

Assurance Argument
Illinois State University - IL

Review date: 10/28/2024

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Argument

Illinois State University has a long history of engaged learning, high achievement standards, and a supportive student environment. Illinois State strives to create a small-college atmosphere with large-university opportunities and is committed to providing individualized student attention. These values are also represented in the institution's faculty hiring and evaluation practices.

Illinois State University continues to invest resources in applied learning opportunities and faculty-mentored research experiences to occur across instructional delivery modalities and locations. Processes ensure program content is current, appropriate to higher education, and of high quality.

Illinois State University offers 76 baccalaureate, 58 graduate, and 41 certificate programs. Quality levels and learning goals of programs offered are consistent across locations and modes. Appropriate and consistent rigor and quality are achieved and maintained through processes that promote an environment of continuous improvement.

[3.A.1]

Illinois State uses several internal processes to maintain appropriate rigor and currency of its courses and academic programs. Illinois State also has numerous academic programs subject to review by external entities through discipline-specific accreditation.

Creating and revising Illinois State courses and programs is a thorough process to ensure input from faculty at the department/school, college, and university levels. Faculty at the department/school level typically initiate the process with proposals reviewed first by the department/school curriculum committee provided for in department/school governing documents. Proposals are subject to review and approval by the department chairperson/school director, who, as fiscal agent, is responsible for ensuring that the curriculum can be delivered. Proposals are then reviewed by the appropriate college curriculum committee, as provided for in college governing documents, and subject to review and approval by the college dean.

Proposals related to educator preparation programs receive further review by the Council for Teacher Education. Proposals for courses intended to meet general education requirements are reviewed by the Council on General Education, and courses reviewed for AMALI and IDEAS graduation requirements are reviewed by a corresponding faculty expert panel. Undergraduate and graduate program proposals are reviewed by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and Graduate Curriculum Committee, respectively, where course syllabi are examined to ensure they include student learning outcomes consistent with university policies and guidelines.

New program proposals require additional Academic Senate, Board of Trustees, and Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) approvals. The IBHE proposal form includes curriculum and course descriptions as well as a description of student learning outcomes assessment.

Every academic degree program at Illinois State maintains a student learning outcomes assessment plan. Although program assessment plans differ by discipline, Illinois State's academic assessment framework includes four elements: student learning outcomes, direct and indirect evidence of student learning, and using the results. Faculty members gather evidence regarding student performance and use the information to modify student learning goals, course content, and program content and structure.

Illinois State reviews academic program assessment plans through the Process for the Review of Academic Assessment Plans and annual update processes. The goals of these processes are to support academic programs in enhancing program quality and guide academic decision making at Illinois State University. The Assessment Advisory Council is responsible for reviewing academic assessment plans in a manner consistent with IBHE policies and procedures regarding assessment and program review.

Illinois State program review is conducted in compliance with statutes approved by the Illinois General Assembly and with IBHE regulations. The state requires review of every degree and certificate program at Illinois public universities at least every eight years.

The program review process for Illinois State programs spans three years. During the first year, the student learning outcomes assessment plan is reviewed and revised through a process described in the Process for the Review of Academic Assessment Plans. During the second year, faculty members compile assessment data in accordance with the revised assessment plan. During the third year, faculty members complete an extensive program self-study using student assessment results and other available information. Required self-study content includes a program curriculum evaluation and a report of findings from the latest specialized accreditation

review, if applicable. Programs are also asked to respond to the previous program review's findings and recommendations for improvement.

Illinois State (as of October 2023) has 122 academic programs or units that are accredited or approved by specialized accreditors (see accreditation by accrediting body and accreditation by program). Accredited sequences include educator preparation plans of study, which are subject to Illinois State Board of Education oversight.

University Assessment Services (UAS) supports academic programs in gathering alumni feedback in several ways. UAS created a survey bank of alumni-related questions that academic programs can access. Departments can consult with UAS in the design and analysis of survey feedback. Lastly, UAS has established a process for contacting alumni through a mass email system, using addresses maintained by the Office of Alumni Engagement.

UAS collects and analyzes labor market outcome data through the Illinois Department of Employment Security, and has compiled earnings and industry data through 2019 for alumni who graduated between 2003 and 2018 and reside in Illinois. The data indicate that, regardless of the academic program completed, alumni experience both job stability and steady salary increases after graduating. UAS has shared program-specific findings with academic units for use in program evaluation and student recruitment.

Beginning with the 2020 graduating class, Project Nest was implemented to capture post-graduation information through exit surveys. The data identify average first-destination annual salary, the percentage employed upon graduation, graduate school attendance, and top employers. Project Nest enables the University to understand graduate workforce readiness and provides a tangible measure of the value of an Illinois State degree.

[3.A.2]

Broad learning goals for programs are articulated by course level through documents maintained by the Undergraduate and Graduate Curriculum Committees. Learning goals for specific programs are articulated through student learning outcomes assessment plans (see 3.A.1). Policies and procedures, including general expectations of student performance at the 100 through 500 course levels, are published on the curriculum website and reviewed by the appropriate curriculum committees. In addition to meeting requirements of their chosen program of study, undergraduate students must meet General Education program requirements. The General Education program utilizes the Essential Learning Outcomes (LEAP) and VALUE rubrics (see 3.B.1).

[3.A.3]

State and university policies require consistency in program content and quality, regardless of modality and whether a program is offered on or off campus. Section 3.A.1 outlines the compliance processes. Syllabi evidencing compliance are kept on file in department and school offices. COVID-19 resulted in new modality definitions based on the percentage of instruction

completed in-person: face to face/in-person (75%+), hybrid (26-74%), online hybrid (1-25%), and online (0%).

Any academic program for which a degree or certificate is conferred by the University must be approved by IBHE as a new program or a reasonable or moderate extension of degree-granting authority previously approved by IBHE. Criteria for IBHE approval are set forth in 23 Illinois Administrative Code 1050. The code specifies requirements for distance education programs and provides that “demonstration of student learning and program outcomes [shall be] ... consistent regardless of program delivery method.” The code also provides that Illinois public universities must receive prior IBHE staff approval before offering any academic program at off-campus locations outside their IBHE-designated home region.

Federal regulations require institutions of higher education to obtain approval from the home state of an out-of-state student before enrolling that student in an online course. Illinois State University became an institutional participant in the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements through the Midwestern Higher Education Compact in 2015. The agreement includes policies and standards regarding the quality of distance education programs.

Illinois State has adopted policies and programs to further consistency across delivery modes and locations. Its credit hour policy provides that credit hour requirements for distance education courses are to be “consistent with the standards of courses offered through face-to-face instruction” and that all definitions and standards apply equally to courses offered on and off campus.

Distance education has been supported with robust professional development over the last decade. Since fall 2014, 507 individual course instructors have completed semester-long programs to design high-quality online courses through programs such as DART, AIM, or TOP. The training is based on Quality Matters standards to ensure that distance education courses have the same rigor, performance expectations for students, and faculty support as courses offered through face-to-face instruction. The global pandemic led to the hiring of a chief online learning officer in 2022 to guide the development of entirely online programs and expand professional development for evidence-informed online course design and delivery. Work is currently underway to develop a strategic plan to guide these efforts and prioritize future work.

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3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

Argument

Consistent with its mission, Illinois State University offers a comprehensive array of undergraduate programs and select graduate programs in areas of specialized expertise. Courses and programs are ever-changing to remain current, relevant, and appropriately rigorous (see inventory of changes since the 2015 HLC review). General education, the foundation of undergraduate education in all disciplines, is being revised to respond to assessment data and to promote timely graduation, expand instruction outside the classroom, and further incorporate experiential learning and information fluency. All academic programs have student learning outcomes assessment plans that articulate learning goals and guide collection of data for program improvement. Faculty are guided by a balanced teacher-scholar model through which they incorporate research, scholarship, and creative activities into their teaching and involve graduate and undergraduate students in original and collaborative scholarship.

[3.B.1]

The General Education Program offers students a foundation for their undergraduate experience. It prepares students for their future academic, professional, and personal lives through the provision of knowledge and skills across the following categories: Communication/Composition and Critical Inquiry, United States Traditions, Individuals and Civic Life, Mathematics, Quantitative Reasoning, Social Sciences, Sciences, Humanities, and Fine Arts. The program has four learning outcomes for students:

- Knowledge of diverse human cultures and the physical and natural world
- Intellectual and practical skills

- Personal and social responsibility
- Integrative and applied learning

Learning goals have also been developed within each of the four outcomes. For example, one of the five learning goals within the “intellectual and practical skills” outcome ensures students “analyze data to examine research questions and test hypotheses.” Each of the learning outcomes and goals are linked to specific categories within the General Education Program (see Criterion 4 for the assessment processes).

Illinois State's General Education Program aligns closely with the University’s mission statement and values, which emphasize student engagement, appreciation of diversity, critical thinking, effective communication, responsible and ethical actions, individualized attention, applied learning experiences, and rigorous inquiry.

Undergraduate students’ enrollment continues to have a strong and active presence, representing about 87% of enrollment. Accordingly, general education plays a prominent role in the University and is reviewed periodically to ensure that its goals, structure, and requirements align with the University’s mission, vision, goals, and strategies. The General Education Program is designed to provide students in all 78 undergraduate programs with a broad, common educational foundation. Students complete general education in three ways: First-time-in-college (FTIC) students complete the 36-39 credit hour general education program; transfer students with a baccalaureate-oriented associate’s degree are considered to have met general education requirements; and transfer students without a baccalaureate-oriented associate’s degree can complete either the Illinois Transferable General Education Core Curriculum (IAI GECC) or Illinois State's General Education Program. Transfer students constitute approximately one-third of new students new each fall. The IAI is a statewide transfer agreement, which articulates general education and major courses among the 100+ public state institutions that are required by law to participate in IAI. The Council on General Education (see 3.A.1) works to align individual general education courses with program goals and reviews all courses to be included in the General Education program, in addition to department/school and college curricular review and approval process. Each of the 13 categories has its own definition/purpose and learning outcomes. There are over 250 courses designated as general education.

The general education program is currently undergoing a significant revision, which includes developing new learning outcomes, structure, and assessment plan.

[3.B.2]

Aspects of the LEAP framework guided the General Education program to provide students broad knowledge and essential skills (see section 3.A.2). It is designed to provide students a broad foundation of study upon which to build an undergraduate education, regardless of the discipline they choose to pursue. The *Undergraduate Catalog* includes program specifics.

[3.B.3]

In 2020, Illinois State hired its first chief equity and inclusion officer to work with all campus units to center equity, diversity, inclusion, and access (EDIA) efforts. There were four objectives: create an inclusive classroom/campus environment, recruit/retain diverse faculty and staff across the inclusion spectrum, create/invest in affirming spaces, and close the retention/graduation gaps (see section 1.C.1). To meet these goals, the University has diversified and internationalized its curriculum, increased civic engagement and service learning opportunities, provided programs and experiences, and established needed infrastructure.

Human and cultural diversity is intentionally integrated into the curriculum. Through the program review process, academic programs are asked to provide evidence of faculty efforts to further infuse diversity issues into and across the curriculum to ensure EDIA becomes a part of every degree program. All undergraduate students must complete at least one course in global studies and choose from courses in the cultures and traditions of Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, and indigenous peoples (AMALI). Departments/schools also internationalize curricula by adding language, culture courses, or study abroad experiences to their major plan of study.

In 2017-18, the Campus Climate Task Force recommended adoption of an additional graduation requirement related to diversity, a requirement that all undergraduate students complete a course focusing on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access in the United States (IDEAS). Beginning in fall 2023, all students complete an IDEAS-designated course as part of their general education or major. A panel of experts reviews and approves these courses to ensure the true intention of the graduation requirement is upheld.

The Center for Integrated Professional Development (CIPD) has increased its programming to help faculty build a more inclusive academic experience through developing inclusive courses for people with disabilities, decreasing loneliness and increasing belonging in classrooms, developing queer allyship, and reinventing courses with an EDIA lens.

To help develop Illinois State as a culturally diverse place of learning, the University aggressively recruits students from underrepresented populations. The University conducts application workshops at high schools serving racially diverse student populations to provide assistance with application completion as needed. The University partners with community-based organizations that assist traditionally underrepresented students with navigating the college selection and application process. Due in part to these efforts, the number of students at Illinois State self-identifying with underrepresented populations increased from 15% in 2011 to 40% in 2023 (from 3,147 students to 5,547). The number of Hispanic (any race), Black/African-American, and Asian students increased 100.2%, 59.6%, and 33.7%, respectively.

The University offers scholarships to high-achieving students who would not otherwise be able to attend college. In the previous five years, the University provided \$12 million dollars annually in need-based grants to students from low-income families, most of whom are from underrepresented groups.

For qualified graduate students, the University offers diversity tuition waivers and partial tuition waivers for international students and promotes numerous private scholarships and fellowships.

The Office of International Engagement (OIE) coordinates Illinois State's international programs, facilitates study abroad opportunities, and welcomes students and faculty from other countries, thereby enriching the learning environment for Illinois State students. In 2014, Illinois State adopted an *International Strategic Plan* to further guide globalization of campus and curriculum. OIE is currently working with the International Studies Advisory Council to revise the strategic plan.

At the time of the last HLC review, Illinois State had committed to doubling the number of undergraduates studying abroad. Efforts included study abroad fairs each fall and spring, as well as twice weekly drop-in advising sessions. These efforts have increased study abroad participation again, from a pandemic-related decrease of 161 students participating in study abroad in fiscal 2022, to 425 students in fiscal 2023, a 164% increase. Committed to furthering access, OIE introduced the Access Abroad Awards in 2019 to minimize financial barriers for students wanting to take advantage of study abroad opportunities.

While it is not possible for all students to travel abroad, some majors have worked to internationalize their curriculum by infusing world language and culture into the major either through requirements or suggested elective courses.

At the beginning of 2018, the University's then-president announced a goal of increasing international enrollment at the University from approximately 2% of total enrollment to 10% by 2026. The University contracted with INTO University Partners (INTO), an international recruitment team working in more than 75 countries, to further these efforts. In fall 2018, a group of 43 international students recruited by INTO enrolled in Illinois State. Since then, approximately 362 new international students recruited by INTO have enrolled in Academic English and Pathway programs. Each incoming international student is assigned to one of three tracks, depending on their English proficiency and admission credentials. The University provides intensive English language preparation for students needing that assistance. CIPD has added global learning professional development opportunities for faculty and staff members working most closely with international students.

Efforts are currently underway to increase exchanges with international partners. For example, the College of Business has two programs in partnership with Quality Leadership University (QLU) in Panama City, Panama. The programs have been in operation for five years. The Bachelor of Science in International Business started Cohort #6 in April 2024, and the MBA will start Cohort #5 in September. Over 130 students have completed programs in total. Illinois State delivers courses in-person at QLU's facilities, as faculty travel to Panama to teach. Starting last year, the University delivered courses through the HyFlex modality wherein students may join classes synchronously online when in-person attendance is precluded (sickness, travel, relocation, etc.). QLU provides all facilities and equipment.

During the 2015 HLC review, a task force of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs representatives was completing its investigation of ways to further strengthen the University's commitment to civic engagement. The task force completed its work summer 2015, recommending establishment of a civic engagement center to develop appreciation, understanding, and application of the civic engagement principles among students, faculty, and

staff. In fall 2017, the Center for Civic Engagement (CCE) officially opened to support existing university programs that promote civic engagement and to serve as a catalyst to create, coordinate, and expand future programming. CCE works to inform students about community engagement and service-learning opportunities available to them and provides resources to faculty and staff to integrate civic engagement and service learning into the curriculum. The center embraces the American Democracy Project's framework of social change and aims to make equity-centered civic learning and democratic engagement an integral part of the student experience. In 2020-21, CCE began using National Issues Forum Institute curricula to create a Deliberative Dialogues program and trained faculty, staff, and students to facilitate conversations about controversial issues in classes and the community. In 2022-23, 2,056 people participated in dialogues via 200 sessions on topics such as immigration, climate change, elections, mental health, free speech, and vaccines (see 3.E).

CCE coordinates the interdisciplinary undergraduate civic engagement and responsibility minor. Its curriculum has a concentration for teacher education majors interested in pursuing careers in urban schools, including courses with a strong focus on diversity, anti-racism, and community-engaged classrooms. Many of these courses offer hands-on activities and assignments that allow students to collaborate with urban schools and communities.

Cocurricular activities include projects such as September Service, Spring into Service, Bring it Back to Normal, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, Serving Those Who Served, Alternative Breaks (winter, spring, and summer), and mentorship initiatives that match preservice teachers with students in local and Chicago schools. Student-led cultural and civic engagement opportunities include over 400 registered student organizations activities concerning cultural/ethnic issues, 81 concerning advocacy issues, and 74 concerning service.

The Stevenson Center coordinates graduate sequences in applied community and economic development in anthropology, applied economics, kinesiology and recreation, political science, and sociology master's programs. AmeriCorps alumni and returned Peace Corps volunteers in the program complete an 11-month professional practice with a nonprofit or government organization. In 2016, the Stevenson Center launched a campus-wide Peace Corps Prep program.

Faculty and staff survey results have prompted additional and ongoing professional development to better meet changing student needs. The Division of Student Affairs, Research and Sponsored Programs, CIPD, and the Office of the Provost responded by developing EDIA learning opportunities. The Culturally Responsive Campus Community Conference and the EDIA Leaders Circle provide intensive learning opportunities for faculty and staff to help students build community.

In response to students seeking enhanced sense of belonging, programs and experiences have been developed to improve community-building opportunities. For example, in fall 2021 the Rainbow floor was established as a Themed Living-Learning Community within Housing, residence hall menus were expanded to accommodate different dietary needs, the *First-Gen Triumph* podcast was started, and Deliberative Dialogues were held to depolarize opinions and connect students with training in constructive dialogues.

Events that support EDIA efforts are held monthly, including the 50th anniversary of Title IX celebration, International Seminar Series, ReggieCon (comic and popular media discussions centered on race and diversity), First-Gen Celebration week, and Transgender Awareness Week.

The Multicultural Center opened in fall 2021 to champion antiracism, equity, and justice while embracing students' intersecting identities. The center sponsors five cultural student organizations that serve as umbrella organizations for their identity communities while providing programming and welcoming spaces for many more, including a Gender Affirmation Station, a child-friendly family space, and a reflection/prayer space. To be more gender-inclusive, Illinois State has 57 all-gender restrooms. To meet increasing mental health needs, student counseling staff has increased by 25%, and much Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) II money has been dedicated to mental health, including technology, training, and programming.

The HLC Quality Initiative focuses on student success. It seeks to close differences in equitable retention and graduation rates with several goals, including defining student success and its metrics, being data-driven, connecting student success to faculty success, analyzing university practices with an EDIA lens, and reviewing institutional barriers to student success.

The President's Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council works to move Illinois State to a more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and socially just institution. The group focuses on long-term infrastructure, underrepresented faculty/staff retention, LGBTQIA+ issues, and underrepresented student enrollment and retention.

[3.B.4]

All Illinois State programs engage students in modes of inquiry and scholarly creativity appropriate to their chosen discipline, with an emphasis on collaboration between students and faculty in scholarship and its dissemination. Faculty members' work is guided by a balanced teacher-scholar model that values faculty contributions as facilitators of learning and as creators and discoverers of knowledge and information. Strategic plan strategies focused on providing a supportive, student-centered educational experience have contributed to increases in student participation in research at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Scholarship standards for tenured and tenure track faculty members are addressed through Faculty Appointment, Salary, Promotion, and Tenure (ASPT) Policies. A committee of faculty peers most familiar with the discipline review faculty scholarship at the department/school level. Scholarship standards are established in each department/school by faculty vote and are published in department/school policies. Types and volume of activities deemed acceptable for tenure or probationary tenure status vary across academic units.

From fiscal 2013 through fiscal 2023, the number of faculty requests for external funds to support research annually averaged 238. The number and value of grant awards averaged 175 and \$24.9 million, respectively, when removing emergency COVID-19 relief funding. In fiscal 2023, 236 external grant requests submitted by Illinois State faculty were funded for a total of \$40 million in restricted funds (48% of which were classified as research).

A point of Illinois State pride is the involvement of both graduate and undergraduate students in research. Faculty mentors encourage all students, regardless of level, to present or publish their original scholarship or creative works. The largest venue for students to share their work is the Research Symposium held each spring. The 2023 symposium included over 460 student presentations. Students from 29 of 35 departments/schools participated, and 139 faculty members served as research mentors. Graduate and undergraduate students studying the fine arts and creative technologies disciplines have opportunities to present their works through multiple events and venues. In a typical year, approximately 200 music concerts and recitals, 60 student theatre/dance performances, and 40 student art exhibitions occur in University Galleries and in the community (see fine arts).

The Graduate School coordinates programs and services to promote and support graduate student research, with several new initiatives developed or expanded since the last HLC review. The GradBird Scholar recognizes graduate students for their scholarly endeavors. Professional Development workshops are scheduled each semester through the Graduate School and the CIPD. The Three-Minute Thesis competition, which challenges graduate students to describe their research and its significance to a lay audience within three minutes, is a signature event attracting almost 200 people. The Graduate School also coordinates graduate assistantships overseen by units and their faculty. In 2023-24, 783 graduate students (31%) received assistantships with full-tuition waivers. In addition, the University allocated \$589,500 to units to provide full or partial tuition waivers to students not receiving assistantships.

In spring 2019, the Office of Student Research (OSR) was established to support, coordinate, and raise the profile of student research activities at the institution, with an initial emphasis on undergraduate research. OSR has established several programs since its inception. Since 2020, the FIREbird award has funded faculty-mentored, independent research experiences. Students may apply for up to \$3,000 (summer) or \$1,500 (academic semester) for salary, supplies, or expenses related to travel to conduct research. Students from every academic college have received funds. Between summer 2020 and summer 2023, over 80 students were provided \$335,500 to support independent research projects with faculty mentors. The BirdFEEDER (Fund for Experimentation, Enquiry and the DEvelopment of Student Research) grant provides undergraduate and graduate students with small grants (less than \$500) for research-related expenses (e.g., commodities and incentives). Between spring 2022 and summer 2023, 44 students have received \$11,000 to support their research. Since summer 2022, OSR has also offered support (up to \$300) for students accepted to present their research or creative works at conferences and juried exhibitions.

OSR promotes student research through campus media, including regular features in *Redbird Scholar* and through an annual Image of Research Competition, which invites graduate and undergraduate students to submit one static image and a brief research abstract of their research. Entries are evaluated by an external (to campus) jury and finalists' work is printed and displayed at University Galleries during an exhibit to which the campus and community are invited. The competition receives an average of 30 entries, and winners receive cash prizes.

Finally, OSR offers professional development for faculty research mentors and student researchers through trained facilitation of CIMER's Entering Mentoring and Entering Research Curricula.

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3.C - Core Component 3.C

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
2. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.
3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
5. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

Argument

Planning, budgeting, and personnel policies ensure that faculty and staff are sufficient in number, appropriately credentialed, adept at their work, current in their expertise, and accessible to students. The University maintains a 19-to-1 student-to-faculty ratio by allocating sufficient resources for instructional capacity while maintaining enrollment within a target range. The student-to-faculty ratio varies across departments. A sufficient and appropriately qualified team of student support personnel is also vital to providing a quality, small-college experience. Numerous professional development opportunities are available to faculty and staff to hone their skills and remain current with higher education instruction and administration changes.

[3.C.1]

Various tools and strategies support diversity and inclusion among faculty and staff. To promote diversity among teaching faculty, the Office of the Provost provides supplemental support to assist units with successful faculty recruitment and retention via a Faculty Diversity Enhancement Program (FDEP). FDEP, a \$4.5 million initiative, encompasses revamping how the University attracts, hires, retains, and promotes candidates who advance our mission to foster an inclusive environment. FDEP is the overarching program to assist with additional expenses

incurred by faculty. FDEP comprises two alternative approaches: the Educational Diversity Enhancement Program (EDEP) and the Strategic Diversity Enhancement Program (SDEP).

Modest but steady progress has been made in the last 10 years concerning faculty diversity. Comparing fall 2012 to fall 2022, the number of departmental faculty members at Illinois State self-identifying with underrepresented populations increased 6%, from 149 to 158. Faculty members self-identifying as Black/African American and Asian increased by 7.9% and 17.4%, respectively. The University also participates in the state-facilitated Diversifying Higher Education Faculty Initiative (DFI) to increase the number of minority tenure track faculty and full-time staff at Illinois' two- and four-year, public and private colleges and universities (see 1.C.2).

The Search Advocate Program, launched in September 2021, supports faculty and staff searches with a focus on increased hiring of faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds. Modeled after Oregon State University's program, Illinois State's program uses search advocates as external, non-voting search committee members who serve as equity and inclusion consultants and play a vital role in position description development, recruitment, screening, interviews, evaluation, and integration of the new faculty or staff into the institution.

Illinois State is also working to retain faculty of color through various efforts. For example, employee affinity groups (Latino/a, Black, Asian, LGBTQ2IA+) are dedicated to enhancing the University's academic, social, and cultural environment. Results from the COACHE Faculty Jobs Satisfaction Survey were analyzed by work groups to address faculty retention issues.

The Office of Human Resources purchased contracts for departments to advertise at no or very low cost with the Black Doctoral Network, American Association for Access Equity and Diversity, HBCU Connect, Diversity & Inclusion Focus on Higher Ed Jobs, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Hiring departments are counseled about diverse recruitment options. Search committee training required for all search committee members includes bias mitigation, equitable search practices, and an inclusive search process.

[3.C.2]

Despite flat or declining state appropriations, Illinois State has increased faculty numbers through strategic allocation of existing resources, measured tuition and fee increases, and cost savings. In fall 2022, the University employed 1,362 faculty (1,025.9 FTE) compared to 1,180 (984.8 FTE) in fall 2014, which represents a 12.4% increase by headcount and a 4.2% increase by FTE. Of those 1,362 faculty, 726 held tenured or probationary tenure status (54.8%) and 600 (193 full-time and 407 part-time) held non-tenure track status (45.2%). Most tenure track faculty teach two or three courses during both fall and spring semesters. Full-time non-tenure track faculty members typically teach three or four courses each semester. The Division of Academic Affairs and its shared governance partners carefully monitor the mix of tenure track and non-tenure track faculty members to promote continuity in programs, while providing flexibility to shift instructional resources as needs change.

Each department/school works with their college each year to prepare an annual report and make various temporary and permanent budget requests for submission to the Office of the Provost, including new tenure track faculty search authorizations. College deans priority rank all tenure track requests from schools/departments and submit a ranked list to the provost. The provost subsequently makes decisions regarding new positions, in consultation with deans and division administrators.

Providing enough faculty to support an academic program is key for new or significantly revised programs. Before a new program proposal moves beyond the department/school level, the program submits a financial implication form, which provides information about the adequacy and sustainability of faculty support for the program. The proposal proceeds to college-level review only upon confirmation by the provost that resources are sufficient to support the program, at times with an allocation by the provost of one or more additional faculty lines.

To ensure that work such as curriculum development and revisions, assessment, and other non-classroom demands are met, a portion of tenure track faculty workload is designated as service.

[3.C.3]

Illinois State has a system that ensures appropriately credentialed faculty provide quality instruction across programs and delivery formats. Search committees, managed by department chairpersons or school directors, screen and select faculty recruited through national search procedures outlined in Criterion 2.A. Each department/school chairperson/director makes faculty teaching assignments, and the college dean and provost approve those assignments.

Faculty credentials are established by faculty in the department/school and college. Peer review committees oversee individual faculty performance through annual evaluations and consider tenure and/or promotion requests, primarily through the Appointment, Salary, Promotion, and Tenure (ASPT) system.

Graduate School bylaws provide that courses restricted to graduate students may be taught only by faculty members with graduate faculty status. To qualify for that status with full voting rights in Graduate School matters, faculty must have full-time tenure or tenure track employment, possess adequate training or education including the appropriate terminal degree, actively participate in scholarship appropriate to the discipline, provide evidence of effective graduate-level teaching, demonstrate the ability to supervise theses and dissertations, and be involved in activities recognized or commended by an appropriate professional organization. Graduate School bylaws, revised in spring 2023, describe membership qualifications and graduate faculty credential oversight.

Per ASPT policies (see 3.B.4), an applicant for a tenure track faculty position must have the terminal degree appropriate to the field, as established by faculty at the department/school level. Candidates for tenure track positions are also evaluated for their scholarship and service record. Specialized accreditation standards guide some programs' hiring qualifications.

Non-Tenure Track Faculty Classifications and Performance Evaluation establish general qualifications for non-tenure track instructors, which vary by classification. Instructors must have earned a degree at least one higher than the level of students they are hired to teach. Specific qualifications vary by position, based on the discipline and instructional needs, and are established by the department/school and college in consultation with Human Resources.

[3.C.4]

The University's strategic plan supports investment in high-quality faculty by recognizing, rewarding, and promoting the balanced teacher-scholar model (see 3.B.4), primarily through the faculty evaluation process. Faculty ASPT policies, adopted by the Academic Senate's Faculty Caucus, require annual department/school-level evaluation of tenure track faculty in January per guidelines adopted by department/school faculty (see 3.B.4) and approved by the respective college. Faculty meeting performance standards are eligible for salary increases, as funds are allocated for them by the University. Performance evaluations provide tenure track faculty formative feedback and are a critical factor in promotion and tenure decisions. ASPT policies provide for a system of faculty appeals to ensure fair and equitable treatment of all faculty members.

The University Review Committee facilitates a comprehensive review of university-wide policies every five years. However, changes may be made at any time by the Academic Senate Faculty Caucus vote with the president's concurrence. The most recent comprehensive review of the ASPT policy document occurred in 2021-22. In fall 2022, after almost three years of collaborative work by the University Review Committee and the Faculty Caucus, the Caucus recognized Civic Engagement as faculty service. The University President subsequently approved the articles, which took effect January 1, 2023.

The Non-Tenure Track Faculty Classifications and Performance Evaluation policy (3.3.4) provides for annual evaluation of non-tenure track faculty not covered by a collective bargaining agreement. Evaluation of negotiated non-tenure track faculty is addressed in the Non-Tenure Track Faculty Association collective bargaining agreement, which was valid through June 30, 2024. Academic units have discretion regarding how evaluations are conducted and by whom, whether the evaluator is a tenured faculty or someone with demonstrated training or experience in completing instructional evaluations.

[3.C.5]

Ensuring that instructors are current in their discipline and qualified to teach starts with effective hiring processes (see 3.C.2). All faculty in the hiring unit are typically involved in opportunities to meet and comment on candidates and, for some, search committee service. In this way, candidates are vetted by faculty members most familiar with the discipline and most knowledgeable about the skills the successful candidate will need to succeed.

ASPT policies require that tenured and tenure track faculty's annual performance evaluation includes assessment of teaching, service, and scholarly/creative productivity, including student

reactions to teaching that are solicited following policies and procedures adopted at the unit level. Some units use the IDEA instrument.

The University's strategic plan articulates a culture that values and promotes excellence in teaching. Among the strategies to achieve that vision are increasing professional development offerings designed to help faculty deliver high-quality online and face-to-face instruction. While some offerings are provided via the Office of the Provost, most opportunities occur through CIPD.

Illinois State has a long and proud history of promoting teaching excellence. A 2001 endowment by Dr. K. Patricia Cross, a scholar in the field of higher education, created the Cross Chair in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), believed to be the world's first and only university-wide endowed chair in SoTL in higher education. The Cross Chair conducts SoTL research and facilitates others' innovation and research in teaching and learning on campus through consulting, workshops, writing circles, grants, and publications.

CIPD offers numerous teaching development grants as well as workshops, consultations, learning communities, professional development circles, and course redesign cohorts focused on evidence-informed teaching across all modalities. The center also facilitates third-party midterm chats on behalf of instructors seeking to improve students' learning experience in their courses. CIPD annually hosts New Faculty Orientation. The center sponsors a teaching and learning symposium each January for faculty members to share innovations in instruction and assessment. At the symposium (up until the pandemic), CIPD announced its Path to Excellence Award, which recognizes units for participating in CIPD professional development activities. In 2019, CIPD founded its Teaching Scholars-in-Residence program to recognize faculty for their teaching excellence. Teaching Scholars serve as facilitators for several workshops and complete a SoTL research project under the Cross Chair in SoTL's mentorship. During the 2023 calendar year, 1,069 unique individuals engaged in some form of professional development offered by CIPD.

Research and Sponsored Programs has numerous programs and services to assist faculty with research, scholarly, and creative endeavors (see 2.E.2) and those seeking to remain current with changes in their field. The Office of International Engagement offers scholarships and waivers to support individual or collaborative research, scholarship, or creative activity and faculty facilitation of student trips.

Each department/school and college annually recognizes one or more faculty for excellence in teaching and scholarship. In addition, the University Teaching Committee annually recognizes teaching excellence campus-wide through its University Teaching Awards, while the University Research Council annually bestows University Research Awards.

[3.C.6]

Individualized attention is a core value of Illinois State. The Faculty Responsibilities to Students policy provides that faculty should be available outside the classroom. This ordinarily means "posting and observing a reasonable number of regular office hours during which the faculty

member will be available for student conferences.” Additional appointment times mutually convenient to students and faculty are to be made available when student schedules conflict with regular office hours.

Each department/school establishes policies regarding faculty availability to students, which vary by discipline, course structure, course content, and course delivery method. The recommended syllabus format posted on the University Curriculum website includes contact hours, office hours, and location. Most instructors use course management software (Canvas) to post course content and communicate with students.

[3.C.7]

Recruiting and retaining a high-quality, diverse staff is key to providing a supportive and student-centered educational experience. Appropriate qualifications for student support services personnel are ensured through hiring processes managed by Human Resources.

The Julia N. Visor Academic Center, a unit of University College, has about 80 undergraduate tutors who provide tutoring services during a typical semester. That center also delivers tutor training to other Illinois State units. Since 2015, the Visor Center has maintained Level II Certified Tutoring Center distinction from the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA). The certification requires tutors to participate in six hours of training before being permitted to tutor and to complete CRLA training within two semesters of hire. Weekly tutor training sessions throughout the semester include topics like the tutoring cycle, handling difficult situations, active listening, critical thinking, time management skills, adult learning, and learning styles.

The Office of Financial Aid has standardized its staff qualifications based on National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators guidelines. Candidates for a financial aid advisor position must have a bachelor’s degree, with a master’s degree preferred (see position descriptions). Financial Aid staff have internal training and participate in Enrollment Management and Academic Services (EMAS) unit professional development, which brings together all EMAS units, including Admissions, Honors, University College, and the Office of the Registrar.

Illinois State employs 80 full-time and two part-time academic advisors. An undergraduate academic advisor candidate must have a bachelor’s degree (master’s degree preferred) with at least two years of professional advising experience or demonstrated equivalent (see sample advisor position description). Some schools/ departments also require that the academic advisor have a degree in the discipline of their advising assignment. Extensive orientation, training, and mentoring are done through the hiring unit and the Academic Advising Council. Advising caseloads average 325; special populations, such as Honors, have lower caseloads.

Most cocurricular activities are coordinated through the Division of Student Affairs. Professional association standards (e.g., Council for the Advancement of Standards, student affairs professional associations, and the State of Illinois Civil Service system) inform division staff qualifications. All staff new to the division participate in a standardized New Staff Orientation

program and departmental training. Professional Competencies for Student Affairs Educators, developed by NASPA and ACPA, inform many departmental training and development initiatives. Student Affairs bases professional development on seven knowledge areas and offers professional development planning tools, an annual conference, and a Mid-level Career Development Track.

Sources

- 3.C.1.COACHE
- 3.C.1.COACHEResultsSummary
- 3.C.1.EmployeeAffinityGroups
- 3.C.1.FacultyDiversityEnhancementProgram
- 3.C.1.IBHEDiversifyingHigherEducationFaculty
- 3.C.1.ISUSearchAdvocateProgram
- 3.C.1.SupplimentalHRtrainingdocuments
- 3.C.2.AcademicImpactFund
- 3.C.2.AnnualBudgetMaterials
- 3.C.2.FinancialImplicationsForm
- 3.C.3.FacultyCredentials
- 3.C.3.GraduateSchoolBylaws
- 3.C.3.NTTClassificationAndPerformanceEvaluation
- 3.C.4.CollectiveBargainingAgreement
- 3.C.4.ProvostTAndPWebpage
- 3.C.4.UniversityReviewCommittee
- 3.C.5.CIPD
- 3.C.5.NewFacultyOrientation
- 3.C.5.OfficeOfInternationalEngagement.pdf
- 3.C.5.ResarchAndSponsoredPrograms
- 3.C.5.SoTL
- 3.C.5.SoTLCrossChair
- 3.C.5.TeachingScholarInResidence
- 3.C.5.UniversityResearchAwards
- 3.C.5.UniversityTeachingAwards
- 3.C.6.FacultyResponsibilityToStudents
- 3.C.6.SyllabusFormat
- 3.C.7.AcademicAdvisingCouncil
- 3.C.7.AdvisorJobDescription
- 3.C.7.CAS
- 3.C.7.CRLA
- 3.C.7.EMASProfessionalDevelopment
- 3.C.7.FinancialAidAdvisor
- 3.C.7.ProfessionalCompetenciesforStudentAffairsEd
- 3.C.7.StudentAffairsAnnualConference
- 3.C.7.StudentAffairsProfessionalAssociations
- 3.C.7.StudentAffairsProfessionalAssociations2

- 3.C.7.StudentAffairsProfessionalDevelopment
- 3.C.7.VisorAcademicCenter
- 3.C.FacultyToStudentRatios

3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Argument

Illinois State aspires to provide a supportive environment that places all learners at the center of teaching and scholarship through programs and services characterized by individualized attention. The University strives to provide holistic support services responsive to student needs, including learning support, academic advising, and personal development. The University strives to maintain the infrastructure and resources faculty and staff need to provide high-quality educational experiences.

[3.D.1]

The Office of Planning, Research, and Policy Analysis (PRPA) provides dashboards illustrating student enrollment and success measures, including an annual Common Data Set, along with customized data reports upon request. University Assessment Services (UAS) collects, analyzes, and shares engagement, satisfaction, and student success data from various institution-level surveys, including the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Many units study student needs and evaluate existing programs and services to identify ways to improve effectiveness.

Undergraduate students receive academic support primarily through University College and individual academic units' programs, and they receive out-of-classroom support primarily through the Division of Student Affairs. Academic units and the Graduate School provide support services to graduate students. A Guide to Helping Students Get Help is distributed to every faculty and staff member annually. The Redbird Care Team, a collaboration of academic and student affairs staff, meets weekly and engages in intensive follow-up with students through case managers and specialized outreach to address issues that impede student success, including finances, mental health, and meeting basic needs.

Illinois State has extensive orientation programs about available support services for new students. New undergraduate students and their families attend a two-day summer orientation (Preview) and a multiple-day program before the fall semester (Welcome Week), condensed to one day for spring admits (Welcome Day). Graduate students are oriented to their academic program and support services through their department/school.

Illinois State provides specialized services to groups of students that have unique needs and concerns. The 2023 NSSE shows that nearly 40% of Illinois State students are first-generation students raised by parents, guardians, or someone else in their household who did not complete a bachelor's degree.

The University continues to dedicate significant efforts to programs that ease the transition to college for first-generation college students, including programs like TRIO, STEM Alliance, Mentoring, Academics, Scholarship, and Achievement Initiative (MASAI), and First Star Academy for youth in the foster care system. The TRIO program works with students from enrollment through graduation, retaining nearly 95% from first to second year. MASAI has recently focused on students from one of the Noble Network of Charter (High) Schools in Chicago. Since the 2019 review, Illinois State has also added the SOAR (Supporting Opportunity, Actualization, and Realization) Scholars Program, Hope Chicago, and other Community-Based Opportunity partners. These programs' staff dedicate themselves to developing a community of scholars who support each other and enhance their sense of belonging and achievement. In 2018, the University's then-president established a persistence fund to support students through micro-grants, described in 4.C.3.

Transfer students typically constitute 30% or more of new undergraduate students. In fall 2022, for example, 29.3% of new undergraduates had transferred from another institution of higher education. The Transfer Council, created in 2016, meets regularly to enhance the transfer experience through changes such as establishing the Transfer Redbirds (RSO) and creating a Transfer Student Seminar. The Transfer Council has also improved recruitment practices, transfer and orientation days, and relationships with community colleges; further, it has created open houses and orientation sessions specially designed for transfer students, including an abridged version of Welcome Week held before the spring semester and a new chapter of Tau Sigma, the national transfer students honorary society. University College's transfer specialist advisors offer personalized assistance to transfer students, once they arrive on campus. Illinois State is one of only 10 U.S. schools to be recognized every year of the Phi Theta Kappa Transfer Honor Roll's existence.

In the past 10 years, the number of Illinois State students who self-identify as Black, Indigenous, and people of color increased from 17% to 31.9% (fall 2023). The University celebrates these increases while working to maintain a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environment.

In 2018, Illinois State was invited to participate in one of 16 transformation clusters organized by the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU). The goal is to share best practices in reducing differences in graduation rates between minoritized and non-minoritized students, which Illinois State identified as an institutional goal in its 2015 assurance argument. This group also resulted in yearlong projects/professional development through the Data Literacy

Institute and the Advising Success Network. Illinois State became a member of the American Talent Initiative (funded by the Bloomberg Foundation) in 2023, aimed at expanding Pell-eligible students' access and success.

In 2016, the Campus Climate Task Force was established to make recommendations based on an independent campus climate assessment report. Among the recommendations were strategies for elevating women's status, retaining students of color, hiring diverse faculty, and providing students, staff, and faculty equity training. In 2019, the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council was established as a permanent group that works proactively to create an equitable path to student success (see section 1.C.1).

Illinois State is committed to providing services to veterans, active-duty personnel, National Guard members, reservists, and their families that allow them to be successful in their collegiate careers. University staff assist military-connected students from the application and course registration to acclimating to campus life, with specialized veterans academic advising and a Veterans and Military-affiliated Student Seminar. Veterans and Military Services coordinate veteran support services. In recognition of its support for veterans, Illinois State has been rated as military-friendly by VIQTORY since 2009. In 2023, College Factual ranked Illinois State University 143rd of 2,157 institutions for veteran friendliness.

[3.D.2]

Proficiency examinations are offered in many 100-level courses and in a limited number of 200-level courses. Students passing exams receive credit and enroll in advanced courses. Students may also receive course credit or exemptions through participation in the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), the Advanced Placement Program, and International Baccalaureate.

Students who have not completed their general education math requirement take the ALEKS placement test. All students can use the practice modules and retest up to five times within 12 months. Most students scoring 45 or less typically must enroll in developmental math courses. Supplemental instruction is also offered in Math 113 for those who scored on the lower end of the math for credit courses. While it does help students succeed, it is a very expensive course to offer.

The Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures offers online placement tests to help students majoring in French, German, or Spanish decide which introductory course is most appropriate, given their skills. Tests are optional and freely available to other majors who plan to take a language class. Results do not block or permit enrollment in any given course.

Students who need more intensive help with writing skills may enroll in a special section of the required beginning writing course. The ENG101.10 section meets five days per week instead of three and includes lab sessions led by a writing consultant.

Campus policy provides out-of-class instructor support for students through regular office hours and consultations by appointment (see 3.C.6). Students desiring additional support may

participate in programs and services of one or more specialized campus units, depending on their circumstances.

Administration of most academic support services is centralized in University College to facilitate ease of student access and cross-program faculty and staff referrals. Students are first exposed to University College services through Preview for FTICs or through the Transfer Registration and Orientation Day.

Many students access University College programs and services through its Dr. Julia N. Visor Academic Center. Its programs include tutoring and weekly study groups for many required courses, study skills workshops, academic coaching, writing support, developmental math assistance, and a first-year seminar redesigned in 2018 to better help students transition to the University and explore curricular and career paths. Undergraduate students on academic probation must enroll in Project Success to help them set academic goals, become aware of campus services, understand probation policies, and ultimately return to good academic standing. As student success centers grow within the colleges and some departments, they are partnering with University College to avoid duplicating services, such as the Peer Success Advocates program, and to capitalize on the knowledge and skills of University College.

The Honors Program enriches student learning through academic, cultural, professional, and community-building opportunities and offers six unique learning experiences each semester. Students are empowered to select experiences based on their interests and aspirations. Typically, between 1,200 and 1,300 students participate in the Honors Program. Since 2015, the Honors Program has made a concerted effort to increase student diversity. As a result, BIPOC Honors participants increased from 11% in 2015 to 26.9% in 2023. To support the changing demographics, additional experiences have been added, including the EDIA Peer Mentors program and significant increases in the number of EDIA-focused Advanced Seminars and Honors Explorations.

The Karin L. Bone Athletics Study Center and University College collaboratively provide services for student-athletes. The study center has a program that helps freshmen, transfers, and academically vulnerable student-athletes adjust to the rigors of a university setting and allows for individualized one-on-one attention and meaningful relationships, which assist in Redbird student-athletes' holistic development. Study center staff provide weekly reports, academic progress report reviews, tutoring services, and life skills/professional development support. University College services to student-athletes include academic advising, major selection, and NCAA academic rules and eligibility standards education. University College athletics advisors work collaboratively with campus department/school advisors to ensure student-athletes have plans of study that meet both academic/career goals and eligibility standards.

These efforts have contributed to six-year graduation rates for scholarship student-athletes that are often higher than those for all undergraduate students. The NCAA gauges student-athletes' academic success through calculation of a graduation success rate unique to athletics and accounts for student-athletes who transfer their eligibility from one institution to another. Illinois State graduation success rates have consistently equaled or slightly exceeded the aggregate rate

for all Division I athletes. In spring 2023, student-athletes collectively set a new grade point average of 3.38.

[3.D.3]

Professional advising staff within departments/schools, University College, and the Honors Program provide undergraduate academic advising. First-year advising comes from University College and Honors advisors who are trained to match students' evolving educational objectives and potentials with appropriate majors. The total intake advising model has allowed Illinois State to provide FTICs with consistent and specialized services as they transition to college life. After students complete 24 credit hours and have a major, they are transitioned to the departments' professional advisors.

An ongoing challenge related to decentralizing undergraduate advising services is assuring high-quality, consistent services across advising units and clear communication among advisors. The Academic Advising Council (AAC) serves as a communication forum and a professional development facilitator. Its professional development sub-committee offers three half-day Advisor Days each year.

The AAC assessment sub-committee regularly evaluates advising practices' quality. Advising survey results regularly show students having a positive advising experience across campus and rating academic advising as good, very good, or excellent. In fall 2020, a survey assessed advising as COVID-19 moved campus services to remote primarily. These data were used to improve technology and provide quality virtual advising. The AAC uses information from assessments to continually improve academic advising across campus. For example, assessment showed that several high-enrollment programs on campus needed additional academic advisors. As a result, several advisors have been hired to meet the need.

In summer 2023, Illinois State launched a newly created position to address advising needs, the director of advising advocacy, innovation, and technology. This role works with all advisors on three areas: time to degree, advising practices, and technology and data analytics.

Faculty members serving as their units' graduate program coordinators typically advise graduate students. The Graduate School provides guidance to advisors through its *Graduate Coordinator Handbook*. Program coordinators meet several times each semester to coordinate graduate-level advising, and most students are assigned a faculty advisor to work with on their plan of study and culminating experience.

[3.D.4]

Through careful budgeting, strategic use of reserves and bonded indebtedness, private contributions, and public/private financing models, Illinois State has completed numerous facility and technology upgrades and maintained library services and resources.

Illinois State University's strategic plan and master plan articulate a vision for campus' physical development through new construction, renovation, and improvement of utilities infrastructure.

Capital improvement projects are designed to meet the needs identified in the strategic plan. The master facility plan guides capital improvement implementation. The Board of Trustees approved Illinois State's latest master plan, *Master Plan 2010-2030—Looking to The Future*, on February 18, 2011, and was provided the *Master Plan Update 2010-2030* on July 26, 2019.

Capital improvement funding from the state of Illinois between 2010 and 2015 was insufficient to meet Illinois State's needs. To address that lack of significant capital improvement funding since 2010, Illinois State has pursued an aggressive schedule of facility upgrades financed with general revenue, reserves, or proceeds from bond sales or developed through public-private partnerships.

Large-scale projects completed since 2019 or underway include two Capital Development Board (CDB) projects in construction: a Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts (WKCFA) Infrastructure Project and a \$7.9 million Fume Hood Replacement Project for the Science Laboratory Building. Illinois State has worked on the CDB-funded WKCFA Project since 2010, which has increased into a \$70 million project. In addition, Illinois State has been in the schematic design phase of the \$14 million CDB-funded Felmley Science Annex HVAC and Building Envelope Upgrade Project since 2022. Illinois State initiated and undertook significant capital projects during the summer of 2023: an \$18 million MCN Simulation Center Project, a \$9 million Renovation/Upgrade of the Center for the Visual Arts Rotunda Classrooms, a \$6.6 million DeGarmo Hall Plaza Restoration/Upgrade Project, a \$2.5 million Rachel Cooper Mechanical Upgrade Project, and a multi-million dollar University Farm Beef Barn Restoration Project. Illinois State is also in the early planning stages of a \$61 million building Renovation Project (to accommodate Phase 1 for the new College of Engineering) and a new \$60 million Science Building.

Since the 2019 review, the University has begun a multiphase, multiyear project to update the campus wired network, with an estimated 2025 completion. The additional requirements of augmented and virtual reality, streaming video, and physical security, such as cameras and monitoring, necessitate rebuilding the campus network for educational and operational growth. The University anticipates beginning a two-phase, two-year project to update the wireless network. Average campus users have two to three devices connected to the wireless network. This usage, combined with increased reliance on Wi-Fi-enabled devices for building automation and security, requires a robust wireless network scalable to demand.

The learning management system (LMS) is a core technology component of the learning environment. The University migrated from the decade-plus use of Sakai to a new, fully cloud-hosted solution utilizing Instructure's Canvas platform, allowing for better integration to campus systems, new video/distance learning features, and enhanced user experience. Select instructors piloted Canvas in spring 2023, instructors could choose Canvas or ReggieNet (Sakai) summer 2023, all courses moved to Canvas in fall 2023, and access to ReggieNet ended November 30, 2023.

Shifting to fully online learning in fall 2020 led to a need-based laptop loaning program for students. This program's success during the pandemic led to its continued execution, with fall 2023 being the program's fourth academic year.

The University is scheduled to complete a multiyear redesign of data center server architecture for applications hosted and managed on campus at the end of 2024. The expected benefits of this new hyper-converged environment include scalability, operational effectiveness, and sustainability. Other completed and in-progress technology initiatives since 2019 include migrating core enterprise resource planning tools to the cloud for availability/recovery initiatives, information security investments, transcript processing, augmented reality/virtual reality research and program supports, and redesigned identity and access management.

To fund technology and classroom space renovation backlogs, the Academic Enhancement Fee fund was created. These funds can be used for instructional equipment, course instruction technology, student furniture, or facility initiatives. Funds are requested annually during the annual budget request process for resources directly benefiting students' academic experience and are reserved for temporary (one-time) facility or technology requests. No facility requests should be submitted for spaces not highly utilized by students. All requests must include a rationale with the number of courses/students directly impacted by enhancement funds.

Milner Library provides faculty expertise and resources to support instruction and research in all academic programs. Library faculty subject specialists are assigned to work with academic units to facilitate integration of library resources and services into the curriculum and to ensure that resources purchased or licensed by the library are those most needed to support research, scholarship, and creative activities. Milner Library also supports University authors' scholarly publication needs by administering an institutional repository, hosting faculty-led open access journals, funding open access publishing through multiple agreements with scholarly publishers, and providing workshops and consultation. A student success librarian connects students with Milner Library's services and collection to further enhance their academic and personal success. Library faculty and staff members provide group and individualized library and information fluency instruction through class sessions, reference services (in-person, telephone, email, chat, and text), and research consultations. In FY22, program and library faculty delivered nearly 400 library instruction sessions, reaching over 7,500 students. The program review process evaluates collaboration between the library and departments/schools.

With more academic programs delivered in whole or part via distance education and in response to the pandemic, Milner Library continues to respond to student and faculty needs for timely access to library resources and services. Online research guides available on the library website are accessed more than 8,600 times per month. The library provides online access to 318 databases, 144,579 journals, and 731,658 e-books. Milner Library personnel have collaborated broadly to study the issue of textbook affordability and address it through an e-book licensing program that provides up to one-third of all assigned texts. Through the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois, Illinois State students and faculty have free access to almost 40 million print items, with daily delivery of materials to Illinois State or the member library closest to the patron. Milner Library provides online access to periodical literature through journal subscriptions, interlibrary loan (Tipasa), and on-demand, electronic delivery of materials in the Milner Library print collection. To offset the cancellation of low-use, niche journal subscriptions, necessitated by ever-rising subscription costs and stable budgets, the library leverages a paid document delivery service to get patrons articles electronically rapidly.

The Illinois State approach to teaching effective use of information resources involves collaboration between academic programs and library faculty in designing and implementing information use and fluency instruction. Discipline-specific research courses typically provide more advanced, discipline-specific information literacy training. The course instructor and library subject specialist often collaborate to deliver in-class training and may provide a research guide for the subject or course. The course instructor provides out-of-class guidance through office hours, and the librarian is available for one-on-one consultations. The library also provides research instruction through its reference services, typically delivered in person and via telephone, email, chat, and text eight to 12 hours daily.

Graduate students receive similar information literacy training through faculty/librarian collaboration. Many programs' incoming graduate students are oriented to the library at the beginning of the fall semester and receive information literacy instruction in research methods courses required in their program. Librarians offer instruction regarding copyright, journal selection and publication, source management, open access, and other issues to assist graduate students writing theses. The Graduate School, in partnership with Milner Library and other campus units, also provides guidance related to research and information literacy through its professional development workshops. Milner Library collaborates with the Graduate School, Office of Student Research, Visor Center (tutoring), University Centers, and other offices to support, promote, host, and disseminate students' scholarly and creative work.

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3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Summary

Illinois State University continues to provide a high-quality education for students enrolled in all programs. The University has well-established program review processes to monitor program quality and learning goal achievement. Just over half of all plans of study also maintain specialized accreditation. In addition, the University maintained its student-to-faculty ratio at 19-to-1 by allocating sufficient resources for instructional capacity, even with stable or declining financial support from the state. Since 2015, the University has refined its General Education Program to prepare students more effectively for success in their specialized programs and promote timely graduation.

The University continues its efforts to diversify programs and populations. The strategic plan outlines several initiatives to promote an inclusive environment for our increasingly diverse students, faculty, and staff population. Resources are available to support all students, faculty, and staff, including those from underrepresented groups.

Furthermore, the University continues its efforts to globalize the curriculum, internationalize the university population, and prepare students to be civically engaged after graduation. Faculty and students are actively engaged in scholarship and creative activities, with numerous programs available to support and showcase their successes.

Illinois State has well-established shared governance practices and policies to ensure sufficient faculty and staff are available to provide high-quality programs, faculty have the support they need for effective teaching, and appropriate curricular and co-curricular resources are available to support all students' success.

Sources

There are no sources.