

APPROVED
June 26, 2024

Melissa Bealon
Board Secretary Melissa Bealon

Item #H-1
June 26, 2024

MINUTES – BOARD MEETING
March 13, 2024

Submitted for: Action.

Summary: Minutes of the March 13, 2024, meeting of the Illinois Board of Higher Education held in person at Monmouth College, Poling Hall, 700 East Broadway, Monmouth, IL 61462, the Bilandic Building, 160 N La Salle St, Chicago, IL, the Vandalia CUSD #203, 1109 North 8th Street Vandalia, IL and online 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 March 13, 2024, Board meeting.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

MINUTES – BOARD MEETING
March 13, 2024

A meeting of the Illinois Board of Higher Education was held in person at Monmouth College, Poling Hall, 700 East Broadway, Monmouth, IL 61462, the Bilandic Building, 160 N La Salle St, Chicago, IL, the Vandalia CUSD #203, 1109 N. 8th St. Vandalia, IL and online 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, Magnus Noble, Kenneth Shaw, and Clarence Wyatt.

Others present in person: Ms. Ginger Ostro, Illinois Board of Higher Education; Dr. Nkechi Onwuameze, Illinois Board of Higher Education; Dr. Glenda Gallisath, Illinois Board of Higher Education; Mr. Jose Garcia, Illinois Board of Higher Education; Mr. David A. Kelm, Illinois Board of Higher Education, and Ms. Melissa Bealon, Illinois Board of Higher Education.

Board members present in Chicago: Vice-Chair Veronica Herrero, Sylvia Jenkins, Andrea Evans, and Eric Zarnikow.

Others present in Chicago: Gloria Gibson, Chief Financial Officer, Illinois Board of Higher Education

Board members present in Vandalia CUSD #203: Jennifer Garrison

Pursuant to the Illinois Open Meetings Act, a quorum was present in the Monmouth, Chicago and Vandalia locations. 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 approximately 1:10 p.m. The Chair announced the new Board Secretary, Melissa Bealon. Board Secretary Bealon took roll call. A quorum was present.

Opening Remarks by Chairman Kothari

Welcome to the March meeting of the Illinois Board of Higher Education. I'd like to thank Monmouth College President and Board Member Dr. Clarence Wyatt and the rest of the team here at Monmouth for inviting us and for allowing us to hold today's meeting here.

Just three weeks ago, Governor JB Pritzker outlined his administration's priorities for the next fiscal year in his state of the state and budget address. His proposed budget includes 2.55 billion dollars for higher education in fiscal year 2025 – a 10 million dollar increase for the Monetary Award Program or MAP, a 24.6 million dollar increase for public universities, and a 5.9 million dollar increase for community colleges.

The governor's budget builds on the historic funding of higher education over the last several years. Fiscal year 2024's higher education budget included the largest investment and the largest increase in higher education in two decades. The historic increases in MAP over the last five years have made significant inroads in affordability – increasing the size and expanding the number of grants for students from low-income households statewide.

Continuing to build on historic higher education investments from the last several years is crucial in helping remove barriers and ensuring all students have equitable access to a higher education in Illinois. We are hopeful the General Assembly passes the governor's recommended budget so that we can continue the work outlined in the state's higher education strategic plan meant to close equity gaps.

Now to some exciting news that I'm sure some of you have heard by now – the IBHE was awarded a 750-thousand-dollar grant by the Lumina Foundation to implement, in collaboration with the Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, a direct admissions program for community college students transferring to public universities and recent high school graduates. Executive Director Ginger Ostro will speak in more detail about this great news in a few minutes.

I want to talk briefly now about another piece of news you might have already heard about. On March 1, the Illinois Commission on Equitable Public University Funding submitted its recommendations report to the Illinois General Assembly. The Commission worked since November 2021 to develop a funding formula that will ensure institutions receive funds needed to support the diverse needs of their student bodies and remove barriers to student access and success.

Some key components of the formula are that it:

- Determines for each institution a unique funding level based on its students' needs, mission, and variety of programs;
- Encourages greater access and success for historically underrepresented students;
- Provides a funding increase to every institution when new dollars are invested;
- Ensures institutions have flexibility to invest in ways that best serve their students;
- Incentivizes institutions to reduce reliance on student tuition with increased state investment;
- Distributes new funding through an equity allocation; and
- Calls for transparency and increasing accountability as institutions get closer to adequate funding.

More on this at the June meeting. You can download the full report on IBHE's website – ibhe.org.

With the funding commission's recommendations now in the hands of the general assembly, the board is now focused on developing an accountability, learning, and improvement framework

for *A Thriving Illinois*, the state's higher education strategic plan. I have had a chance to talk 1:1 with nearly all of our IBHE board members over the past month and there is a clear consensus that as a board we are eager to better understand the progress we are making on key strategies within *A Thriving Illinois*, have an opportunity to discuss areas where we may be lagging, and inform how best to ensure the plan remains current over the coming years. I'll be working with Executive Director Ostro to layout an approach to developing this framework over the coming months, informed by our stakeholders, and expect to be able to share that plan at our June 2024 meeting. Based on feedback from the board, we will also begin implementing some structural changes to these meetings to ensure we have more opportunities for board engagement around the state's most critical higher education topics.

Finally, I would like to thank our partners, stakeholders, and the staff at IBHE for advancing so much important work statewide.

Next let me welcome Monmouth College President and IBHE Board Member Clarence Wyatt to offer remarks.

Welcome and Overview

Clarence Wyatt, President Monmouth College and IBHE Board Member, provided welcoming remarks. He expressed Monmouth was honored to host the Board and highlight their student-centered institution.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Ginger Ostro provided a brief report which included an overview of the Lumina Grant from the Lumina Foundation. She stated it was part of a national competition called the "Great Admissions Redesign Program." Awards were given based on innovative ways to simplify and strengthen the admissions process.

IBHE's submission was based on two points of interest.

Collectively, IBHE, ISAC (Illinois Student Assistance Commission) and ICCB (Illinois Community College Board) decided to focus on what could be done to simplify the admissions process for transfer students as well as students coming directly from high school. Because Illinois has a great infrastructure in place, it was easy to use existing programs like the Public University Uniform Admissions Pilot Program to build upon with the end goal being Direct Admissions.

Currently, the Public University Uniform Admissions Pilot Program guarantees admission to the top ten percent of a high school class to any of four public universities and the University of Illinois who implemented the program this past year. Legislation expanded last spring to include guaranteed admission for transfer students from Illinois community colleges who meet certain criteria. Having this solid foundation to build upon allows for the expansion of other institutions to participate in the guarantee of admissions, focusing on the transfer student population. Creating awareness about guaranteed admissions among the student population is also a goal.

Further development of the Common App is also part of the grant work to be completed. All public universities and many private institutions use the app for freshman college applications.

The goal is to expand participation to transfer students and create a mechanism of communication within the app that promotes or initiates awareness about the guaranteed admissions program. This work takes another step towards Direct Admissions. Illinois was one of three states Lumina funded with an implementation grant. The grant work will take place over the next twenty-four months.

Ms. Ostro then gave an update on the status of the Equity Plan. She stated on March 1st all the public universities and community colleges (received February 29th) received data that provides a statewide overview of equity, enrollment, retention, and completion. Additionally, each institution received customized data related to each institution to help build their equity plan. Base line plans are due May 31st for all public institutions.

Vice-Chair Herrero inquired if input would be sought from two- and four-year institutions as work moves forward on the Lumina Grant. Executive Director Ostro indicated there is a working group with two- and four-year institution members.

B. Presentations

What role can higher education play in supporting and strengthening rural communities? What challenges and opportunities do we have?

- [Dr. Chris Merrett, Dean for Innovation and Economic Development and Director, Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Western Illinois University](#)

During his presentation, Dr. Merrett highlighted the relationship between Illinois' changing demographics and economic development. He emphasized that rural communities in Illinois face several challenges, including an ageing population, depopulation, youth outmigration, limited education access, and workforce development issues. In many rural areas, a prevailing 'psychology of decline' has developed due to decades of population loss.

To address these challenges, Dr. Merrett suggests shifting the conversation from needs to asset-based community development. By adopting this approach, rural communities can transform and begin to thrive.

Specifically, he pointed out the importance of higher education in downstate Illinois. While innovative academic programs are necessary, they alone cannot sustain population growth and improve quality of life. To stabilize rural communities, macro-scale policies are essential. Dr. Merrett also emphasized that higher education plays a crucial role in economic and demographic development.

The state should actively market to students, utilizing a similar approach to businesses. Recruiting and retaining students assertively can contribute to a positive outcome.

Lastly, Dr. Merrett advocated for funding equity over funding equality, recognizing that different communities have varying needs and resources.

- [Dr. Tamara Laprad, Associate Professor and Co-Chair of Educational Studies, Monmouth College on Rural Education Initiatives \(REDI\)](#)

Dr. La Prad discussed the work being done to overcome students' disinterest in education as

a career choice. One reason given is the narrative they hear about teachers. Dr. La Prad stated they are working with the Rural Schools Collaborative to change the narrative. Specifically, the Rural Teacher Corps with the goal to change their teaching philosophy/framework so teachers can counter the negative narratives.

Financial considerations are crucial because as we know, rural teachers are not usually paid very well. The minimum salary requirement is helpful; however, students will still have a large debt burden to carry. Grant appropriations, scholarships, stipends, etc. are helpful for students and administration to offset the cost of their degree. Monmouth is very appreciative of the funding it receives.

Dr. La Prad went on to say that Monmouth has numerous programs engaging with the local community. The community is considered a classroom with community impact projects.

She asserted that rural schools have seen little change since she was a student. To transform the perception of “rural”, we must reimagine how students engage with their communities, treating the community itself as a classroom.

- [Dr. Mark Willhardt, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty, Monmouth College](#)

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Rural healthcare faces a critical shortage of qualified, skilled nurses. Monmouth College and the Order of St. Francis have partnered together to offer an innovative dual-degree program to address this crisis, the Monmouth-OSF 3+1 Nursing Program. The Monmouth-OSF 3+1 Nursing Program consists of three years for a Monmouth College Bachelor of Arts or science degree and one more for a Bachelor of Science in nursing degree from OSF. All four years will be spent on the Monmouth campus. Graduates of the program will be ready to pursue their careers in healthcare and serve a vital need in the region.

C. Advisory Committee Presentation

- [Student Advisory Committee, Samiha Syed, SAC Chair and Senior, Benedictine University](#)

The Student Advisory Committee is committed to collaborating with the Illinois Board of Higher Education to champion and advance the vision of A Thriving Illinois, while also enhancing the student experience. A summary of their presentation is below. A video is available for viewing at the link above.

Enhancing equity and mitigating barriers to higher education is key. This can include promoting equity and removing barriers to higher education, resource accessibility, equitable access to resources, ensuring at-risk students have targeted support systems to serve them. Facilitating seamless transitions for community colleges students transferring to 4-year institutions within Illinois.

Leverage IBHE support to organize events like statewide symposiums, opportunities to learn more about the higher education climate, and share concerns. In the future, SAC would like to discuss a potential collaboration with the Governor’s office and other state leaders of higher education to facilitate direct communication issues and open dialogue focusing on the retention of students and improvement of state colleges and universities in Illinois. Initiatives

include symposiums, competitions, policy seminars, town halls, and youth civic engagement conferences.

DEI and Mental Health Initiatives include advocating for accessible healthcare services, counselling, peer support groups, promoting diversity in hiring practices, workshops and awareness campaigns.

SAC advocates for comprehensive support of basic needs. This includes an emphasis on mental health, DEI and student empowerment initiatives. Advocating for the overall student well-being, affordability, and improved resource awareness through collaboration (when and where possible.) Recognizing the fundamental human rights of worship and religious practices.

D. Public Comment

Chair Kothari asked Secretary Bealon if any member of the public in person or on-line had requested time to address the Board. Secretary Bealon indicated that one member of the public requested time to address the Board.

- Teri Hockett, Coding Temple, inquired about the status of a new unit of instruction.

E. Action Items

Dr. Onwuameze presented the staff recommendations for community college approvals, including the following:

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

Danville Area Community College is seeking approval for a 67-credit hour Associate of Applied Science in Diagnostic Medical Sonography. The curriculum includes 16 credit hours of required general education coursework, 35 credit hours of required career and technical education coursework, and 16 credit hours in diagnostic medical sonography clinical practice. This excludes 12 credit hours of general education pre-requisite coursework in anatomy and physiology, and physical science. The curriculum was developed according to standards developed by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP)-Joint Review Committee on education in Diagnostic Medical Sonography (JRC-DMS) to prepare graduates for necessary credentialing as a Registered Diagnostic Medical Sonography (RDMS) through the American Registry of Diagnostic Medical Sonography (ARDMS) or for the national certification exam in diagnostic medical sonography through the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT). The program focuses on the DMS abdominal and obstetrics/gynecology specialty areas. There are policies in place to ensure faculty members possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to provide instruction in the proposed program. The College has sufficient library, technology, staff, and financial resources in place to support the proposed program.

Danville Area Community College is seeking approval for a 64-credit hour Associate of Applied Science in Echocardiography. The curriculum includes 15 credit hours of required

general education, 28 credit hours of required career and technical education coursework, and 21 credit hours in echocardiography clinical practice. This excludes 16 credit hours of general education, 3 prerequisite coursework in anatomy and physiology, mathematical foundations, and physical science. The curriculum was developed according to standards developed by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP)-Joint Review Committee on education in Diagnostic Medical Sonography (JRC-DMS) to prepare graduates for national certification through the American Registry of Diagnostic Medical Sonography (ARDMS) or Cardiovascular Credentialing International (CCI). This program focuses on the DMS adult cardiac specialty. There are policies in place to ensure faculty members possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to provide instruction in the proposed program. The College has sufficient library, technology, staff, and financial resources in place to support the proposed program.

Harper College is seeking approval for a 60-credit hour Associate of Applied Science in Cybersecurity. The curriculum includes 15 credit hours of required general education, and 45 credit hours of required career and technical coursework. Graduates of the proposed curricula will be prepared for various industry credentialing including CompTIA ITF+, Network+, Linux+, Security+, Cloud+, PenTest+, Project+, Microsoft Administering Windows Server Hybrid Core Infrastructure, ISACA CISM, EC-Council CHFI, Microsoft 365 Administrator, and ISC2 SSCP certifications. Assessment of student learning for each program will be achieved through evaluation of the student's performance completing a comprehensive final project during the capstone course by program faculty. There are policies in place to ensure faculty members possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to provide instruction in the proposed program. The College has sufficient library, technology, staff, and financial resources in place to support the proposed program.

McHenry County College is seeking approval for a 60-credit hour Associate of Applied Science in Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning. The curriculum includes 15 credit hours of required general education, and 45 credit hours of required career and technical coursework. Assessment of student learning will be achieved through evaluation of a comprehensive final project by program faculty. The proposed degree provides an educational ladder opportunity for students and graduates of the College's existing nine HVAC-related Certificate programs. There are policies in place to ensure faculty members possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to provide instruction in the proposed program. The College has sufficient library, technology, staff, and financial resources in place to support the proposed program.

McHenry County College is seeking approval for a 60-credit hour Associate of Applied Science in Horticulture. The curriculum includes 16 credit hours of required general education, 28 4 credit hours of required career and technical coursework, and 16 credit hours in related technical electives. Assessment of student learning will be achieved through evaluation of a comprehensive final project by program faculty. The proposed degree provides an educational ladder opportunity for students and graduates of the College's existing Horticulture Basics, Advanced Horticulture, and Floral Design Certificate programs. There are policies in place to ensure faculty members possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to provide instruction in the proposed program.

The College has sufficient library, technology, staff, and financial resources in place to support the proposed program.

McHenry County College is seeking approval for a 60-credit hour Associate of Applied Science in Software Application Design and Development. The curriculum includes 15 credit hours of required general education, 27 credit hours of required career and technical coursework, six credit hours of work-based learning, and 12 credit hours of related technical electives. Graduates of the proposed curricula will be prepared for optional industry credentialing in web development, iOS development, Android development, and Python development. Assessment of student learning for both programs will be achieved through evaluation of the student's performance during the capstone project/internship by program faculty or worksite supervisor. There are policies in place to ensure faculty members possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to provide instruction in the proposed program. The College has sufficient library, technology, staff, and financial resources in place to support the proposed program.

McHenry County College is seeking approval for a 60-credit hour Associate of Applied Science in Welding and Fabrication. The curriculum includes 15 credit hours of required general education, and 45 credit hours of required career and technical coursework. Assessment of student learning will be achieved through evaluation of a comprehensive final project by program faculty. The proposed degree provides an educational ladder opportunity for students and graduates of the College's existing five welding-related certificate programs. There are policies in place to ensure faculty members possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to provide instruction in the proposed program. The College has sufficient library, technology, staff, and financial resources in place to support the proposed program.

Moraine Valley Community College is seeking approval for a 62-credit hour Associate of Applied Science in Diagnostic Medical Sonography. The curriculum includes 16 credit hours of required general education, 36 credit hours of required career and technical coursework and 10 credit hours in diagnostic medical sonography clinical practice. The curriculum was developed according to standards outlined by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP)-Joint Review Committee on education in Diagnostic Medical Sonography (JRC-DMS) to prepare graduates for necessary credentialing as a Registered Diagnostic Medical Sonography (RDMS) through the American Registry of Diagnostic Medical Sonography (ARDMS) or 5 for the national certification exam in diagnostic medical sonography through the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT). Assessment of student learning will be achieved through evaluation of the student's performance during their clinical learning experience and through a practice registration exam. There are policies in place to ensure faculty members possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to provide instruction in the proposed program. The College has sufficient library, technology, staff, and financial resources in place to support the proposed program.

Sauk Valley Community College is seeking approval for a 77-credit hour Associate of Applied Science in Diagnostic Medical Sonography. The curriculum includes 22 credit hours of required general education, 42 credit hours of required career and technical coursework and 13 credit hours in diagnostic medical sonography clinical practice. The

curriculum was developed according to standards developed by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP)-Joint Review Committee on education in Diagnostic Medical Sonography (JRC-DMS) to prepare graduates for necessary credentialing as a Registered Diagnostic Medical Sonography (RDMS) through the American Registry of Diagnostic Medical Sonography (ARDMS) or for the national certification exam in diagnostic medical sonography through the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT). Assessment of student learning will be achieved through evaluation of the student's performance during their clinical learning experience and through a practice registration exam. There are policies in place to ensure faculty members possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to provide instruction in the proposed program. The College has sufficient library, technology, staff, and financial resources in place to support the proposed program.

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

Moving to the next item, Dr. Onwuameze presented the staff recommendations for public university approvals, including the following:

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

Illinois State University (ISU or the University) is seeking authorization to offer a Master of Science in Physics in the Central Region. The proposed program will be housed in the College of Arts and Sciences within the Department of Physics. As Illinois State University becomes a more comprehensive university that includes engineering and other science disciplines, the proposed program will expand ISU's interdisciplinary offerings and contribute to the growth of the physics department. The Master of Science in Physics program will require a minimum of 30 credit hours and prepare students to apply concepts of nanotechnology, optics and photonics, biology, and material science to create devices and systems that address societal challenges. The proposed program will produce physics graduates who will meet the needs of Illinois employers seeking well trained STEM professionals thereby diversifying the STEM workforce and contributing to the state and regional tax base. Furthermore, a key aspiration of the proposed program is to become a leader and an exemplar in equity, diversity, and inclusion by recruiting and retaining a diverse pool of student, faculty, and administrator candidates which will mitigate opportunity gaps in underserved communities and promote workforce development and investments in infrastructure in urban and rural settings.

Board Member Jenkins moved to approve the new program of instruction. Board Member Noble seconded the motion. A roll call was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Moving to the last item, Dr. Onwuameze presented the staff recommendations for Independent Institutions which includes the following:

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

Trillium University submitted an application to the IBHE for operating authority in the Chicago Region on January 24, 2023. Trillium University is a for-profit postsecondary institution that plans to offer health and medical sciences related programs in Illinois. Trillium University has affiliate entities offering post-secondary programs in health sciences in the Caribbean and Easton Education established in Ontario, Canada offers online continuing education programs in medical sciences, law, and technology for international students. Trillium University seeks to offer bachelor's and master's level online and hybrid programs focused on health and medical sciences and technology.

After extensive review, staff determined that the proposal is not viable and fails to meet several provisions in statutes and administrative rules for the implementation of post-secondary, private colleges, and universities in the State of Illinois. It was the recommendation of staff to deny the request.

Dr. Handa provided a brief rebuttal statement.

Chair Kothari opened the floor for questions. Brief discussion followed.

Board Member Garrison moved to approve the staff recommendation. Board Member Herrero seconded the motion. A roll call was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

4. Consideration and Approval of Final Rulemaking for Higher Education Distance Learning and Interstate Reciprocity (23 Ill. Adm. Code 1033) (Dave Kelm)

Mr. Kelm provided a brief review of the NC-SARA update. He stated last March staff presented rule updates to be consistent with NC-SARA. The updates moved through the process including JCAR with no substantive changes to the draft. The last step is for the board to give final approval. Staff recommended approval of the final rules.

Board Member Wyatt moved to approve the final rules. Board Member Zarnikow seconded the motion. A roll call was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

F. Consent Agenda Action Items

1. Consideration and Approval of Board Meeting Minutes – January 17, 2024

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

G. Executive Session

The Board moved into Executive Session for discussion of matters involving 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) and 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11). No final action was taken during the closed session.

Board Member Herrero made a motion to move into Executive Session. Board Member Garrison seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved unanimously.

H. Other Business

The next Board meeting will be held Wednesday, June 26, 2024, at the IBHE office. Additional details about the meeting and agenda will be posted on the IBHE website.

I. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, on motion of Board Member Shaw and seconded by Board Member Jenkins, a roll call vote was taken, and by unanimous vote, the meeting adjourned at approximately 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Melissa Bealon, Secretary to the Board.