

APPROVED

January 17, 2024



Dave Kelm
General Counsel

Item #E-2
January 17, 2024

MINUTES – BOARD MEETING
November 15, 2023

Submitted for: Action.

Summary: Minutes of the November 15, 2023, meeting of the Illinois Board of Higher Education held in person at the University of Illinois, Chicago, 828 South Wolcott, Chicago, Illinois, and via Zoom as permitted by the Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/7).

Action Requested: That the Illinois Board of Higher Education approve the minutes of the November 15, 2023, Board meeting.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

MINUTES – BOARD MEETING
November 15, 2023

A meeting of the Illinois Board of Higher Education was held in person at the University of Illinois, Chicago, 828 South Wolcott, Chicago, Illinois, and via Zoom as permitted by the Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/7). The meeting was recorded and an announcement to that effect was made by the Chair at the beginning of the meeting.

The following Board members were present in person: *Pranav Kothari, Chair, Sharon Bush, Jennifer Delaney, Andrea Evans, Jennifer Garrison, Veronica Herrero, Sylvia Jenkins, Sam Majka, Magnus Noble, Garth Walker, Clarence Wyatt, and Eric Zarnikow.*

The following Board members were present via videoconference: *Kenneth Walker.*

Others present in Chicago: Ms. Ginger Ostro, Illinois Board of Higher Education; Dr. Nkechi Onwuameze, Illinois Board of Higher Education; Dr. Eric Lichtenberger, Illinois Board of Higher Education; Mr. Jose Garcia, Illinois Board of Higher Education; Ms. Gloria Gibson, Illinois Board of Higher Education; Mr. David A. Kelm, Illinois Board of Higher Education, Ms. Ja'Neane Minor, Illinois Board of Higher Education.

Pursuant to the Illinois Open Meetings Act, a quorum was present in Chicago allowing for participation by videoconference. Additionally, all action items were recorded with roll call votes. The audio of the meeting was recorded and may be requested on the IBHE website.

A. Call to Order/Roll Call

- **Call Meeting to Order, Pranav Kothari**

Chair Pranav Kothari called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. Acting Board Secretary Kelm took roll call. A quorum was present.

A motion was made by Board Member Herrero and seconded by Board Member Delaney to allow Board Member Shaw to participate via WebEx. A roll call was taken, and the Motion was approved.

Opening Remarks by Chairman Kothari

Welcome to the November meeting of the Illinois Board of Higher Education at the University of Illinois Chicago. I'd like to thank UIC Chancellor Marie Miranda and all the folks at UIC for inviting us and for allowing us to hold today's board meeting here.

Today's meeting is bittersweet as we say goodbye and thank departing Board colleagues and welcome new members to the Board. First, I'd like to welcome our new members: Sharon Bush,

president of the Grand Victoria Foundation; Dr. Garth Walker, assistant professor at RUSH and the senior Medical Director for RUSH Health; Sam Majka, student at Illinois State University; and Magnus Noble, student at John Logan Community College. Welcome! We're thrilled to have each of you on the Board. I'll have some words for departing members later on in my remarks.

As I'm sure many of you have heard by now – freshmen enrollment at the state's public universities increased for the third year in a row, and total undergraduate enrollment increased for the first time in several years. Most notable, though, are the increases in African American and Latino student enrollment compared to national data.

Enrollment of African American freshmen increased by 2.9 percent in, and African American undergraduate enrollment was up 0.5 percent year-over-year in Illinois. This is in stark contrast to the national decrease of 5.1 percent for African American freshmen and a decrease of 0.4 percent for African American undergraduate enrollment. Latino freshmen enrollment in Illinois increased by a robust 6.9 percent while it decreased by a sizeable 6.3 percent nationally. And Latino undergraduate enrollment increased 4.1 percent year-over-year at Illinois public universities compared the 2.5 percent increase at the national level.

Now to enrollment at the Illinois Community College System – there's good news here, too! Enrollment at community colleges increased for the second straight year. The fall 2022 to fall 2023 increase of 5.7 percent is the second largest Fall-to-Fall enrollment growth in the last 30 years and was higher than the 4.4 percent increase at the national level. Only the fall 2008 to fall 2009 increase of 7.4 percent during the Great Recession was higher.

Closing enrollment equity gaps for historically disadvantaged students is the core focus of state's strategic plan for higher education. Data like these tell us that statewide strategies like efforts to simplify admissions processes through the Common App and the governor's commitment to affordability through investment in MAP grants are making an impact.

Over the past few weeks, I participated in meetings of both the National College Attainment Network and Midwestern Higher Education Compact. A reminder from both experiences is for us to not stop at enrollment. As we have seen many times, enrollment increases do not automatically translate into commensurate growth in persistence and timely degree and credential attainment. Our collective work should continue to ensure students from every background can succeed in higher education and complete a degree or credential that will help them thrive in Illinois. My other major takeaway is to ensure we in Illinois continue to learn from our neighbors near and far as so many states are working to drive the similar outcomes. Our ability to connect nationally will ultimately benefit our work in Illinois and contribute to population-level improvement in outcomes.

Before moving to the next item on the agenda, I'd like to say thank you to Board Member Professor Jennifer Delaney for her service to the students and families of Illinois as she steps down from the Board. We wish you well.

I'd also like to thank departing student board members Isiah Overton and Emmanuel Segbedzi – your input as students was invaluable. We wish you the best of luck as you enter the workforce as recent college graduates.

Lastly, I'd like to thank John Atkinson for his service and dedication to Illinois students and families. John recently stepped down as Chair of the IBHE. I'm looking forward to continuing working closely with you in your role as Chairman of Intersect Illinois.

Carrying on from John's leadership, my priorities are quite simple and mirror several areas discussed in our retreat earlier today. First, I am eager to build on A Thriving Illinois with a set of shared progress indicators, so we know the degree to which we are fulfilling the plan and = where we need to focus and improve. Next, we know that progress on these strategies and outcomes is not individual work. The plan was developed in collaboration with an array of stakeholders which means its execution also relies on the work of so many. We all have a role in driving shared outcomes, and it is important that we are explicit about this. Finally, and again to our last topic during the retreat, I am eager to ensure this board is doing what it can to support our incredible IBHE team and that the IBHE team has the resources it needs to succeed.

There's lots of exciting and important work going on. Thank you to our partners, stakeholders, and the staff at IBHE for making it all happen.

Welcome and Overview

Provost Karen Colley, UIC, provided welcoming remarks and highlights of work at UIC.

She noted that UIC is proud of the work they have done to close equity gaps at a major research university. UIC is designated Research 1, the highest research level, is also a Minority Serving Institution, and Hispanic Serving Institution and an Asian American, Native American, Pacific Islander Serving Institution. She noted that 56 percent of the students are Pell eligible. They had the largest fall cohort and the largest Black first year enrollment this fall. They adopted enrollment management strategies to reach prospective students early, accelerated scholarship notification so that it comes with admission letters. AIM HIGH has played an important role, as well. They have implemented a housing grant to decrease the cost of housing. As a result, they have also seen Asian American enrollment increase 10 percent and Latino enrollment by 7 percent.

She noted additional areas of focus, including increasing Black student enrollment, increase graduation rates to 85 percent, close gaps in graduation rates. Additional strategies include increasing students' sense of belonging and providing additional support services. Academic/learning support includes the summer college, which provides college readiness work, tuition free. Their leadership program – including coaching and a stipend – has led to 2,400 students showing increase in outcomes, with 88% of the students being first generation; 92 percent Pell; and 92 percent from underrepresented groups. She also noted that students' sense of belonging begins in the classroom and that faculty grants are available to build inclusive programming.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Ginger Ostro, IBHE, provided her report to the Board. She also thanked the UIC team which has been amazing in arranging the Board's events, noting that they managed multiple meetings and didn't say "no" to any requests. Ostro then went on to highlight progress and work underway:

Housing and Basic Needs Insecurity (led by Ashley Lewis). IBHE recently awarded nearly \$1.8 million in grants to ten public and private institutions to address and basic needs insecurity. This is the second year of grants and are excited with the interest and applications.

Equity Plan Framework (led by Ja'Neane Minor at IBHE and Jennifer Foster at ICCB). The framework was released to institutions last week and provides a way for institutions to describe their individualized path to closing equity gaps in enrollment, persistence, completion, and student loan repayment rates for students of color, low-income students, working adults, rural students, individuals with disabilities and other underrepresented groups. Ostro noted that the Equity Plan has four major components:

- Institutional vision
- Data
- Campus Climate assessment
- Actions and Outcomes: Policies, Strategies, Services, and Practices

Trustee Leadership Conference (led by Ja'Neane Minor). IBHE held the annual leadership conference for public university trustees which included an update on *A Thriving Illinois* implementation; an overview of the Equity Planning process; and Legal Guideposts and Guardrails. Trustees have an opportunity to interact and learn from peers at other institutions.

Transfer Summit. Illinois was one of 11 states invited to attend a Summit held by the U.S. Department of Education on Transfer Student Success. Illinois fielded a team of ten people from IBHE, ICCB, community colleges, and public universities. Ostro noted that she was invited to present on a plenary panel on scaling transfer policies and practices. The team attended multiple break-out sessions and worked together to discuss opportunities for Illinois.

Transfer Success. At the Summit, the U.S. Department of Education announced they will be regularly releasing data on transfer student success. Illinois was tied with New Jersey for first in the country with 56 percent of community college students who transferred to 4 year institutions completing within eight years of starting at the community college. Illinois also tied for fifth with 29 percent of students who start at community colleges transferring to a four-year institution within eight years.

B. Presentations

- Public University Presidents Advisory Committee (President Z Scott, Chicago State University); and
- Community College Presidents: David Sam, Elgin Community College, President Keith Cornille, Heartland Community College)

President Scott opened her remarks by noting that public universities are an investment and all 12 public universities have an access mission. Enrollment in recent years has increased at rates above national trends because of budget increases, including MAP. However, she noted that the aging infrastructure and deferred maintenance impacts the ability to support students. Rebuild Illinois projects are underway and she urged that they be completed quickly. Work on equity is a priority for the public universities. At Chicago State, their Center will connect Black communities to higher education. Southern Illinois University recently hosted their second Equity Symposium. She emphasized that the public universities will lead on equity. Many have already started work on the

Equity Plans and Practices process. She echoed the goal of A Thriving Illinois, noting that the future of Illinois' growth depends on higher education close gaps. That requires continued investment and reversing outmigration.

President Cornille opened on behalf of the Community College presidents. He noted the increase in community college enrollment this fall and that it exceeded national rates. Community colleges are accessible, equitable, and affordable, providing training, professional development, and transfer opportunities. Career and Technical Education program enrollment grew 10.4 percent. He highlighted that Illinois is a national leader in transfer to four-year institutions after community colleges. The Illinois Articulation Initiative is an important part of that. He highlighted the Presidents' priorities, which include funding operations; distribution of capital funding; maintaining local control of community colleges; strengthening transfer and articulation. He noted there is a task force of presidents, chief academic officers, student services officers reviewing transfer and proposing language to improve transfer and articulation. He spoke about equity gaps in transfer, as well as the partnerships around transfer. He noted community college roles in meeting workforce needs, supporting degrees for returning adults who are place-bound, and efforts to secure funding to transform the manufacturing workforce. He also spoke about the need to expand competency-based education to reduce time to completion. He also spoke about the work underway to meet the state requirements for Equity Plans.

President Sam spoke about the partnership between Elgin and the U of I system to promote the U of I transfer guarantee and transfer partnerships.

Chair Kothari asked the panel what was working for transfer. President Scott emphasized the CSU articulation with City Colleges of Chicago as a system and collaboration relationships and pathway agreements with other schools, such as the supply chain pathway with Oliver Harvey. She also said transfer scholarships were important, as well as students understanding access – clear transfer paths. Dr. Cornille noted that the strongest asset is collaboration. There are also barriers that institutions don't control but can influence. Dr. Sam highlighted a partnership with Northern Illinois University to offer Bachelor's in teacher preparation on the Elgin campus as an example of collaboration and making it easier for students to complete.

Board member Walker asked about the intentionality of serving minority students with a focus on connecting them to high demand careers/preparation for the workforce. President Scott agreed and noted that the state needs to be mindful of the decrease in Black enrollment and the student experience; that intentional work is needed on belonging, financial aid, financial support, internships, housing. She noted that corporate partnerships are important to drive strong first jobs for graduates. Dr. Cornille spoke about the Workforce Equity Initiative with its laser-focus on underserved students.

C. Public Comment

Chair Kothari asked General Counsel Kelm if any member of the public in person or on-line had requested time to address the Board. General Counsel Kelm indicated that several members of the public requested time to address the Board.

- Catherine Main, UIC, spoke in support of ECACE;
- Shawn Schumacher, Faculty Advisory Committee, commented on prior learning credits;
- Jennifer Juarez, Latino Policy Forum, spoke in support of ECACE;
- Linda Ruhe March, ISU, spoke in support of ECACE;

- Jelani Saadiq, Advance Illinois, spoke in support of university funding, teacher education funding, and ECACE;
- Angela Farwig, Illinois Action for Children, spoke in support of ECACE;
- Stacy Tolar, Illinois Action for Children, spoke in support of ECACE;
- Raven Stewart, Illinois Action for Children, spoke in support of ECACE;
- Peter Alemis, Family Dental Care, spoke in support of Midwest Career College's Hygiene Program;
- Terri Legno, Oral Care Center, spoke in support of Midwest Career College's Hygiene Program; and
- Inna Dolzhenko, CSU, spoke in support of ECACE.

D. Action Items

1. Consideration and Approval of New Units of Instruction at Public Community Colleges (Dr. Nkechi Onwuameze)

Dr. Nkechi Onwuameze presented new associate degree programs at community colleges. These programs have all been previously approved by the Illinois Community College Board and meet the needs of regional employers. The section on "Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Efforts" provides highlights about each college's plans to close equity gaps in the proposed program. This content aligns with strategies outlined in the higher education strategic plan, "A Thriving Illinois."

- Rend Lake College is seeking approval for a Digital Agriculture Associate of Applied Science program. The program will prepare graduates in the field of digital agriculture and provide a continuing educational ladder opportunity for students completing the College's recently approved Digital Agriculture Certificate.
- South Suburban College and Waubensee Community College are seeking approval for a Cybersecurity Associate of Applied Science. Graduates of the proposed curriculum will be prepared for industry credentialing in the cybersecurity field, including CompTIA Certifications.
- Southwestern Illinois College requests approval for a Geospatial and Aeronautical Associate of Applied Science program. The proposed program is designed to train students on geospatial and aeronautical information technology to make informed use of existing applications, and to gain skills necessary to construct new applications. The program will provide a continued educational ladder opportunity for students completing the College's recently approved GIS and AIS Certificates.
- Spoon River College is seeking approval for an Early Childhood Education Associate of Applied Science program. The program was developed using Illinois Network for Child Care Referral Agencies and will prepare individuals for various Gateways to Opportunity credentials.

Board Member Jenkins moved to approve the new associate degree programs. Board Member Zarnikow seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved unanimously.

2. Consideration and Approval of Program Modification for Illinois Eastern Community College District #529 (Dr. Nkechi Onwuameze)

- This item requests that all prior program approvals issued by the Board to Frontier College, Lincoln Trail College, Olney Central College, and Wabash Valley College be amended to state that the approvals were given to Illinois Eastern Community College District #529. Illinois Eastern Community College District was originally approved as a Class 1 community college district, with branch campuses and regionally accredited as a district. Upon approval, new program requests from District #529 will be from Illinois Eastern Community College District #529 and not from any one of its individual campuses.

Board Member Evans moved to approve the two programs. Board Member Garrison seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Consideration and Approval of New Units of Instruction, Public Service, and Research at Public Universities (Dr. Nkechi Onwuameze)

Dr. Onwuameze sought approval from five new degree programs and eight new administrative units at four public universities.

- Illinois State University is seeking authorization to offer a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering; Bachelor of Science in Engineering; Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering and to establish the School of Creative Technologies in the Central Region. The College of Engineering and respective Departments will seek regional and national industry partnerships to provide graduates with opportunities for applied research and innovation. The proposed engineering programs are designed to expose students with core engineering discipline through the study and application of the principles of engineering to a broad range of systems and will help meet the need for engineer professionals in the State. The proposed School of Creative Technology will serve as an administrative structure for the Creative Technologies program and will house Creative Technologies programs at the undergraduate and master's level.
- Southern Illinois University Carbondale is seeking authorization to offer a Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity Technology and a Bachelor of Science in Statistics in the Southern Region. The Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity Technology program is designed to provide foundation in technical, communication, and applied problem-solving skills and will prepare graduates for employments in cybersecurity, networking, information assurance, and information technology fields. The proposed Bachelor of Science in Statistics will provide students with training on statistical applications, statistical computations, and data skills to prepare graduates for a career as professional statisticians.
- University of Illinois Chicago is requesting authorization to establish the Center for Population Health, Health Equity, Health Outcomes and Health Informatics Research in the Central Region and the Institute for Healthcare Delivery Design in the Chicago Region. Both units will serve as administrative structures for healthcare delivery and implementation.

- The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign is seeking authorization to establish the Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment; Center for Global Studies; Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies; Center for Women and Gender in Global Perspectives; and the Illinois Global Institute in the Prairie Region. All centers are established and seeking permanent Board approval.

Board Member Herrero moved to approve the program. Board Member Noble seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

4. Consideration and Approval of New Operating and/or Degree Granting Authority for Independent Institutions (Dr. Nkechi Onwuameze)

Dr. Onwuameze requested approval for two associate degrees at one private, for-profit institution.

- Midwestern Career College requests authorization to offer the Associate of Applied Science in Dental Hygiene in the South Metro Region and the Associate of Applied Science in Diagnostic Medical Sonography in the West Suburban Region. Midwestern Career College currently holds a permit to operate as a private business and vocational school and is approved to offer Diagnostic Medical Sonography in the Chicago region. The proposed Associate of Applied Science in Dental Hygiene will prepare graduates for entry-level positions as licensed dental hygienists. The College has established institutional and third-party scholarships of up to \$335,270 as of 2022-2023 academic year that help make educational programs affordable for students – 90% of whom are working adults. Additional support is provided through advising sessions, personal and career counseling, and academic tutoring.

Discussion ensued regarding the cost of the program.

Board Member Zarnikow moved to approve the program. Board Member Garrison seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed with 11 voting to approve and 1 abstention.

E. Consent Agenda Action Items

- 1. Consideration and Approval of Board Minutes – August 16, 2023.**
- 2. Consideration and Approval of Funds Transfer to the Illinois Math and Science Academy.**

Board Member Majka moved to approve both items on the Consent Agenda. Board Member Herrero seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved unanimously.

F. Resolutions and Recognition

Chairman Kothari recognized four IBHE board members for their service. Board Member Shaw moved and Board Member Herrero seconded approval of the resolutions. Roll was taken and the resolutions were approved unanimously.

G. Presentations and Discussion

The Board heard from Discovery Partners Institution and the Illinois Innovation Network, Jay Walsh, Vice-President, Economic Development and Innovation, University of Illinois, Kyle Harfst, Executive Director, Illinois Innovation Network, Jennette Tamayo, Associate Vice-President for Workforce Development & Community Engagement, University of Illinois, and Bill Jackson, Executive Director of Discovery Partners Institute.

H. Other Business

The next Board meeting will be held Wednesday, January 17, 2024, at Loyola University Chicago. Additional details about the meeting and agenda will be posted on the IBHE website.

L. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, on motion of Board Member Jenkins and seconded by Member Delaney, a roll call vote was taken, and by unanimous vote, the meeting adjourned at approximately 3:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by David A. Kelm, Acting Secretary to the Board and General Counsel.