterion team's questions, please consider incorporating the themes expressed in ISU's Mission and Vision Statements.

**ISU's Mission Statement reads:** Illinois State University prepares diverse, engaged, and informed members of society through collaborative teaching, scholarship, and service.

**ISU's Vision Statement reads:** Illinois State University will be a national leader in student-focused education connecting teaching, research, innovation, and intercultural understanding.

## CRITERION 1 – MISSION

1. As you understand it, what is ISU's mission?
2. Do you know where you would find the official mission statement?
3. How is the spirit of the mission reflected in what you do and in your daily life?
4. What do you see as the strongest evidence that ISU knows and follows its mission?
5. In what ways is ISU accomplishing its mission? In what ways is it not?
6. Does your college have a mission statement?
7. Are your department and divisional policies and procedures consistent with ISU's mission?
8. Are you familiar with and do you support the core values of ISU?
9. Does the ISU Board of Trustees support the mission of ISU?
10. How were you involved in the strategic planning process at ISU?
11. What are ISU's current strategic planning priorities?
12. Do you believe ISU has made progress toward achieving the identified strategic goals?
13. How do faculty, staff, and administration work towards accomplishing ISU's mission and goals?
14. Is diversity incorporated into the mission of ISU?
15. What are the goals of diversity at ISU? How are they measured?
16. How does ISU ensure support for diverse populations?
17. How does ISU ensure diversity in hiring practices? What are the goals for diversity in hiring practices?
18. Describe ISU's diversity efforts regarding student and faculty recruitment and retention.
19. Does ISU offer programming in support of diverse populations?
20. Describe your department/unit's diversity efforts related to student recruitment, multicultural and inclusive settings.
21. Explain opportunities for working and collaborating in a diverse, multicultural, and inclusive setting.
22. How is ISU developing a campus environment that is welcoming, inclusive, and increasingly diverse?
23. Explain how budgeting aligns with the mission and what the process is.
24. Are budget decisions made based on the strategic goals of the university?
25. Do budget decisions take into account recommendations from the program review process?
26. How does ISU support students who meet the admissions criteria?
27. How does ISU support students who are underprepared or struggling?
28. In what ways does ISU demonstrate commitment to the public good?
29. How does ISU support the community at large?
30. What do you believe have been the major accomplishments of ISU over the last ten years?
31. What are ISU's problem areas?
32. What concerns do you have about the future of ISU?
33. Are marketing materials accurate and up to date?
34. Is there anything you would like us to know that we have not asked or covered?

## **CRITERION 2 – INTEGRITY: ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT**

1. Do students actually receive what ISU promises in the catalog, recruitment materials, and website?
2. Does the website and recruitment material describe or depict an accurate portrayal of ISU? Is the information accurate, timely, representative, etc.?
3. Do you believe that your daily reality matches all the documentation that the team was sent?
4. Are ISU's stated goals the ones that are funded and supported? How is this apparent?
5. Can students get the courses they need to complete a degree in a timely fashion?
6. Do students receive clear information as to how much their education would cost?
7. When a policy, process, or program is being examined or proposed, is it publicized to the appropriate constituencies?
8. Does ISU have appropriate policies and procedures in place?
9. How are policies developed and updated at ISU?
10. Do you know where to get a class schedule or a financial report? Is this common knowledge?
11. Do people know where to voice concerns or lodge a complaint?
12. How are complaints addressed?
13. How do students learn about information literacy?
14. What examples can you provide which speak to how ethics are played out at ISU?
15. Is ISU committed to equal educational/employment opportunities?
16. Describe the campus climate at ISU.
17. Describe shared governance and how faculty participate in decision-making at different levels of the university (department, college, institution)
18. For some common faculty issues (workload, salary, sabbatical leaves, etc.), what works well and what needs to be improved?
19. Are you satisfied with the support you receive to enhance your teaching?
20. Are you satisfied with the support you receive to enhance your scholarship?
21. Have ISU administrators established a culture of trust within the university?
22. Do you understand the FERPA policy?
23. What are the major responsibilities of the Board of Trustees?
24. Who is responsible for curriculum additions/deletions/modifications?
25. Who is responsible for academic policy creation/modification?
26. Do you, faculty, believe you have academic freedom in your teaching?
27. Does ISU have policies and procedures in place to address ethical conduct in research for both faculty and students?
28. Is there anything you would like us to know that we have not asked or covered?

### **CRITERION 3 – TEACHING AND LEARNING: QUALITY, RESOURCES, AND SUPPORT**

1. How does ISU provide support for student learning and effective teaching?
2. What is your role in assuring students' learning?
3. Do faculty have the necessary infrastructure and resources to support effective teaching and learning (i.e., technology, laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, museum collections)?
4. How are courses developed?
5. How is consistency of Student Learning Outcomes guaranteed from section to section for the same course?
6. What characterizes an ISU education?
7. Are you familiar with and do you support the university student learning outcomes?
8. What is the purpose of ISU's General Education program? How do you know if it is achieving its purpose? How could it be improved?
9. How does ISU assure quality in its educational programs?
10. What type of ongoing assessment is used for quality management?
11. How does the program review process work and what measures do you have in place to ensure that the review process has an impact on student learning?
12. Do you know your departmental program(s) student learning outcomes?
13. How do you know your majors are attaining the program learning outcomes?
14. What is your department's vision for the future? How does it relate to the university's vision?
15. How are course quality and consistency ensured in multiple-section face-to-face courses? In online versions of face-to-face courses? In concurrent enrollment courses?
16. What is the role of faculty in ensuring academic quality?
17. Do you know what ISU's Quality Initiative was these past three years?
18. What professional development opportunities are available to faculty and staff members?
19. Are instructors evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures?
20. How are faculty members evaluated? Who assigns/hires faculty?
21. How are faculty credentials evaluated? How is previous experience evaluated? How are hiring committees developed for full and part-time faculty?
22. Can you describe the tenure and promotion process? What is your impression of the process?
23. What is the process for making curriculum changes in your academic programs?
24. How are concurrent courses managed?
25. Does your department offer courses or programs via online education? If so, how does your department ensure the quality of the curriculum?
26. Does the university provide support for the development of online courses?
27. Are the classes offered by your department taught by qualified faculty including adjuncts and concurrent enrollment course instructors?
28. How do co-curricular activities/programs contribute to the educational experience of students?
29. How are co-curricular activities defined?
30. How do students receive academic advising?
31. How are advisers trained about specific programs and disciplines?

32. What services are provided to students enrolled in courses?
33. Are students provided with adequate academic and personal support services?
34. Are students provided with sufficient and relevant co-curricular experiences?
35. Does ISU have a commitment to retention and progression to graduation? How successful have the efforts been?
36. Are you involved in research? Does ISU's research focus further its mission?
37. What opportunities do students in your program have to gain experience with research? With community or civic engagement? With diversity or multiculturalism?
38. Does ISU provide sufficient technology support?
39. What resources are available to support faculty? Are they sufficient?
40. Does ISU have sufficient and appropriate classrooms to instruct students?
41. Are facilities appropriately maintained at ISU?
42. What policies are in place to guide ISU's work in this area?
43. How would you characterize the relationship between faculty and administration?
44. What changes do you see happening at ISU over the next few years?
45. How do you track your majors to determine how successful they are after they graduate?
46. Is there anything you would like us to know that we have not asked or covered?

#### **CRITERION 4 – TEACHING AND LEARNING: EVALUATIONS AND IMPROVEMENT**

1. Tell us about your department, school, or college's assessment program. How was it developed? Is it well-known throughout the institution?
2. How has course/program assessment within your unit changed over recent years?
3. What improvements have resulted from the assessment?
4. Is your unit or ISU more effective than it was 5-10 years ago?
5. How are faculty/staff involved in course or program assessment? How are concurrent/online/adjunct faculty involved?
6. How is consistency of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) guaranteed from section to section of the same course?
7. Are ISU faculty appropriately qualified?
8. How is information analyzed and shared with stakeholders concerning student outcomes?
9. Where is the institution using data to improve student learning?
10. What is changing as a result of the data? At the program level? Department level? Institutional level?
11. How do program assessment results impact your budget and planning processes?
12. Describe the program review process at ISU. Has your department been through it recently? What was the process like?
13. What measures do you have in place to ensure the process has an impact on student learning?
14. What measures are used for student placement? How is this handled for dual enrollment and online courses?
15. Describe the transfer policy used by ISU for general education courses and courses in your major.
16. Describe the general education course approval process.
17. How are you made aware of ISU students' achievement of the university student learning outcomes? Where is this information located?
18. How is ISU doing with regard to first-year retention rates and graduation rates?
19. What is ISU doing to improve retention/graduation rates?
20. Is your department actively involved in assessing student learning?
21. How has your department used its assessment findings?
22. Is there anything you would like us to know that we have not asked or covered?

## **CRITERION 5 – INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, RESOURCES, AND PLANNING**

1. How are planning and budgeting tied together at ISU?
2. Can you describe the budgeting process?
3. How do you ensure that the budget meets the Mission, Core Values, or Strategic Plan for proposed spending of resources?
4. Explain your resource allocation framework and share your assessment of how well the process works.
5. Is there equity among departments relative to funding, staffing, space, and support services?
6. What contingencies do you have for unexpected expenses?
7. How is professional development budgeted?
8. Are capital improvements (facilities, technology, equipment) based on strategic needs of the institution?
9. How are assessment results, program review recommendations, and strategic planning goals taken into consideration during the budget decision-making process?
10. What are the different streams of revenue utilized by ISU to fund the institution?
11. How do you see the integration of various institutional planning resources (strategic planning, annual planning, financial planning, technology planning, academic planning, etc.) taking place at ISU? What are the barriers you see to making this integration most effective?
12. Are there areas in your future vision which will require a major shift in the utilization of resources? How well does your current allocation meet your mission and support your current institutional priorities?
13. In what ways can ISU be expected to continue to accomplish its mission?
14. Is enrollment rising/falling/stabilized? What are the reasons for this?
15. What kinds of changes are taking place within the university? Do you see these changes as positive or negative? How will these changes impact ISU?
16. What is the most significant change since you have been here?
17. What challenges do you believe ISU will need to deal with in the next 10 years?
18. Do you have any concerns for the future of ISU?
19. How is quality documented and maintained for various constituencies or delivery mechanisms?
20. Other than processes that assess student academic achievement, what other processes are well-functioning in the evaluation of institutional effectiveness? Can you share examples?
21. Where might the institutional focus be in the future to strengthen its evaluation processes to ensure institutional effectiveness?
22. How are completion rates measured? What strategies are used for improvement? What types of completion are reported?
23. How is information disseminated so that all stakeholders are informed?
24. What do you see as the strengths and challenges of the governance model employed at ISU?
25. How does the Board of Trustees fit into the institutional governance structure?
26. What is the role of the Academic Senate?
27. How are faculty given the opportunity to provide input into important initiatives?
28. Is there anything you would like us to know that we have not asked or covered?