

**APPROVED**  
**June 25, 2025**

*Melissa Bealon*  
Board Secretary Melissa Bealon

Item #F-2  
June 25, 2025

**NEW UNITS OF INSTRUCTION, PUBLIC SERVICE,  
AND RESEARCH AT PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES**

**Submitted for:** Action.

**Summary:** This item requests approval of four degree programs and six administrative units at four public universities.

**Action Requested:** That the Illinois Board of Higher Education approves the following:

Northeastern Illinois University

- Master of Science in Nursing, Entry into Practice Program in the Chicago Region

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

- Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering in the Southern Region

University of Illinois Springfield

- Center for Lincoln Studies in the Central Region

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

- Bachelor of Arts in Media in the Prairie Region
- Bachelor of Science in Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering + Data Science in the Prairie Region
- Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning in the Prairie Region
- Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery in the Prairie Region
- Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery in the Prairie Region
- Department of Oncology in the Prairie Region
- Department of Surgery and Digestive Health in the Prairie Region

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**NEW UNITS OF INSTRUCTION, PUBLIC SERVICE,  
AND RESEARCH AT PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES**

By statute, the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) is responsible for approving new on-campus and off-campus units of instruction, organized research, and public service, and units of administration proposed by public university governing boards. The Board's approval criteria, defined in rules adopted for administering the statute, addresses university mission, academic control, faculty and staff, support services, financial resources, student demand, curriculum, statewide need, and congruence with Board policies and priorities. In addition to the approval criteria in rules, each new program was reviewed for its contributions to the goals of *A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth*, which sets forth priorities to guide Illinois higher education. Staff recommendations are based on analyses of application materials and responses to staff questions.

**Executive Summary – Public Institutions**

Northeastern Illinois University

- Master of Science in Nursing, Entry into Practice Program in the Chicago Region

Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU or the University) is seeking authorization to offer a Master of Science in Nursing, Entry into Practice Program (MSNEP) in the Chicago region. The proposed program will be offered by NEIU's College of Graduate Studies and Research (CGSR) and located in the Goodwin College of Education. The proposed degree program is designed for individuals seeking entry into the nursing profession who may not have prior experience in health care. The MSNEP will provide the foundational knowledge to prepare students to sit for the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) for professional Registered Nurse (RN) licensure. The proposed program will also offer two concentration areas, Geriatrics and Mental Health, which will address high-need areas of the workforce.

The proposed MSNEP will contribute to the mission statement of NEIU, by preparing a diverse community of students for leadership and service in the region and in a dynamic, multicultural works. As a Minority-Serving Institution, NEIU provides higher education access for residents of the surrounding communities and those traditionally underserved by the higher education community. The mission statement of the MSNEP seeks to integrate nursing practice, scholarship, and education to prepare compassionate, innovative nurses to provide holistic, high-quality care, while promoting social justice and health for all. In turn, the mission supports IBHE's strategic plan, *A Thriving Illinois*, through providing accessible education that leads to competitive wages and contributes to addressing the emerging and changing workforce needs of the state while seeking to reduce equity gaps. There are policies in place to ensure faculty members possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to provide instruction in the proposed program. The University has sufficient libraries, technology, staff, and financial resources in place to support the program.

Approval request summary, including staff conclusion, follows in Attachment A.

Southern Illinois University Carbondale

- Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering in the Southern Region

Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC or University) is seeking authorization to offer a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering (BS in EnvE) in the Southern region. The program will be housed within the School of Civil, Environmental and Infrastructure Engineering (CEIE). The 126-credit hour program is designed to prepare students to apply mathematical and scientific principles to the design, development and operational evaluation of systems for controlling contained living environments and for monitoring and controlling factors in the external natural environment, including pollution control, waste and hazardous material disposal, health and safety protection, conservation, life support, and requirements for the protection of special materials and related work environments. The School of CEIE will seek accreditation for the proposed program from the Engineering Accreditation Commission (EAC) of the Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology (ABET). Graduates will meet the eligibility requirements for the Fundamentals of Engineering licensure examination and possess high-quality credentials to address global environmental challenges and develop sustainable solutions in public and private sectors. SIUC has developed campuswide initiatives to systemically close persisting equity and opportunity gaps in student outcomes and faculty hiring. There are policies in place to ensure faculty possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to provide instruction in the proposed program. The University has sufficient library, technology, and financial resources to support the program.

Approval request summary, including staff conclusion, follows in Attachment B.

University of Illinois Springfield

- Center for Lincoln Studies in the Central Region

The University of Illinois Springfield (UIS or the University) requests authorization to permanently establish the Center for Lincoln Studies (CLS) in the Central region. The Center was previously approved as a temporary center by the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and is applying for permanent status. The Center for Lincoln Studies is housed within the Academic Affairs division and serves primarily as a research unit without a direct instruction component. CLS is dedicated to the study of Abraham Lincoln's life, era, and legacy. The Center supports the University's mission and statewide goals by offering community education and student-centered learning activities through public programs, collaborations with partner organizations, and art exhibitions. Additionally, the Center employs research assistants to work on CLS projects which provide valuable experiential learning and mentorship opportunities. The University of Illinois Springfield has developed campuswide initiatives to systemically close persisting equity and opportunity gaps in student outcomes and faculty hiring. There are policies in place to ensure faculty and staff possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to administer the research and logistical processes of the Center. The University has sufficient library, technology, and financial resources to support the Center.

Approval request summary, including staff conclusion, follows in Attachment C.

## University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

- Bachelor of Arts in Media in the Prairie Region

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC or University) requests authorization to offer a Bachelor of Arts in Media (Media) in the Prairie region. The program, housed in the College of Media and jointly administered by the Charles H. Sandage Department of Advertising, the Department of Journalism, and the Department of Media and Cinema Studies. The 120-credit interdisciplinary program is designed as an online degree completion program to support non-traditional students. This program will only be open to transfer students or previous UIUC students applying for reentry. The program will help upskill and reskill the current workforce. The proposed program, which builds on a student's prior coursework, is comprised of 45 hours of UIUC coursework, of which 21 hours are 300- or 400- level courses and a minimum of 40 hours of total upper division coursework. The curriculum will provide opportunities for students to participate in experiential learning experiences. Graduates of this unique program will be prepared for careers in "high growth" career fields, as defined by the Illinois Department of Employment Security, in areas such as public relations, market research and analysis, film and video editing and camera operations, and technical communications. UIUC has developed campuswide initiatives to systemically close persisting equity and opportunity gaps in student outcomes and faculty hiring. There are policies in place to ensure faculty possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to provide instruction in the proposed program. The University has sufficient library, technology, and financial resources to support the program.

- Bachelor of Science in Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering + Data Science in the Prairie Region

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC or University) requests authorization to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering + Data Science (BS in NPRE + DS) in the Prairie region. In addition to the Department of Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering, the program will be supported by four academic units: the Siebel School of Computing and Data Science in Grainger College of Engineering, the Mathematics and the Department of Statics in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the School of Information Sciences. The 128-credit hour program combines a solid foundation in nuclear, plasma, and radiological engineering with training in data science principles, techniques, and practices. The curriculum blends core course requirements with 70 credit hours of materials science and engineering courses and 29 hours of data science courses. Graduates of this unique program will be prepared to meet the demand for positions involving modeling, simulation, analysis of materials informatics, and use of computational methods. UIUC has developed campuswide initiatives to systemically close persisting equity and opportunity gaps in student outcomes and faculty hiring. There are policies in place to ensure faculty possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to provide instruction in the proposed program. The University has sufficient library, technology, and financial resources to support the program.

- Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning in the Prairie Region

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC or the University) requests authorization to establish the Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning (CRITEL) in the Prairie region. The Center will be housed in the College of Education serving primarily as a research unit without a direct instruction component. The Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning will provide a hub for research and innovation through investigating the

multitude of ways new technologies impact learning and education. CRITEL's purpose is to initiate and support transformative and scaled-up research initiatives surrounding the development of new educational technologies and studies in authentic contexts at K-12 and higher education classrooms and beyond (e.g., museums, community centers). The Center supports UIUC's mission in positioning the University as a leader in technology-enhanced learning and design that addresses emerging trends and issues related to educational technologies in national and global circles.

The University prioritizes closing equity gaps among the citizens of Illinois within urban and rural communities. The University of Illinois System has developed a comprehensive initiative in its Access 2030 strategic plan to increase the number of graduates from underrepresented groups by 50 percent by the end of the decade. This initiative will strengthen the University of Illinois' bedrock commitment to the public good and create more opportunities for Illinoisans of all backgrounds. The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign has developed campuswide initiatives to systemically close persisting equity and opportunity gaps in student outcomes and faculty hiring. There are policies in place to ensure faculty and staff possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to administer the research and logistical processes of the Center. The University has sufficient library, technology, and financial resources to support the Center.

- Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery in the Prairie Region

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC or the University) requests authorization to establish the Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery (Department). The Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery will be composed of cardiology, cardiac surgery, vascular surgery, and interventional radiology faculty that are currently under the umbrella of the Clinical Sciences Department within the Carle Illinois College of Medicine (CI MED). The proposed Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery will be instrumental to advancing the clinical, academic, and research components of CI MED. This new department will be composed primarily of faculty specializing in cardiovascular medicine and surgery, who will deliver specialized education, clinical care, and research initiatives in alignment with the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's mission.

The Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery will play a central role in instruction, with faculty delivering both didactic and clinical education to medical students, residents, and fellows. The Department's involvement in teaching is critical, as it ensures that cardiovascular-specific knowledge and skills are effectively imparted to the next generation of healthcare providers. The University's mission and goals, academic plans, support services, and financial resources are in alignment with statewide higher education priorities.

- Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery in the Prairie Region

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC or the University) requests authorization to establish the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery. The Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery will be housed within the existing Clinical Sciences Department of the Carle Illinois College of Medicine (CI MED) and will be composed primarily of neurology and neurosurgery faculty who will deliver the clinical, academic, and research components of the CI MED educational experience specific to their area of expertise. This structure was established in accordance with CI MED's approved bylaws and under the guidance of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, which approved the creation of CI MED on March 1, 2016, and its Doctor of Medicine degree on March 14, 2017.

The Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery will play a central role in instruction, with faculty delivering both didactic and clinical education to medical students, residents, and fellows. The department's involvement in teaching is critical, as it ensures that neurology-specific knowledge and skills are effectively imparted to the next generation of healthcare providers. The University's mission and goals, academic plans, support services, and financial resources are in alignment with statewide higher education priorities.

- Department of Oncology in the Prairie Region

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC or the University) requests authorization to establish the Department of Oncology (the Department) within the Carle Illinois College of Medicine (CI MED) in the Prairie region. The University received approval from IBHE to establish the Carle Illinois College of Medicine on March 1, 2016, and subsequent authorization to offer and award a Doctor of Medicine degree in the Prairie region on March 14, 2017. The University obtained preliminary accreditation from the Liaison Committee for Medical Education (LCME) organization on October 11, 2017. As part of accreditation requirements, CI MED must have a sufficient number of organizational units to accomplish the mission of the medical school. On September 18, 2018, the University received IBHE approval to create a Department of Biomedical and Translational Sciences and the Department of Clinical Sciences. The University is currently seeking approval to create the following administrative departments within the existing Clinical Sciences Department: the Department of Oncology, the Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery, the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery, and Department of Surgery and Digestive Health.

The Department of Oncology will be composed primarily of hematology/oncology, radiation oncology, surgical oncology, breast surgery, gynecologic oncology, and thoracic surgery faculty who will deliver the academic, research, and clinical components of the CI MED education. The Department will be composed primarily of faculty specializing in oncology, who will deliver specialized education, clinical care, and research initiatives in alignment with the University's mission. The University's mission and goals, academic plans, support services, and financial resources are in alignment with statewide higher education priorities.

- Department of Surgery and Digestive Health in the Prairie Region

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC or the University) is seeking authorization to establish the Department of Surgery and Digestive Health (the Department) in the Prairie region. The proposed department is an administrative unit that will be housed in the Carle Illinois College of Medicine (CI MED) within the existing Clinical Sciences Department. The proposed department will be integral to furthering the clinical, academic, and medical research activities of CI MED, specifically in the field of surgery and digestive health. This new department will be composed primarily of faculty specializing in surgery and digestive health, who will deliver specialized education and clinical care in alignment with the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's mission. There are policies in place to ensure faculty and staff possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to provide instruction and support the administrative functions of the department. The University has sufficient library, technology, and financial resources for the department.

Approval request summary, including staff conclusion, follows in Attachment xxx.

The staff recommends adoption of the following resolution:

*The Illinois Board of Higher Education hereby grants to Northeastern Illinois University authorization to grant the Master of Science in Nursing, Entry into Practice in the Chicago region, subject to the institution's implementation and maintenance of the conditions that were presented in its application and that form the basis upon which this authorization is granted.*

*The Illinois Board of Higher Education hereby grants to Southern Illinois University Carbondale authorization to grant the Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering in the Southern region, subject to the institution's implementation and maintenance of the conditions that were presented in its application and that form the basis upon which this authorization is granted.*

*The Illinois Board of Higher Education hereby grants to University of Illinois Springfield authorization to establish the Center for Lincoln Studies in the Central region, subject to the institution's implementation and maintenance of the conditions that were presented in its application and that form the basis upon which this authorization is granted.*

*The Illinois Board of Higher Education hereby grants to the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign authorization to grant the Bachelor of Arts in Media and the Bachelor of Science in Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering + Data Science in the Prairie region, subject to the institution's implementation and maintenance of the conditions that were presented in its application and that form the basis upon which this authorization is granted.*

*The Illinois Board of Higher Education hereby grants to the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign authorization to establish the Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning, Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery, Department of Oncology, and the Department of Surgery and Digestive Health in the Prairie region, subject to the institution's implementation and maintenance of the conditions that were presented in its application and that form the basis upon which this authorization is granted.*



## Northeastern Illinois University

**Proposed Degree Title in the Region of Authorization:** Master of Science in Nursing, Entry into Practice in the Chicago Region

Projected Enrollments and Degrees		
First Year Enrollment	Fifth Year Enrollment	Degrees Awarded Fifth Year
15	100	40

## Background

Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU or the University) is seeking authorization to offer a Master of Science in Nursing, Entry into Practice (MSNEP) in the Chicago region. The proposed program will be offered by NEIU's College of Graduate Studies and Research (CGSR) and located in the Goodwin College of Education. The proposed degree program is designed for individuals seeking entry into the nursing profession who may not have prior experience in health care. The MSNEP will provide the foundational knowledge to prepare students to sit for the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) for professional registered nurse (RN) licensure. The proposed program will also offer two concentration areas, Geriatrics and Mental Health, which will address high-need areas of the workforce.

NEIU, a Minority-Serving and Hispanic-Serving Institution, will continue to serve a diverse population of students from its surrounding community with the proposed MSNEP. The proposed program will prepare students for a high-demand career as a registered nurse. In Illinois, there are approximately 7,963 job openings annually, as noted by Illinois Department of Employment Security for 2022 to 2032, with a median annual salary of \$86,070, in comparison to the median annual salary of the state for all occupations at \$48,060. The proposed program is designed to offer non-traditional adults an opportunity to pursue a career change to the nursing field in a streamlined manner.

The proposed program will benefit from the student support services of the University and will reside on the El Centro campus on the second floor. This facility will be remodeled to house the proposed program featuring a simulation area. The location of the proposed program is in a Latinx community and was thoughtfully designed to provide access and equitable academic opportunities. NEIU is working to intentionally promote equity and eliminate disparities in degree completion rates for underserved populations, improving access, promoting social justice, and improving educational outcomes for graduates and the communities in which they serve. The strategic plan of the University systematically addresses the barriers that have historically undermined the success of traditionally underrepresented students.

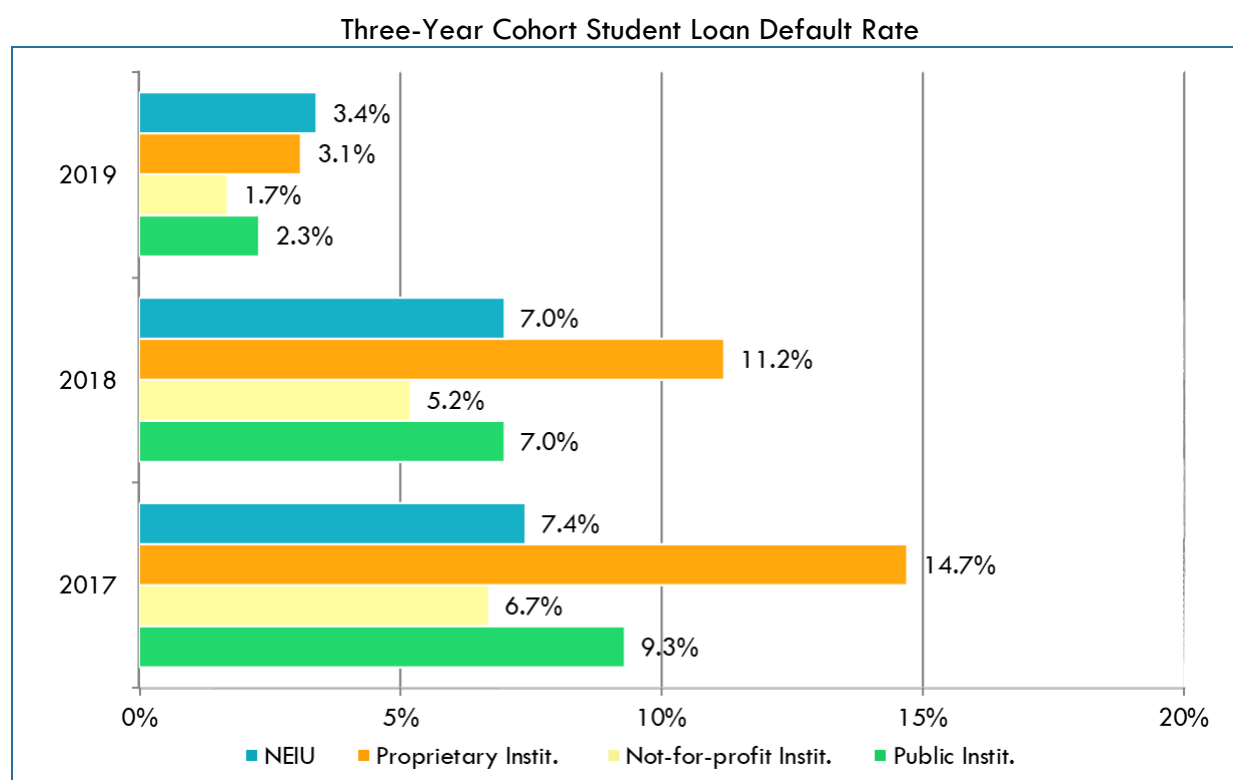
## Institutional Data

*1050.30(b)(1)(H): Success in student progression and graduation rates across all existing approved programs, and success rates in programs preparing students for certification and licensure, shall be consistent with expectations in higher education and the appropriate related field of study. At a minimum, the Board shall consider these factors based on results for similar institutions. (i) Graduation rates, certificate and degree completion rates, retention rates, and pass rates for licensure and certification aligned with thresholds set by State nor national regulatory bodies. (ii) The success rate shall be, at a minimum, higher than those of the lowest quartile of these measures for similar Illinois*



*institutions defined as open versus competitive enrollment institutions and primarily associate versus primarily baccalaureate granting institutions. Exceptions may be made to the lowest quartile if an institution is above the national average for these measures using the same comparison categories of institutions.*

This section includes information about institutional and student success measures for Northeastern Illinois University. The institution's rates will be compared to Illinois institutions from within a select comparison group and against the national standards or averages. For a proposed undergraduate program, this section will include undergraduate graduation rates, first to second year retention rates, student loan default rates, and any applicable licensure passage rates. For a proposed graduate program, this section will primarily focus on student loan default data since this measure also includes graduate students in the calculation.



Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), US Department of Education

Note: Due to the pause on federal student loan payment that began in March 2020, the cohort default rates for fiscal years 2020 and 2021 are zero percent for the institution and all institution types. The national cohort default rate for fiscal year 2019 was 2.3 percent and zero percent for fiscal years 2020 and 2021. A lower number is a positive indicator.

The three-year cohort student loan default rate is the percentage of a school's borrowers who enter repayment on certain Federal Loan Programs during a particular federal fiscal year, October 1 to September 30, and default or meet other specified conditions prior to the end of the second following fiscal year.

## Need

1050.30(a)(6): A) The unit of instruction, research or public service is educationally and economically consistent with the educational priorities and needs of the State of Illinois. B) The unit of instruction, research or public service meets a need that is not currently met by existing institutions and units of instruction, research or public service.

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), a national organization for academic nursing, reports the nursing shortage of RNs will intensify. This is due to the aging of the “Baby Boomer” generation. The generational impact is also coupled with struggles of nursing schools to expand capacity to meet the rising workforce demand. In April 2022, a nursing workforce analysis report found that from 2020 to 2021 the total supply of nurses decreased by more than 100,000. This is the largest drop in the past 40 years, and most were employed in hospitals. In addition, the “2022 National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses,” found that 23 percent of RNs working in outpatient, ambulatory, and clinical settings have retired or plan to retire in the next five years. In March 2023, the International Council of Nurses called for the shortage to be treated as a global health emergency. In AACN’s report, “2023-2024 Enrollment and Graduations in Baccalaureate and Graduate Programs in Nursing” shared that U.S. nursing schools turned away 65,766 qualified applications from baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs in 2023. This was primarily due to an insufficient number of faculty, clinical sites, classroom space, preceptors, and budgetary resources.

According to the Illinois Department of Employment Security, the projected ten-year growth rate of 3.09 percent from 2022 to 2032 is greater than the overall state occupational growth rate of 2.66 percent. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the national median pay for registered nurses was \$86,070 annually, with a projected growth outlook of six percent, faster than the four percent average, until 2033.

Illinois Employment Projections, 2022-2032 Registered Nurses (SOC Code 29-1141)						
Occupation Title	Employment			Average Annual Job Openings Due to...		
	2022	2032	Change (%)	Growth	Replacements (transfers & exits)	Total
Registered Nurses (SOC 29-1141)	138,047	142,307	3.09	426	7,537	7,963
<b>All Occupations</b>	<b>6,369,370</b>	<b>6,538,492</b>	<b>2.66</b>	<b>16,912</b>	<b>691,808</b>	<b>708,720</b>

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security

U.S. Employment Projections, 2023-2033 Registered Nurses (SOC Code 29-1141)				
Occupation Title	2023 Median Annual Wage	Employment, 2023	Employment, 2033	Employment Change (%)
Registered Nurses (SOC 29-1141)	\$86,070	3,300,100	174,589,000	197,200 (6.0%)
<b>All Occupations</b>	<b>\$48,060</b>	<b>167,849,800</b>	<b>174,589,000</b>	<b>6,739,200 (4.0%)</b>

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor

NEIU is requesting a National Center for Educational Statistics Classification of Instruction (CIP) code of 51.3801 for “Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse.” The code is used for a program that “generally prepares individuals in the knowledge, techniques and procedures for promoting health, providing care for sick, disabled, infirmed, or other individual groups. Includes instruction in the administration of medication and treatments, assisting a physician during treatments and examinations, referring patients to physicians and other health care specialists, and planning education for health maintenance.” The proposed program is designed to assist students seeking entry into the nursing profession who do not have a professional nursing background or an undergraduate nursing education. These types of programs are typically referred to as “Entry-to-Nursing Practice” programs. The proposed MSNEP program will help to address the nursing shortage by providing an efficient pathway for students with a non-nursing bachelor’s degree to pursue a different, high-demand, well-paying career path. NEIU’s program will prepare students to sit for the NCLEX to start their career. This program can help improve community health outcomes by providing access and graduating a diverse population of nurses who will be employed locally. Other master’s level nursing programs in Illinois also use the “Nursing Science” CIP code (51.3808), which is “a research program that focuses on the study of advanced clinical practices, research methodologies, the administration of complex nursing services, and that prepares nurses to further the progress of nursing research through experimentation and clinical applications.” Generally, these programs are geared toward students who already hold nursing licensure.

As of September 2024, the IBHE Program Inventory lists 31 master’s level nursing programs offered by 25 institutions in Illinois in the Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse and Nursing Science CIP codes. There are eight programs that are entry-to-practice programs similar to the NEIU’s proposed MSNEP. The additional proposed program will help contribute to addressing the nursing workforce need in the region.

### **A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth**

The proposed Master of Science in Nursing, Entry into Practice Program at Northeastern Illinois University will embody IBHE’s *A Thriving Illinois* strategic plan as the institution’s mission entails, “preparing a diverse community of students for leadership and service in the region and in a dynamic, multicultural world.” The institution and the program are designed *to close equity gaps for students who have historically been left behind*, which is IBHE’s Equity goal. NEIU is regarded as the most diverse public, comprehensive university in the Midwest and is designated as a Hispanic-Serving and Minority Serving Institution by the U.S. Department of Education with a diverse population of approximately 60 percent of the student body. Specifically, the proposed program will be located on the El Centro campus in the Avondale neighborhood which was founded in the 1960s to serve the surrounding Latinx community.

The program is designed to provide students who have a non-nursing bachelor’s degree with an opportunity to pursue an advanced degree to facilitate an efficient career change to the in-demand nursing field. Besides providing access to education, the program will prepare nurses to address systemic racism and pervasive inequities in health care. This program will produce nurses who will deliver health care to patients across the lifespan, populations, and communities in a variety of health care settings.

NEIU is working intentionally, and in a multifaceted way, to promote equity and eliminate disparities in degree completion rates for African American, Latinx, and Pell-eligible populations. The proposed program will utilize a Holistic Admissions Review (HAR). The HAR process was identified as a necessary process for health care education programs to meet the need for greater

numbers of health care professionals representing diverse populations. In addition to HAR, the Experiences-Attributes-Metrics model from the American Association of College of Nursing will be implemented. This model draws from the experiences, attributes, and academic metrics of nursing candidates to make admissions decisions. Through this model and application process, the University will have a more comprehensive view of each applicant.

NEIU joined the Student Success Equity Intensive (SSEI) program through the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, funded through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The SSEI will provide three years of personal and cohort coaching for students. It will also launch an Institutional Transformation Assessment to measure program impact. While the SSEI is primarily targeted to improve undergraduate completion rates, the proposed MSNEP will utilize features of the SSEI, including hiring a dedicated student advisor and success coach. The coach will address the unique needs of all students but will focus on underrepresented and underserved students. The coach will proactively reach out to students and address items from academic resources to self-care strategies, mental health resources, financial aid, and scholarship funding.

The proposed program also aligns with equity goals from the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and the Human Resources office. Together, they will infuse equity-minded practices into the onboarding of faculty and staff. The proposed program will implement mandatory search-and-screen training for all hiring committee members seeking to include implicit bias training while focusing on equity-minded hiring practices. The MSNEP Executive Director will collaborate with faculty members, the Center for Teaching and Learning, and staff from the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion to create semester- and year-long workshops to provide pedagogical training for faculty that is inclusive, equity-minded, and attentive to students' diverse needs while enabling them to explicitly connect curriculum to career and real-world problems.

In *A Thriving Illinois*, Goal 2: Sustainability, to build a stronger financial future for individuals and institutions by finding ways to reduce the financial burden of education on students and their families. The NEIU student body is primarily comprised of students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, therefore it is critical for the program and institution to embrace sustainability and accessibility. NEIU strategically crafted the proposed tuition rate to support the needs of the program while being mindful of costs to students. The program will have a differential tuition charge of 30 percent per credit hour. This is in comparison to a similar public master's-level entry nursing program in the Chicago region, which charges a differential tuition rate of approximately 75 percent of tuition. Even with the differential tuition, NEIU is positioned to have the most affordable master's-level entry nursing program in the region. The University will also offer graduate tuition waivers and assistantships that MSNEP students can leverage to make the college costs more affordable. The University is committed to seeking opportunities to secure funding from external sources that will reduce the financial burden to students in the program.

The proposed MSNEP will support *A Thriving Illinois*: Goal 3, Growth, to increase talent and innovation to drive economic growth, by contributing to regional and state workforce needs. The nursing shortage is well documented, and its impact is felt in the Chicago region as well as throughout the state. The proposed program will offer two concentrations, Geriatrics and Mental Health. Illinois workNet lists Registered Nursing as a field with strong demand in the state. The average annual openings are categorized as "very high". Between 2022 and 2032, the Registered Nursing field is expected to grow by 3.09 percent, whereas the growth for all occupations is 2.66 percent, according to the Illinois Department of Employment Security. Besides having a strong employment outlook, the profession has a median average wage higher than the national average. Nationally, RNs have a median salary of \$86,070 in comparison with the average of \$48,060.

The proposed program will provide graduates with an opportunity to secure an in-demand career with higher wages. This degree can also serve as the basis for students to pursue additional education in advanced practice fields of nursing which can lead to various disciplines in nursing and higher earnings.

### **Comparable Programs in Illinois**

Northeastern Illinois University's proposed Master of Science in Nursing, Entry into Practice Program is designed to meet the needs of the health care workforce through creating a pipeline of well-trained nursing professionals who will have an education enhanced by incorporating tenants of social equity into the training. There are multiple pathways to pursue licensure as a registered nurse, including education at the associate and baccalaureate levels. At the master's level, there are two types of programs. The traditionally structured program is the "Registered Nursing to Master of Science in Nursing" pathway where students have a registered nursing license and a bachelor's degree, typically a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, prior to entry. In contrast, the proposed program is an "Entry-to-Nursing Practice" pathway specifically for students without registered nursing licensure or an undergraduate degree in nursing. It is designed to assist baccalaureate degree holders seeking to change career paths into the nursing field in an efficient manner.

According to the IBHE Program Inventory, there are 19 institutions with 21 programs that have the same CIP code as the proposed MSNEP program (51.3801, Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse). In addition to the 51.3801 CIP code, a review was completed for a similar CIP code of 51.3808, Nursing Science which has ten institutions with ten programs. In reviewing the programs from both CIP codes, eight programs have "entry-to-practice" pathways similar to NEIU's proposed program.

The programs in the Chicago region are not expected to be negatively impacted, as Northeastern Illinois University primarily serves students living in the northern Chicago region. According to Peterson.com, Master of Science programs in Illinois only admit 60 percent of applicants, with Hispanic students comprising under 20 percent of the total. NEIU's undergraduate population is approximately 41 percent Hispanic and 12 percent African American. There is an expectation that at least half of the enrollment in the proposed program will be drawn from NEIU's diverse undergraduate population. The proposed program will support applicants who prefer NEIU or did not gain entry to another program. This program will supplement the existing nursing workforce pipeline from other programs.

<b>Comparable Master's-Level Nursing Programs</b>			
<i>CIP Codes: 51.3801 – Registered Nursing/Registered Nurse and 51.3808 – Nursing Science</i>			
<b>CIP Program Title</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Nursing Program Titles</b>	<b>Region(s)</b>
<b>Independent Institutions</b>			
Registered Nursing/Nurse	Chamberlain University	M.S. in Nursing	West Suburban
Registered Nursing/Nurse	Aurora University*	M.S. in Nursing	Fox Valley
Nursing Science	Benedictine University	MSN in Nursing	West Suburban
Registered Nursing/Nurse	Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing	Master of Science in Nursing	Western
Registered Nursing/Nurse	Bradley University	M.S. in Nursing, General	Central
Nursing Science	DePaul University	M.S. in Nursing	Chicago, North Suburban
Registered Nursing/Nurse	DePaul University*	M.S. in Nursing (RN to M.S.)	Chicago
Registered Nursing/Nurse	DePaul University	M.S. in Nursing, General	Chicago
Registered Nursing/Nurse	Elmhurst University*	Master of Science in Nursing	Chicago, West Suburban
Registered Nursing/Nurse	Loyola University of Chicago	M.S.N. in Nursing	Chicago
Registered Nursing/Nurse	McKendree University	M.S.N. - Master of Science in Nursing	Southern, Southwestern
Registered Nursing/Nurse	Methodist College*	M.S. in Nursing	Central
Registered Nursing/Nurse	Millikin University*	MSN - Pre-MSN	Prairie
Nursing Science	North Park University	M.S. in Nursing	Chicago, North Suburban
Registered Nursing/Nurse	North Park University*	M.S. in Nursing Direct Entry	Chicago
Registered Nursing/Nurse	Olivet Nazarene University	MSN in Nursing	South Metro
Registered Nursing/Nurse	Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine & Science*	M.S. in Nursing-Entry to Nursing Practice	North Suburban
Nursing Science	Rush University*	M.S. in Nursing	Chicago
Registered Nursing/Nurse	St. Anthony College of Nursing	Master of Science in Nursing	Fox Valley
Registered Nursing/Nurse	St. Francis Medical Center College of Nursing	Master of Science in Nursing - Online	Central
Nursing Science	St. Johns College	M.S. in Nursing	Central
Registered Nursing/Nurse	St. Johns College	M.S. in Nursing	Central
Nursing Science	St. Xavier University	M.S.N. in Nursing	Chicago
Registered Nursing/Nurse	St. Xavier University	M.S.N. in Nursing	Chicago
Nursing Science	Trinity College of Nursing & Health Sciences	Master of Science in Nursing	Western
Registered Nursing/Nurse	University of St. Francis	M.S. in Nursing	South Metro
Registered Nursing/Nurse	University of St. Francis	M.S.N. in Nursing Education	South Metro
<b>Public Institutions</b>			
Nursing Science	Governors State University	M.S. in Nursing	South Metro
Registered Nursing/Nurse	Illinois State University	M.S. in Nursing	Central
Nursing Science	Northern Illinois University	M.S. in Nursing	Fox Valley
Nursing Science	University of Illinois Chicago*	M.S. in Nursing	Central, Chicago, Fox Valley, Prairie, Western

*\*Programs have an Entry-to-Nursing Practice program option available.*

*Source: IBHE Program Inventory*

## **Mission and Objectives**

*1050.30(a)(1): A) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with the mission of the college or university. B) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with what the unit title implies.*

The mission of the MSNEP program is to integrate nursing practice, scholarship, and education to prepare compassionate, innovative nurse leaders who provide holistic, high-quality care to individuals, families, and communities, while promoting social justice and health for all. The proposed program aligns with the purpose, goals, objectives, and mission of Northeastern Illinois University.

## **Curriculum and Assessment**

*1050.30(b)(1) [applicable only to units of instruction]: A) The caliber and content of the curriculum must assure that the objectives of the unit of instruction will be achieved. B) The breadth and depth of the curriculum must be consistent with what the title of the unit of instruction implies. C) The admission and graduation requirements for the unit of instruction must be consistent with the stated objectives of the unit of instruction. D) Institutions must show the capacity to develop, deliver and support academic programs. Procedures and policies that will assure the effective design, conduct and evaluation of the degree programs under the academic control of the institution must be developed. Assessment plans must demonstrate that the institution has identified clear and appropriate program and student learning goals and has defined appropriate outcomes. Appropriate data must be collected and may be requested by the Board to show the level of student learning that has occurred as a result of participation in the institution's programs of study.*

*1050.30(a)(2): The design, conduct and evaluation of the unit of instruction, research or public service are under the direct and continuous control of the sponsoring institution's established processes for academic planning and quality maintenance.*

## **Admission Requirements**

The admissions process for the proposed program will include embracing a Holistic Admissions Review (HAR), which has been identified as an essential process for health care education programs to be inclusive of diverse populations. The HAR is a flexible, individualized assessment of an applicant beyond traditional academic metrics. In addition to the HAR, the MSNEP program will utilize the Experiences-Attributes-Metrics model from the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. This process utilizes a variety of criteria drawn from experiences, attributes, and academic metrics of applicants to create an in-depth candidate profile for an admission decision. Items of consideration include: the applicant has a commitment to practice in a medically underserved area, resides in a medically underserved area or is a first-generation college student, and speaks English as a second language. Traditional academic metrics are also considered such as an applicant's overall GPA. These efforts support *A Thriving Illinois* by evaluating applicants based on a broad range of factors which should improve equity and access for students.

Applicants must submit a formal application, including official transcripts and an application fee. Applicants must possess a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution with an overall GPA of 2.75 on a 4.0 scale. The applicant must submit two academic or professional letters of recommendation, a personal statement, and a personal assessment of strengths and areas for improvement. The required written items will allow the applicant to share how a nursing degree



from NEIU will be used to address health disparities and how their background could contribute to being a registered nurse. Applicants should submit a Graduate Record Examination score (if taken), a successful Illinois State Police and federal fingerprint background check, and a ten-panel drug screening. Within the last five years, applicants must have completed prerequisite courses in Statistics, Anatomy and Physiology I and II, Microbiology, Organic Chemistry, Psychology, Sociology, and Nutrition.

The proposed program will accept students for both fall and spring semester entry. If students do not meet the academic admission requirements, the University encourages students to address deficiencies in the application via written submissions. This flexibility helps support access to the program and educational opportunities for non-traditional students or those who may have been previously overlooked by higher education.

### Curriculum

The proposed program requires 72 credit hours consisting of three types of classes: interprofessional education, clinical experiences, and simulations. The levels are built from foundational nursing knowledge and corresponding competencies applied to different patient populations. Students will develop leadership and management competencies and synthesize the knowledge and skills developed during their coursework. Students must complete 720 practicum hours during the clinical courses. NEIU has established agreements with local organizations to provide clinical training for the proposed program. Students must earn a minimum GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, complete a synthesis practicum, and a capstone quality improvement project. The proposed program will meet licensure requirements for graduates to sit for the NCLEX exam along with the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation's Board of Nursing requirements. Courses will be provided in a mixed modality including in-person, online, and hybrid formats on the El Centro campus.

NEIU's proposed program will have two concentrations, Geriatrics and Mental Health, from which students may select. NEIU designed courses focused on the Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education as created by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. The AACN emphasizes programs for nurses with the capacity to address systemic racism and pervasive inequities in health care. NEIU's proposed program will also infuse social justice into the curriculum. These efforts will further align the proposed MSNEP program with IBHE's *A Thriving Illinois* to improve equity.

### Assessment of Student Learning

Student learning outcomes will be directly assessed in targeted items built into the courses such as Assessment Technologies Institute's (ATI) preparation examinations and clinical evaluations conducted by preceptors and faculty. Preceptors will provide student feedback on professional communications, content knowledge application, and student interactions while in clinical settings. The student capstone project, evaluated by faculty and preceptors, assesses the student's overall level and corresponding integration of knowledge. The National Council Licensure Examination, which is a requirement for students to practice, will be used to assess overall student learning. The program does not require a thesis to demonstrate student knowledge or mastery of concepts. This will be measured through coursework, clinicals, and a capstone project.

## Program Assessment

The development of MSNEP curriculum includes establishing end-of-program learning outcomes and competencies. All courses align to and support the program learning outcomes and their related competencies. The program learning outcomes and competencies represent what the MSNEP graduates need to practice in the nursing field. As such, the program learning outcomes reflect the AACN's recommendations for competency-based education as outlined in the *Essentials* (2021) book. Competency-based assessment provides flexibility for curriculum changes. As the practice of nursing changes occur in health care settings, the curriculum can be updated to reflect changes as needed. The faculty will evaluate program learning outcomes and course competencies in the final semester. This evaluation will provide necessary information for evaluation of the curriculum.

### **Facilities (space, equipment, instructional materials)**

*1050.30(a)(4): A) Facilities, equipment and instructional resources (e.g., laboratory supplies and equipment, instructional materials, computational equipment) necessary to support the high-quality academic work in the unit of instruction, research or public service are available and maintained. B) Clinical sites necessary to meet the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service. C) Library holdings and acquisitions, owned or contracted for by the institution, that are necessary to support high quality instruction and scholarship in the unit of instruction, research and public service, are conveniently available and accessible, and can be maintained.*

The proposed program will be located at NEIU's El Centro campus, which was founded to provide access and services to students previously overlooked by higher education. It is a comprehensive academic center that offers student support, co-curricular activities, and classrooms. The second floor, approximately 7,268 square feet, will be renovated to support the proposed program. The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation's Board of Nursing requires that all approved programs have a dedicated nursing skills laboratory where students can learn and practice nursing procedures and skills before pursuing clinical experiences. NEIU has submitted finalized renovation plans detailing the simulation laboratory and hospital area, debriefing rooms, classrooms, and offices. Students will have access to collaborative study areas and lounges in the building.

The Ronald Williams Library is located on the University's main campus, approximately 15 minutes away from the El Centro campus. It boasts 140,000 square feet with 450,000 physical titles, seating for more than 600 users, disability support services, a Language Learning Lab, Learning Success Center, and the Center for Academic Writing. NEIU has an extensive online collection of eBooks, journals, streaming and databases for students to access on campus or remotely. NEIU is a member of the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois which allows participants to utilize "I-Share." The sharing program allows participants to access more than 90 academic libraries with access to more than 38 million items.

NEIU's main campus location provides services directly to the El Centro campus on the second floor. El Centro campus students have access to the same physical and online resources as the main campus. The library has a dedicated librarian for the proposed program to support students and faculty. The librarian is a member of the Medical Library Association, which supports librarians working with health profession programs.

## **Faculty and Staff**

*1050.30(a)(3): A) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff ensure that the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are met. B) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff, as evidenced by level of degrees held, professional experience in the field of study and demonstrated knowledge of the field, ensure that they are able to fulfill their academic responsibilities. At a minimum, faculty shall have a degree from an institution accredited by a U.S. Department of Education and/or Council for Higher Education Accreditation recognized accrediting body or a degree from another country evaluated for U.S. equivalency in the discipline they will teach or for which they will develop curricula at least one level above that of the courses being taught or developed. C) The involvement of faculty in the unit of instruction, research or public service is sufficient to cover the various fields of knowledge encompassed by the unit, to sustain scholarship appropriate to the unit, and to assure curricular continuity and consistency in student evaluation. E) Support personnel, including but not limited to counselors, administrators, clinical supervisors, and technical staff, that are directly assigned to the unit of instruction, research or public service, have the educational background and experience necessary to carry out their assigned responsibilities.*

Northeastern Illinois University, and correspondingly the Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education, has institutional policies that ensure faculty and staff hired possess the training, credentials, and other related qualifications to provide instruction at the institution and in the proposed nursing program. The Executive Director of Nursing was the first strategic hire for the proposed program, and who per Illinois Administrative Code Section 1300.340 (g)(8)(b) was responsible for the curricular design, implementation, and evaluation of curriculum for the nursing education program. The institution plans to hire ten new faculty members including a Simulation Director, two Assistant Professors, two Instructors, and five Clinical faculty members in fiscal years 2025 and 2026. Staff hires will include a Simulation Operations Specialist, Clinical Experiences Coordinator, Professional Advisor/Student Support Specialist, and an Office Manager. The proposed program will follow the hiring process for the campus, including "Equity-in-Faculty Search-and-Screen" training for search committee members. Tenure-track faculty and adjunct faculty who will be hired to teach in the proposed program or oversee clinicals will have the appropriate qualifications, licensures, and relevant certifications. Embracing *A Thriving Illinois*, the Executive Director will collaborate with faculty members, the Center for Teaching and Learning, and staff from the Office of Equity and Diversity, and Inclusion to create semester and year-long workshops to provide pedagogical training for faculty which is inclusive and equity-minded to help ensure an equitable program for faculty, staff, and students.

## **Fiscal and Personnel Resources**

*1050.30(a)(5): A) The financial commitments to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are sufficient to ensure that the faculty and staff and support services necessary to offer the unit of instruction, research or public service can be acquired and maintained. B) Projections of revenues necessary to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are based on supportable estimates of state appropriations, local tax support, student tuition and fees, private gifts, and/or governmental grants and contracts.*

The proposed MSNEP is being developed as a strategic initiative from NEIU. Starting with Fiscal Year 2023, NEIU has allocated internal funds to build the program. NEIU presented budget outlines for each fiscal year through 2029-2030. The institution has submitted budgetary plans indicating that the proposed program will be financially viable and self-sustaining during the

projection period. The program has financial support from the institution including allocations from the general operating budget as well as the President's Strategic Planning Development Fund.

### **Accreditation and Licensure**

*1050.30(b)(3)[applicable only to units of instruction]: Appropriate steps shall be taken to assure that professional accreditation needed for licensure or entry into a profession as specified in the objectives of the unit of instruction is maintained or will be granted in a reasonable period of time.*

The proposed program will seek accreditation through the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), which is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. NEIU will submit an application to CCNE within two years of approval by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation's Board of Nursing. NEIU will apply for full accreditation from CCNE in the 2027-2028 academic year with a goal to be fully accredited in 2029.

### **Program Information**

*1050.30(b)(2)[applicable only to units of instruction]: A) The information which the institution provides for students and the public shall include the following: i) An accurate description of the unit of instruction, including its objectives, length, and residency requirements if any; ii) Schedule of tuition, fees, and all other charges and expenses necessary for completion of the unit of instruction, cancellation and refund policies; iii) Student rights and responsibilities; iv) A statement regarding the transferability of college credits, including the fact that the decision to accept transfer credits is determined by the receiving institutions; v) A statement as to how the institution will advise students on the nature of the transfer process, including the importance of consulting with institutions to which the student may seek to transfer; vi) Evidence of arrangements for the transfer of courses or credits or both to institutional counterparts, when these arrangements exist; these arrangements are also known as articulation agreements; vii) A statement of the institution's most recent graduation rates and the number of graduates and enrollments as provided by the institution to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and any submission of data to satisfy Board reporting requirements; and viii) Other material facts concerning the institution and the unit of instruction as are likely to affect the decision of the student to enroll. B) The information listed in subsection (b)(2)(A) shall be available to prospective students prior to enrollment and shall be included in the institution's catalog of programs.*

Detailed information about the proposed program, including a description of the admission policies, University policies, tuition, fees, and curriculum, will be published on the University's website.

### **Staff Conclusion**

The staff concludes that the Master of Science in Nursing, Entry into Practice at Northeastern Illinois University meets the criteria to implement the Board of Higher Education Act (110 ILCS 205/et.seq.) as set forth in 23 Illinois Administrative Code, Ch. II, Section 1050.30, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education policies pertaining to assessment and accreditation or licensure.

## Southern Illinois University Carbondale

**Proposed Degree Title in the Region of Authorization:** Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering in the Southern Region

Projected Enrollments and Degrees

First Year Enrollment	Fifth Year Enrollment	Degrees Awarded Fifth Year
10	45	10

### Background

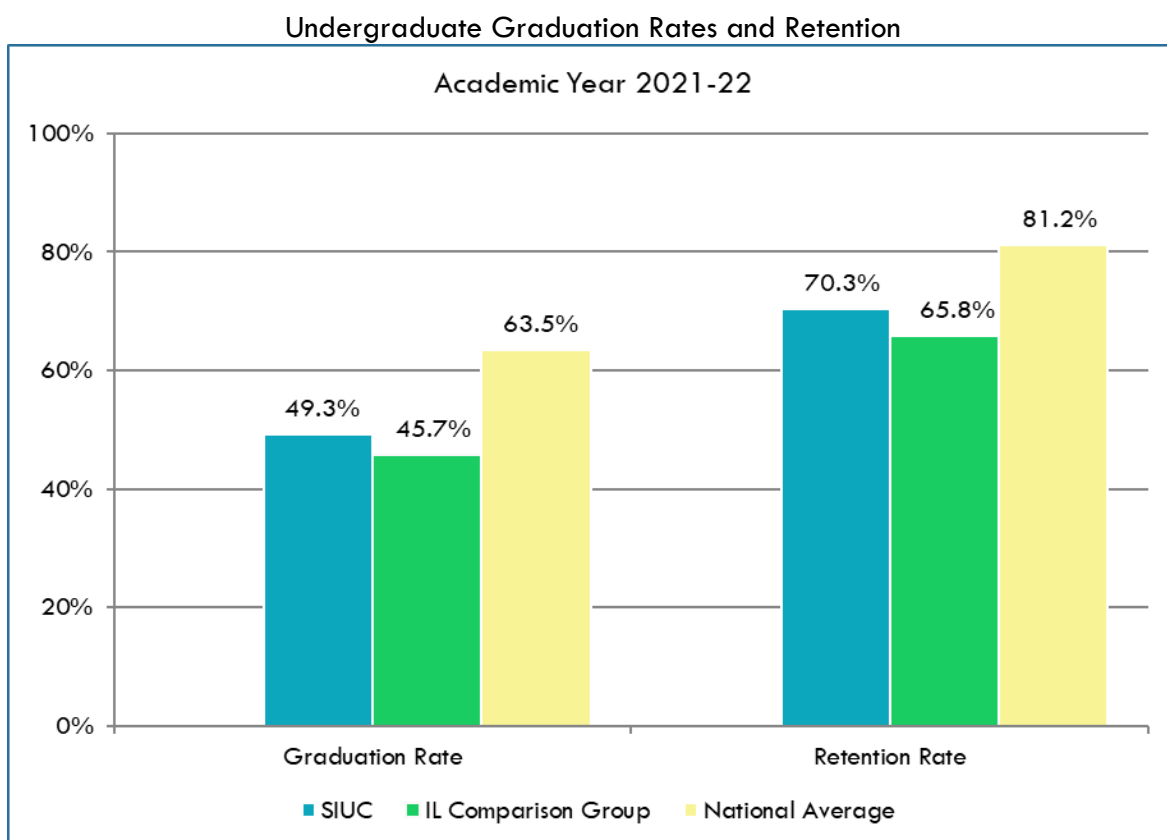
Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC or University) is seeking authorization to offer a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering (BS in EnvE) in the Southern region. The program will be housed within the School of Civil, Environmental and Infrastructure Engineering (CEIE). The 126-credit hour program is designed to prepare students to apply mathematical and scientific principles related to the design, development and operational evaluation of systems for controlling contained living environments and for monitoring and controlling factors in the external natural environment, including pollution control, waste and hazardous material disposal, health and safety protection, conservation, life support, and requirements for the protection of special materials and related work environments. Students will explore a variety of areas including water and wastewater treatment, waste and hazardous waste management, air pollution control, climate change, pollutant/contaminant transport, and learn the fundamental principles of sustainable environmental engineering analysis and design.

The BS in EnvE program builds upon the foundation of SIUC's existing civil engineering curriculum sharing some of the same core courses but differs in its primary focus on environmental engineering courses during the third and fourth years of the program. The program will prepare students to become productive members of the engineering profession as practitioners, researchers, and educators equipped with the knowledge and skills to tackle current and future challenges in environmental engineering. There are a variety of national and international employment opportunities for environmental engineering graduates in government, private sectors, and consulting firms (e.g., water and sewage systems, air quality) as well as public agencies at the city, county, state, and federal levels.

### Institutional Data

*1050.30(b)(1)(H): Success in student progression and graduation rates across all existing approved programs, and success rates in programs preparing students for certification and licensure, shall be consistent with expectations in higher education and the appropriate related field of study. At a minimum, the Board shall consider these factors based on results for similar institutions. (i) Graduation rates, certificate and degree completion rates, retention rates, and pass rates for licensure and certification aligned with thresholds set by State nor national regulatory bodies. (ii) The success rate shall be, at a minimum, higher than those of the lowest quartile of these measures for similar Illinois institutions defined as open versus competitive enrollment institutions and primarily associate versus primarily baccalaureate granting institutions. Exceptions may be made to the lowest quartile if an institution is above the national average for these measures using the same comparison categories of institutions.*

This section includes information about institutional and student success measures for Southern Illinois University Carbondale. The institution's rates will be compared to Illinois institutions from within a select comparison group and against the national standards or averages. For a proposed undergraduate program, this section will include undergraduate graduation rates, first to second year retention rates, student loan default rates, and any applicable licensure passage rates. For a proposed graduate program, this section will primarily focus on student loan default data since this measure also includes graduate students in the calculation.



Source: National System for Education Statistics (NCES), US Department of Education  
 Note: Southern Illinois University Carbondale is in the four-year, baccalaureate inclusive Illinois comparison group. Higher percentages are positive indicators.

### Undergraduate Graduation Rate

The graduation rate measures the rate at which entering freshmen graduate within 150 percent of normal program length. Data is provided for six-year graduation rates for first-time, full-time bachelor's degree-seeking students and three-year graduation rates for full-time associate degree-seeking students. The national standard for graduation rates is reported annually by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

### Undergraduate Retention Rate

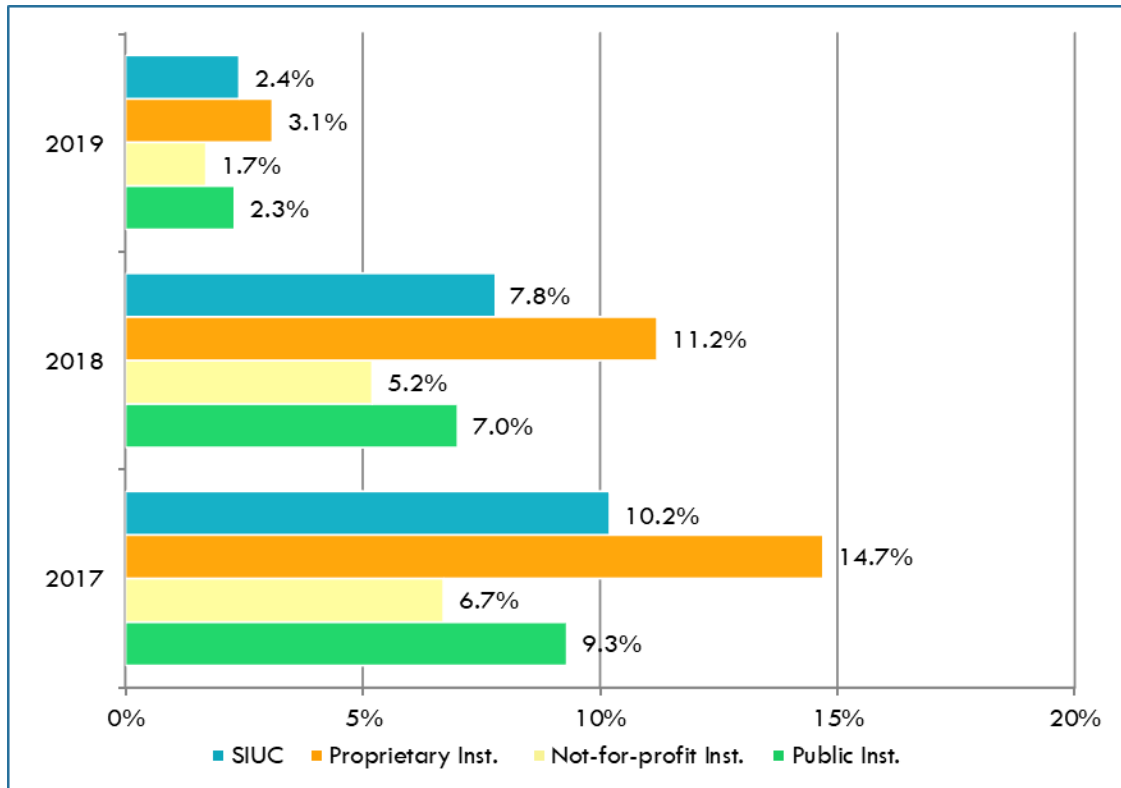
Retention rates examine the percentage of first-time degree seeking students enrolled in the fall of the prior year that are still enrolled in the fall of the current year. The national standard for retention rates is reported annually by NCES.

### Undergraduate Completions per 100 FTE

Academic Year 2021-22	Southern Illinois University Carbondale	Comparable Illinois Institutions
	29	31.9

The full-time equivalent (FTE) data is a unit of measurement intended to represent one student enrolled full time for one academic year. The calculation is based upon credit/contact hours offered at an institution divided by a standard minimum (12 credit hours) full-time course load. The completions per 100 FTE data are included to provide a holistic view of completion across different student populations.

### Three-Year Cohort Student Loan Default Rate



Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), US Department of Education

Note: Due to the pause on federal student loan payments that began in March 2020, the cohort default rate for fiscal year 2020 is zero percent for the institution and all institution types. The national cohort default rate for fiscal year 2019 was 2.3 percent and zero percent for fiscal years 2020 and 2021. A lower number is a positive indicator.

The three-year cohort student loan default rate is the percentage of a school's borrowers who enter repayment on certain Federal Loan Programs during a particular federal fiscal year, October 1 to September 30, and default or meet other specified conditions prior to the end of the second following fiscal year.

### Need

1050.30(a)(6): A) The unit of instruction, research or public service is educationally and economically consistent with the educational priorities and needs of the State of Illinois. B) The unit of instruction,



*research or public service meets a need that is not currently met by existing institutions and units of instruction, research or public service.*

The need for environmental engineers has grown substantially over the past decade. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts an annual growth of seven percent in environmental engineering occupations from 2023 to 2033, with a 2024 median annual salary of \$104,170. In Illinois, a similar growth rate of 4.88 percent is predicted between 2022 to 2032 due to new concerns about chemicals added to water for drilling shale gas (Illinois Department of Employment Security and the Illinois WorkNet Center). Currently, there are 1,460 employed environmental engineers in Illinois out of 47,300 employed nationwide (CareerExplorer). Thus, the job outlook for graduates of the proposed program is promising with various employment opportunities in both government (e.g., Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois EPA, and the City of Carbondale) and a wide range of private sector manufacturing and consulting companies (e.g., water and sewage systems, petroleum and coal products manufacturing).

Southern Illinois is characterized by a distinctive environmental landscape, marked by factors such as the lingering impact of past mining activities, the prevalence of abandoned coal mines, and unique temperatures that contribute to frequent harmful algal blooms. Furthermore, the region's agricultural industry significantly impacts the environment resulting in residents dealing with environmental challenges and seeking a deeper understanding of these issues to improve their quality of life. The new BS in EnvE program at Southern Illinois University will empower the next generation of engineers to tackle environmental problems within their communities and mitigate or even prevent further environmental degradation, fostering a new wave of environmental protection. The School of CEIE has received frequent inquiries from prospective students interested in a degree program in environmental engineering. The proposed program will appeal to students throughout the Southern and Southwestern regions of Illinois (where no BS program in environmental engineering currently exists) and to students in nearby states, including the St. Louis metropolitan area.

### **A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth**

Southern Illinois University Carbondale's strategic plan, *Imagine 2030*, supports IBHE's *A Thriving Illinois: Goal 1, Equity*, to close equity gaps for students who have historically been left behind. In SIUC's strategic plan, the College of Engineering, Computing, Technology, and Mathematics aims to increase the underrepresented student population by five percent by 2030 and the female student population by five percent by 2030. The creation of the proposed program has the potential to attract a more diverse student body, including more female students, thereby fostering gender equality in STEM fields. Establishing an environmental engineering program at SIUC not only addresses the region's environmental challenges by nurturing local talent but also serves as a catalyst for promoting diversity and gender equality within the field of engineering by fostering inclusivity.

Institutional strategies to increase and retain faculty, staff, and administrators of color fall under Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) pillar of SIUC's strategic plan. There are key initiatives of this pillar that will have implications for the proposed program such as: reallocating University resources so that DEI is clearly prioritized and valued; focusing on economic development opportunities that attract diverse businesses in the community; rewarding faculty for cross-disciplinary collaborations; proactively developing social activities for new faculty to aid retention; provide more formal opportunities for mentoring to support new (and mid-career) faculty; conducting yearly workshops for associate professors to prepare for promotion to full professor; discussing DEI initiatives

regularly in meetings; incorporating DEI into faculty onboarding and New Student Orientation; investing in defining, evolving, and sustaining a robust organizational culture; providing pipeline programs and mentorships to improve the University's capability for early detection of needs and disabilities; providing DEI training for residential life staff; and developing opportunities for faculty, staff and students to engage in scholarship and research activities that address DEI social issues.

The proposed program will contribute to *A Thriving Illinois: Goal 2, Sustainability, to build a stronger financial future for individuals and institutions by finding ways to reduce the financial burden of education on students and their families*. Southern Illinois University Carbondale has demonstrated a strong commitment to enhancing college affordability for students by providing scholarships that target underserved populations, reallocating University resources to prioritize DEI, enhancing graduate assistantships and undergraduate research opportunities, and creating more paid and unpaid research opportunities. Each year, cumulatively, students are awarded over \$30 million in scholarships including over \$20 million in merit scholarships to undergraduates, more than \$6 million to new students, and over \$3.4 million in donor scholarships.

The BS in EnvE program is expected to attract a higher percentage of female students compared to the existing BS in Civil Engineering program. To support underserved students, SIUC offers several institutional scholarships, including the Chancellor's Scholarship, the Dean's Scholarship, Saluki Maroon, Saluki Silver, Saluki Gold, and Donor Funded Scholarship which aim to provide equitable opportunities for recipients. Given the anticipated demographics of the proposed program, students enrolling in this degree are likely to have increased opportunities to receive these scholarships.

Additionally, many students in Southern Illinois are from historically underserved backgrounds, including those from farming families and communities with limited financial resources. This new program is designed to serve students from the region by providing an accessible and career-focused pathway in environmental engineering. As a result, students from these backgrounds will have greater access to institutional scholarships and financial aid, helping to reduce barriers to higher education and support their academic and professional growth in a high-demand field.

In addressing *Goal 3 of A Thriving Illinois, Growth, to increase talent and innovation to drive economic growth*, the proposed BS in EnvE program will provide students with valuable co-op and internship opportunities to gain hands-on experience, apply their knowledge in real-world settings, and develop professional networks before graduation. These opportunities will be available through SIUC's collaborations with state agencies, private companies, and non-profit organizations dedicated to environmental protection and sustainability in Southern Illinois and the surrounding regions. Key partners include the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency offering opportunities for students to engage in water quality monitoring, air pollution control, and hazardous waste management projects throughout the state; the Illinois Department of Natural Resources providing internships focused on wetland conservation and environmental impact assessments in Southern Illinois; and the U.S. Geological Survey Central Midwest Illinois Water Science Center providing research internships related to groundwater contamination, hydrology, and PFAS mitigation efforts. The University also partners with other local and regional environmental companies such as Hanson Professional Services (Springfield, IL), Fehr Graham (Springfield, IL), TWM, Inc. (Swansea, IL), and Crawford, Murphy & Tilly (Springfield, IL). These engineering and environmental consulting firms offer student internships in environmental site assessments, water and wastewater treatment design, and environmental compliance consulting.

Students will have the opportunity to complete paid or unpaid internships during the program. Longer-term co-op placements will allow students to alternate between academic coursework and full-time employment in the environmental engineering field. Students may also work on industry-sponsored research projects as part of their senior capstone experience. By leveraging these partnerships and industry connections, the proposed program will equip students with practical experience and professional exposure to address the growing demand for environmental engineers in Southern Illinois and beyond.

Moreover, the proposed program will benefit from the School of CEIE's existing partnership with the Southern Illinois Building Association (SIBA). The SIBA is a full-service association bringing together 446 general contractors, subcontractors and suppliers serving Southern Illinois. Initially created to advance the construction industry, SIBA's focus has expanded to areas of labor relations, safety, education, construction development, Equal Employment Opportunity, and representation with government agencies. One of SIBA's objectives is to promote Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity, and business diversity efforts. SIBA provides a variety of training programs and scholarships to help underrepresented and underserved students graduate from college. The SIBA Career Expo provides a great opportunity for students in the proposed program to meet local employers and business leaders to discuss co-op, internship, and employment positions.

### Comparable Programs in Illinois

Currently, five universities in Illinois offer bachelor's degrees in environmental engineering (two public and three independent institutions). Notably, there are no environmental engineering degree programs in the Southern region of Illinois, neither at the baccalaureate or graduate level. Therefore, the proposed program will appeal to many students in Southern Illinois and surrounding regions seeking to pursue a BS degree in EnvE. Also, incentives such as SIUC's tuition assistance programs available only to Illinois residents or children of SIUC alumni (e.g., the Saluki Commitment program and legacy tuition rates) and a strong employment outlook in the environmental field in both government and private sectors will attract qualified students to enroll in the proposed program. The BS in EnvE program aims to increase diversity and community participation to achieve environmental and social justice. Environmental engineering graduates will support public well-being and healthy communities through creating innovative systems for delivering water, treating waste, and preventing and remediating pollution in air, water, and soil.

Comparable Programs Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering			
Institution	Degree	Region	Sector
DePaul University	B.S. in Environmental Engineering	Chicago	Independent, Not-for-profit
Loyola University of Chicago	B.S. in Environmental/ Environmental Health Engineering	Chicago	Independent, Not-for-profit
Northwestern University	B.S. in Environmental Engineering	North Suburban	Independent, Not-for-profit
University of Illinois Chicago	B.S. in Environmental Engineering	Chicago	Public
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign	B.S. in Environmental Engineering	Prairie	Public

Source: IBHE Program Inventory

## Mission and Objectives

*1050.30(a)(1): A) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with the mission of the college or university. B) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with what the unit title implies.*

The primary mission of the proposed Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering is to prepare students to become productive members of the environmental engineering profession as practitioners, researchers, or educators by giving them the required knowledge and skills to tackle the current and future challenges in environmental engineering. The program is consistent with the purpose, goals, objectives, and mission of Southern Illinois University Carbondale. The requested degree title reflects the program's objectives and curriculum.

## Curriculum and Assessment

*1050.30(b)(1) [applicable only to units of instruction]: A) The caliber and content of the curriculum must assure that the objectives of the unit of instruction will be achieved. B) The breadth and depth of the curriculum must be consistent with what the title of the unit of instruction implies. C) The admission and graduation requirements for the unit of instruction must be consistent with the stated objectives of the unit of instruction. D) Institutions must show the capacity to develop, deliver and support academic programs. Procedures and policies that will assure the effective design, conduct and evaluation of the degree programs under the academic control of the institution must be developed. Assessment plans must demonstrate that the institution has identified clear and appropriate program and student learning goals and has defined appropriate outcomes. Appropriate data must be collected and may be requested by the Board to show the level of student learning that has occurred as a result of participation in the institution's programs of study.*

*1050.30(a)(2): The design, conduct and evaluation of the unit of instruction, research or public service are under the direct and continuous control of the sponsoring institution's established processes for academic planning and quality maintenance.*

## Admission Requirements

Applicants interested in applying for admission to the Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering program must meet the general admission requirements of the University. Students on track to graduate from high school are eligible for automatic admission if they satisfy one of the following criteria for freshman admission: a cumulative high school GPA of 2.75 or above, a ranking in the top 10 percent of their graduating class, or a test score equivalent to a 23 ACT or 1130 SAT. Admission requirements for transfer students include at least 12 transferable semester hours or 18 quarter hours and a GPA of at least 2.0 or above (as calculated by transfer institution grading policies). Students with less than 12 transferable hours must have a GPA of 2.0 or above and also meet freshman admission requirements.

## Curriculum

Environmental engineering is a multidisciplinary field encompassing drinking water/wastewater treatment, air pollution, waste disposal, hazardous waste management, soil and groundwater remediation, and the development of engineering solutions for sustainable energy production. The proposed BS in EnvE is a 126-credit hour program that prepares students to address emerging environmental challenges while considering the complex interactions between technical,

economic, societal, and regulatory issues. The program is designed to give students a broad understanding of social and economic issues, coupled with an in-depth study of science and engineering principles needed to develop engineering solutions to environmental problems. The curriculum was developed using industry guidelines published by the American Society Civil Engineers (ASCE) as well as the Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology (ABET) criteria. An integral part of the curriculum is the emphasis on project-based learning, prioritizing teamwork and hands-on learning experiences in real-world contexts. All courses will be delivered face-to-face on campus. The School of CEIE currently offers a BS degree program in Civil Engineering, with an option to specialize in environmental engineering. The specialization in environmental engineering requires students to take environmental engineering-related technical electives, while completing all civil engineering degree requirements. Compared to the civil engineering program, the proposed program's curriculum contains more specialized courses in environmental engineering by mainly replacing structural analysis and design courses.

Environmental engineering students will have the opportunity to participate in internship programs with local companies and organizations (e.g., the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources) focused on environmental conservation, sustainable development, water resource management, and pollution control. These internships will provide hands-on experience allowing students to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world projects. SIUC's Career Development Center offers specialized career counseling services tailored to environmental engineering majors, including guidance on identifying internship and job opportunities, networking strategies within the environmental engineering industry, and advice on career paths within the field. Students will also benefit from events hosted by the program to connect students with alumni and professionals working in environmental engineering, facilitating mentorship opportunities and industry connections.

The College of Engineering, Computing, Technology, and Mathematics is home to the Success in Engineering through Excellence and Diversity (SEED) academic support program. The SEED program was implemented to help improve enrollment, retention, and graduation rates of students from underserved groups. The SEED program provides a variety of support services such as academic support, tutoring, mentoring, scholarships, assistance with internship and job placement, and support from peers who share similar experiences. The SEED office is staffed with safe zone trained staff to ensure a safe space for students to work and study. A computer lab and printing resources are also provided for students. Additionally, students may also participate in multicultural registered student organizations that support engineering majors from underrepresented populations, including the National Society of Black Engineers, the Society of Women Engineers, and the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers. Other extracurricular activities on campus include environmental clubs, sustainability initiatives, and community service projects that complement students' academic studies and demonstrate their commitment to environmental protection. Additionally, SIUC offers Saluki Cares, a student retention initiative that connects students with academic resources, counseling services, and financial aid support. Another program, the First-Year Experience, helps new students adjust to college life through mentorship, academic workshops, and structured advising.

#### Assessment of Student Learning

The proposed program will adopt ABET's student outcomes which describe the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that students are expected to acquire as they progress through the program including the ability to identify, formulate, and solve complex engineering problems by applying principles of engineering, science, and mathematics; apply engineering design to produce solutions

that meet specified needs with consideration of public health, safety, and welfare, as well as global, cultural, social, environmental, and economic factors; communicate effectively with a range of audiences; recognize ethical and professional responsibilities in engineering situations and make informed judgments, which must consider the impact of engineering solutions in global, economic, environmental, and societal contexts; function effectively on a team whose members together provide leadership, create a collaborative and inclusive environment, establish goals, plan tasks, and meet objectives; develop and conduct appropriate experimentation, analyze and interpret data, and use engineering judgment to draw conclusions; and acquire and apply new knowledge as needed, using appropriate learning strategies. These outcomes will be used to assess student learning measured by the following quantitative and qualitative tools: course assignments, lab reports, co-op/internship reports, capstone design projects, graduating senior surveys, graduating senior exit interviews, and the Fundamentals of Engineering licensure examination results.

In addition, each course will be evaluated by students at the end of the semester as part of the Instructor Course Evaluations developed by SIUC. Based on student feedback, instructors make minor adjustments to the course content, if needed. Any modification that requires a change in the course description requires a review by the Curriculum Committee and is subject to the approval of program faculty. Once every six years, all undergraduate courses offered in the School of CEIE undergo a comprehensive review consisting of evaluating student outcomes, pre-requisites, textbooks, course descriptions, software, projects, labs and lecture topics. The School of CEIE assessment committee compiles and analyzes the data to develop recommendations for any changes to the curriculum.

#### Program Assessment

The proposed program will utilize alumni/employer surveys and retention/graduation data for program assessment and continuous improvement. The School's Assessment Committee is responsible for gathering and sharing assessment results with program faculty. Each year, faculty review assessment results and make changes as necessary to course learning objectives, content, learning outcomes, and teaching approaches to improve student learning.

#### Facilities (space, equipment, instructional materials)

*1050.30(a)(4): A) Facilities, equipment and instructional resources (e.g., laboratory supplies and equipment, instructional materials, computational equipment) necessary to support the high-quality academic work in the unit of instruction, research or public service are available and maintained. B) Clinical sites necessary to meet the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service. C) Library holdings and acquisitions, owned or contracted for by the institution, that are necessary to support high quality instruction and scholarship in the unit of instruction, research and public service, are conveniently available and accessible, and can be maintained.*

The School of Civil, Environmental, and Infrastructure Engineering's existing classrooms, laboratories and offices (located in the Engineering Complex) are adequate to support the proposed program. In addition to a number of traditional classrooms and lecture halls, there are several smart classrooms in different buildings throughout campus equipped with LCD projectors, podiums, sound systems, computers, document cameras, DVDs/VCRs and smart boards. These high-tech classrooms are frequently used for interactive video classes and video conferencing. Training is available through the Center for Teaching Excellence to faculty and staff utilizing the equipment in these classrooms.



The proposed BS in EnvE program requires hands-on laboratory experience and the laboratory has adequate space and is well-equipped to meet the instructional needs of the program. The laboratory is equipped with Microsoft Office as well as course specific software (STAAD, ANSYS, EPANET, HMS, RAS, and AutoCad with Civil 3D). Students also have access to the College's computer facilities in the College of Engineering, Computing, Technology, and Mathematics that houses 27 computers along with 24 Linux workstations. Special application software is available to students in the proposed program such as Autodesk Suites, ArcGIS Desktop, Matlab, CADENCE, Opnet, Synopsis, PLECS, Ansys, Creo, Aspentech, Belt, Analyst, NI, Xilinx, Minesight, Aggflo, Carlson, Flac3D, Rocscience, Slysyl, Lamodel, Multisim, and Labview.

Southern Illinois University's Morris Library contains a wide array of resources to support the proposed program, with more than 2.6 million volumes, 200,000 e-books, 43,000 periodicals and serials, and over 3.6 million microform units. Morris Library subscribes to over 300 engineering journals. Abstracting and indexing are provided by a number of databases, including Web of Science and Computers and Applied Sciences Complete. With these databases, students and faculty can search and find citations to articles and other content from thousands of journals, book chapters, theses and dissertations, and conference proceedings. The library has subscriptions to journals from all major science and technology publishers, including Wiley, Elsevier, Springer, IEEE, ACM, and ASCE. Morris Library has acquired over 5000 books in engineering and technology over the last ten years. Overall, the library holds over 20,000 books in the field. Reference librarians are available in person, by phone, and via chat service.

## **Faculty and Staff**

*1050.30(a)(3): A) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff ensure that the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are met. B) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff, as evidenced by level of degrees held, professional experience in the field of study and demonstrated knowledge of the field, ensure that they are able to fulfill their academic responsibilities. At a minimum, faculty shall have a degree from an institution accredited by a U.S. Department of Education and/or Council for Higher Education Accreditation recognized accrediting body or a degree from another country evaluated for U.S. equivalency in the discipline they will teach or for which they will develop curricula at least one level above that of the courses being taught or developed. C) The involvement of faculty in the unit of instruction, research or public service is sufficient to cover the various fields of knowledge encompassed by the unit, to sustain scholarship appropriate to the unit, and to assure curricular continuity and consistency in student evaluation. E) Support personnel, including but not limited to counselors, administrators, clinical supervisors, and technical staff, that are directly assigned to the unit of instruction, research or public service, have the educational background and experience necessary to carry out their assigned responsibilities.*

Existing faculty in the School of CEIE will provide instruction for the proposed program. The University has identified institutional policies that ensure faculty and staff possess the training, credentials, and other related qualifications to provide instruction in the BS in EnvE program. A formal faculty evaluation process is in place based upon the University's policies and labor agreements. The proposed program will be primarily supported by four tenured or tenure-track environmental engineering faculty members, and three water resources faculty members. Additional tenure-track faculty members may be hired as needed. All full-time faculty are active in research/scholarship and ongoing professional development. The School of CEIE prioritizes gender equality and equal opportunity in faculty recruitment. Over the past eight years, the School of CEIE has welcomed four faculty members from diverse backgrounds (including two female faculty members) in the environmental engineering specialization.



Other personnel that will provide operational and administrative support for the proposed program include the School of CEIE director and an office administrator. Additional office support staff will be hired on a part-time basis as needed. SIUC provides a range of academic support services designed to help students succeed in their programs, from advisement and retention strategies to resources that support timely degree completion. The proposed BS in Environmental Engineering will integrate these university-wide and program-specific initiatives to ensure students receive the guidance and support they need. Advising staff will work with individual students on program admission, course scheduling, degree planning, and academic progress tracking. Once students declare a major, they transition to departmental advisors that provide specialized guidance related to the environmental engineering curriculum. Faculty advisors within the department will guide students in the proposed program through course selection, career pathways, research opportunities, and internship placements. The program will work closely with the Career Development Center to provide resume workshops, job placement assistance, and internship connections with environmental engineering firms and government agencies. Undergraduate students will be encouraged to participate in faculty-led research projects related to environmental remediation, water treatment, and sustainability. Additionally, the program will support engagement in capstone projects and industry collaborations, ensuring students gain practical experience before graduation.

### **Fiscal and Personnel Resources**

*1050.30(a)(5): A) The financial commitments to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are sufficient to ensure that the faculty and staff and support services necessary to offer the unit of instruction, research or public service can be acquired and maintained. B) Projections of revenues necessary to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are based on supportable estimates of state appropriations, local tax support, student tuition and fees, private gifts, and/or governmental grants and contracts.*

The University has adequate faculty, staff, and other instructional resources to administer the proposed program. The program will utilize many courses already offered at SIUC and will be supported by existing faculty and staff. The program will share administrative resources with existing engineering degree programs in the School of CEIE.

### **Accreditation and Licensure**

*1050.30(b)(3)[applicable only to units of instruction]: Appropriate steps shall be taken to assure that professional accreditation needed for licensure or entry into a profession as specified in the objectives of the unit of instruction is maintained or will be granted in a reasonable period of time.*

The proposed program will seek ABET accreditation when eligible. The ABET accreditation review is conducted every six years and requires an extensive self-study by the unit, an external review by the accreditation body, and a detailed follow-up report. SIUC has several ABET accredited programs. Graduates of the proposed program will meet the requirements to take Fundamentals of Engineering licensure examination.

### **Program Information**

*1050.30(b)(2)[applicable only to units of instruction]: A) The information which the institution provides for students and the public shall include the following: i) An accurate description of the unit of instruction, including its objectives, length, and residency requirements if any; ii) Schedule of tuition,*

*fees, and all other charges and expenses necessary for completion of the unit of instruction, cancellation and refund policies; iii) Student rights and responsibilities; iv) A statement regarding the transferability of college credits, including the fact that the decision to accept transfer credits is determined by the receiving institutions; v) A statement as to how the institution will advise students on the nature of the transfer process, including the importance of consulting with institutions to which the student may seek to transfer; vi) Evidence of arrangements for the transfer of courses or credits or both to institutional counterparts, when these arrangements exist; these arrangements are also known as articulation agreements; vii) A statement of the institution's most recent graduation rates and the number of graduates and enrollments as provided by the institution to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and any submission of data to satisfy Board reporting requirements; and viii) Other material facts concerning the institution and the unit of instruction as are likely to affect the decision of the student to enroll. B) The information listed in subsection (b)(2)(A) shall be available to prospective students prior to enrollment and shall be included in the institution's catalog of programs.*

Detailed information about the proposed program, including a description of the admission policies, institutional policies, tuition, fees, and curriculum, will be published on the University's website.

### **Staff Conclusion**

The staff concludes that the Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering proposed by Southern Illinois University Carbondale meets the criteria to implement the Board of Higher Education Act (110 ILCS 205/et.seq.) as set forth in 23 Illinois Administrative Code, Ch. II, Section 1050.30, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education policies pertaining to assessment and accreditation or licensure.

## University of Illinois Springfield

### Proposed Center Title in the Region of Authorization: Center for Lincoln Studies

*New Administrative Unit:* The proposal is for the permanent establishment of the Center for Lincoln Studies. The Center will serve as a research unit with a focus on studying, teaching, and hosting outreach activities about Abraham Lincoln's life and influence.

### Background

The University of Illinois Springfield (UIS or the University) is seeking authorization to permanently establish the Center for Lincoln Studies (CLS) in the Central region. The Center was previously approved as a temporary center in 2018 by the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). CLS is housed within the Academic Affairs division led by the provost and serves primarily as a research unit without a direct instruction component. CLS is dedicated to the study of Abraham Lincoln's life, era, and legacy. Since 2017, CLS has become an important contributor to Lincoln Studies both locally and nationally. Propelled by two distinguished historians of Lincoln, a full-time director, and strengthened by substantial endowment gifts, the Center has sponsored pioneering scholarship and public outreach since its public opening on February 12, 2021. CLS has successfully promoted active learning, meaningful research and impactful civic engagement in furthering the mission of the University of Illinois Springfield. Guided by these objectives, CLS intends to become the world's foremost academic center for Lincoln Studies within the next ten years.

### Need

*1050.30(a)(6): A) The unit of instruction, research or public service is educationally and economically consistent with the educational priorities and needs of the State of Illinois. B) The unit of instruction, research or public service meets a need that is not currently met by existing institutions and units of instruction, research or public service.*

Abraham Lincoln is an influential figure in American history serving as the 16th President of the United States. His name epitomizes the central themes of the American experience, particularly its progress toward freedom, democracy, and equality. The Center for Lincoln Studies is dedicated to studying the life and legacy of Lincoln, playing a critical role in shaping the new generation of thinkers, leaders, and researchers in Illinois. There are few figures in American history who have significantly contributed to democratic society. Through the Center's work with educators, it will continue to help Illinois students understand the importance of citizenship and civic responsibility.

Additionally, CLS collaborates with several organizations in Springfield and central Illinois with the goal of making Lincoln's story accessible to everyone. Some of the Center's partnerships include the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum (ALPLM), the Lincoln Home National Historic Site, the Lincoln-Herndon Law Offices State Historic Site, the Old State Capitol State Historic Site, the Lincoln Tomb State Historic Site, and Looking for Lincoln. Moreover, the Abraham Lincoln Association (ALA), the nation's most influential Lincoln organization, is headquartered in Springfield. Recognizing the many possibilities for collaboration, the ALA in 2016 urged UIS to create a Lincoln Studies Center and pledged to support it. The CLS director is a member of the ALA board and the steering committee of Looking for Lincoln. Since the director's arrival in 2023, CLS has partnered with Looking for Lincoln and the ALPLM on programs. In 2022, the Center hosted a major Lincoln art exhibit with ALPLM, and in prior years CLS faculty affiliates worked closely with the Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History to offer teacher seminars and create an online Lincoln course.

## **A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth**

The proposed Center supports *A Thriving Illinois: Goal 1, Equity, to close the equity gap for students who have historically been left behind*. The University of Illinois Springfield's ACCESS 2030 Plan aims to increase the enrollment of underrepresented minority students and rural students by 20 percent over the next three years and increase the retention of underrepresented minority students and rural students by two percent per year for the next three years. To accomplish these goals, UIS has implemented several initiatives including: improving the admission and acceptance rate of students from underrepresented minority groups, rural Illinois students, first-generation students, and students whose high schools are ranked in the C and D categories on the Illinois Report Card; reallocating institutional scholarship dollars to support outreach to underrepresented minority students and rural students; increasing levels of support for the President's Award Program and MAP funding; expanding Summer Bridge programs to provide more initial support to bolster enrollment and retention; increasing housing assistance funding; increasing student participation in high-quality, high impact practices such as internships, applied case studies/problem-solving, research opportunities with faculty, capstone experiences, and writing intensive courses; and strengthening tutoring and advising services to better support and retain underrepresented and rural students. Progress toward these goals is monitored by the student retention team that includes the Office of Enrollment Management, Institutional Research, the Center for Academic Success and Advising, the Undergraduate Research Program, and Undergraduate Education.

The University's efforts will have positive implications for the Center for Lincoln Studies, enhancing equity and diversity on campus and closing equity gaps in student outcomes. The Center will expand access and opportunities for UIS undergraduate and graduate students of all backgrounds. Most notably, CLS provides funding through graduate assistantships, aligning with the University's plan to reduce financial barriers and support student success. These assistantships offer various hands-on training opportunities including research, oral history interviews, archival research, primary source transcription, citation checking, blogging for social media, and podcast recording and editing. These activities are part of the University's high-impact practices to ensure accessibility for all students, particularly those from historically marginalized groups.

UIS participates in the University of Illinois System's program for recruiting underrepresented minority faculty into tenured/tenure-track positions. The UI vice president for academic affairs and UIS provides additional funding to support the research programs of faculty hired through this program. These funds are designed to enhance offers of employment to minority faculty to make UIS a more attractive career destination. Within the past five years, all six requests for funding through the program have been approved. In 2022, the University created a task force for the recruitment and retention of underrepresented faculty. The task force recently presented its report and recommendations to the provost and campus community, including the launch of a faculty mentoring program, the completion of an updated search manual, and publication of search committee resources. Required training for search committee members has also been incorporated into the hiring process.

To address *A Thriving Illinois: Goal 2, Sustainability, to build a stronger financial future for both individuals and higher education institutions*, the Center for Lincoln Studies will continue to build collaborative synergies both on campus and within the state to broaden the understanding of Lincoln and his legacy. The Center has a partnership with the Department of History in which two distinguished professors serve as CLS faculty affiliates. CLS will work with local history sites, most notably the Lincoln Home National Historic Site and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, to place UIS undergraduate and graduate students in internship positions. These high-

impact learning opportunities will enhance students' educational experiences and promote improved job prospects.

CLS collaborates with many other organizations on programming, particularly Lincoln organizations. Recently, CLS hosted a major art exhibit on Lincoln's legacy with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum and the Springfield Art Association. The Center also contributes to online programming for Looking for Lincoln, an organization that promotes tourism throughout the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area. CLS affiliated faculty work with other organizations such as Oxford University's Rothermere American Institute (RAI). The RAI is the premier center for the study of the United States in Great Britain. CLS plans to work with Lincoln public history sites nationwide on improving communication and collaboration within Lincoln studies. Additionally, the Center will support future-ready learning, research, and public service by promoting a curriculum on Lincoln and American history.

Lincoln's importance to Illinois tourism will present the Center with future opportunities to partner with organizations focused on economic growth in the state, which closely aligns with *A Thriving Illinois: Goal 3, Growth, to increase talent and innovation to drive economic growth*. Although such collaboration may take many forms, CLS is uniquely positioned to provide expertise and assistance for tourism-related projects primarily financed by businesses, foundations, and government agencies. Several such collaborations are currently underway. The Lincoln Presidential Foundation has partnered with the Lincoln Home National Historic Site to develop youth-centered exhibits about Lincoln. Similarly, Storyteller Studios has worked with the Springfield Illinois Convention & Visitors Bureau to produce a new film for the Lincoln Foundation. These examples suggest the possibilities that tourism presents for CLS, which would welcome opportunities to assist in such endeavors. CLS is exploring opportunities for students at local public history sites that will not only fulfill current hiring needs but also create employment opportunities for future graduates.

### **Comparable Units in Illinois**

The Center for Lincoln Studies serves a variety of populations both locally and nationally through teacher education, lecture series, and media outreach; publishing with academic and trade presses to reach scholarly and public audiences; and educating students and the public through programming and student research opportunities. Comparatively, Knox College has a Lincoln Studies Center, but its principal focus is publishing scholarly primary source materials relating to the life and work of Abraham Lincoln. The Center for Lincoln Studies is distinctive in offering community education and student-centered learning experiences on Lincoln and his legacy through public programs, collaborations with partner organizations, and art exhibitions.

### **Mission and Objectives**

*1050.30(a)(1): A) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with the mission of the college or university. B) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with what the unit title implies.*

The University of Illinois Springfield's mission is to provide a uniquely student-centered educational experience both in and out of the classroom through active learning, meaningful research and impactful civic engagement that prepares graduates to contribute fully to society. The Center of Lincoln Studies is consistent with the purpose, goals, objectives, and mission of the University.

## Assessment of Outcomes

*1050.30(a)(2): The design, conduct and evaluation of the unit of instruction, research or public service are under the direct and continuous control of the sponsoring institution's established processes for academic planning and quality maintenance.*

The Center of Lincoln Studies will be evaluated through a set of outcomes that will drive the Center's core activities:

- Publication of scholarship and presentation of creative work in Lincoln Studies. The Center and its affiliate faculty will be active researchers and participants in scholarly forums. CLS will work with publishers and scholars to increase the number of Lincoln Studies resources available to the public.
- Develop a broader public and academic profile. The Center will collaborate with other organizations to promote the study and understanding of Lincoln. CLS will continue to hold the endowed Lincoln Legacy Lecture Series and Juneteenth Lecture Series each year as well as other public programs. In addition, when possible, the Center will facilitate student interaction with the presenters. The Center will also create teacher workshops and professional development opportunities for teachers.
- Strengthen Lincoln Studies at UIS in history and related disciplines. The Center will assist with increasing the number of undergraduate and graduate students studying Lincoln, Lincoln's legacy, the Civil War and Reconstruction, and the 19th century at UIS. CLS will launch a faculty fellowship program to foster interdisciplinary collaboration and support the Center's core research activities with the goal of building the program to five affiliate faculty/fellows over time.
- Attract additional funding sources through cultivating relationships with donors in collaboration with the University's Office of Advancement to support experiential learning opportunities for students, Center lecture series events, and Center research. CLS will pursue at least one grant opportunity each year to gain support for Center projects.

The CLS director will provide annual reports to the provost detailing the unit's research, community education, and outreach activities. The Community Advisory Board and the UIS Campus Advisory Board will assist with evaluating the Center's outcomes, provide guidance to the director, and strengthen relations with constituencies to raise funds for the Center's endowment and future initiatives. The UIS Advancement Office leads the University's fundraising efforts and will assist the director in building an effective community board. Current donors to the University as well as local leaders in Lincoln Studies and public history will play a significant role on the board.

## Facilities (space, equipment, instructional materials)

*1050.30(a)(4): A) Facilities, equipment and instructional resources (e.g., laboratory supplies and equipment, instructional materials, computational equipment) necessary to support the high-quality academic work in the unit of instruction, research or public service are available and maintained. B) Clinical sites necessary to meet the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service. C) Library holdings and acquisitions, owned or contracted for by the institution, that are necessary to support high quality instruction and scholarship in the unit of instruction, research and public service, are conveniently available and accessible, and can be maintained.*

The Center for Lincoln Studies is located in a renovated office space in the Public Affairs Center at UIS. The space has a large reception area with a dedicated desk for a receptionist or office manager; three offices for staff, graduate assistants, or visiting faculty; and a conference room equipped with a Wi-Fi enabled smart TV that seats 12 people. The facility exceeds existing



and projected future needs of the Center.

The University possesses appropriate library resources with access to online databases, books, journal holdings, and other electronic resources to support the Center. The Brookens Library is a member of the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI). I-Share is a service that provides easy access to the holdings of all 88 CARLI libraries without charge to patrons through a reciprocal borrowing system. The I-Share database has 15 million unique bibliographic records and over 38 million item records. The CARLI collection includes scholarly history books on Lincoln and the Civil War. The library has approximately 3,000 volumes on Lincoln, slavery, and the Civil War.

The Center will have physical or full-text digital access to several dozen journals relevant to Lincoln Studies and America in the 19th century. Moreover, the library offers free access to interlibrary loan services that provide electronic access to virtually any journal article within a few days. The library subscribes to 146 databases, including America: History and Life (the preeminent index for researching articles about American history), Ancestry Library (the premier resource for genealogy research), ProQuest Civil War Era Newspapers, HarpWeek (the most widely distributed illustrated newspaper during the Civil War era), the Historical New York Times, Historical Statistics of the United States, Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (the world's largest archive of digital social science data), JSTOR, the Military & Government Collection, Newspapers.com (the largest collection of searchable digitized historical newspapers), the Oxford English Dictionary, Project Muse, Salem Press Online (a collection of full-text primary source materials on American history), and the Statistical Abstract of the United States. Furthermore, Brookens Library is an Illinois Regional Archives Depository for 14 central Illinois counties holding county and municipal records dating from 1817. The records include relevant primary sources for the study of Lincoln between 1831 and 1861.

## **Faculty and Staff**

*1050.30(a)(3): A) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff ensure that the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are met. B) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff, as evidenced by level of degrees held, professional experience in the field of study and demonstrated knowledge of the field, ensure that they are able to fulfill their academic responsibilities. At a minimum, faculty shall have a degree from an institution accredited by a U.S. Department of Education and/or Council for Higher Education Accreditation recognized accrediting body or a degree from another country evaluated for U.S. equivalency in the discipline they will teach or for which they will develop curricula at least one level above that of the courses being taught or developed. C) The involvement of faculty in the unit of instruction, research or public service is sufficient to cover the various fields of knowledge encompassed by the unit, to sustain scholarship appropriate to the unit, and to assure curricular continuity and consistency in student evaluation. E) Support personnel, including but not limited to counselors, administrators, clinical supervisors, and technical staff, that are directly assigned to the unit of instruction, research or public service, have the educational background and experience necessary to carry out their assigned responsibilities.*

The organizational structure of the Center for Lincoln Studies within the Academic Affairs division includes a Center director, support staff, two faculty affiliates and a graduate assistant. The CLS director reports to the vice provost and director of graduate studies and leads Center initiatives by educating students and the public about the life and legacy of Lincoln through community education programming, research assistantships, internships and other experiential learning opportunities. Support staff provide administrative support to the director. Faculty



affiliates in the Department of History teach undergraduate and graduate students, conduct research advancing the knowledge of Lincoln, and engage in CLS projects to promote the importance of citizenship and civic responsibility. The graduate assistant works on research projects under the guidance of faculty affiliates.

CLS does not hire faculty members; however, faculty affiliated with the Center will have the appropriate qualifications. The recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and staff is an intentional goal of the University. The University of Illinois System Office has developed a Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Statement to ensure that human resources processes are uniquely identified and encouraged at all three campuses, including UIS. The UI System Office has developed a diversity certificate program that consists of 14 classes and includes a capstone project. Employees are encouraged to participate in these classes to assist with professional development and understanding diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

### **Fiscal and Personnel Resources**

*1050.30(a)(5): A) The financial commitments to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are sufficient to ensure that the faculty and staff and support services necessary to offer the unit of instruction, research or public service can be acquired and maintained. B) Projections of revenues necessary to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are based on supportable estimates of state appropriations, local tax support, student tuition and fees, private gifts, and/or governmental grants and contracts.*

The University has adequate faculty, staff, and other resources to support the Center. Aside from the salary and benefits for the director and staff, which are provided through the operating budget of the Office of the Provost, CLS is funded entirely through endowment revenues and current use funds. Accounts are managed by the University of Illinois Foundation. The Center's expenditures include personnel, graduate assistants, office expenses, and various programs such as the Juneteenth lecture series, Lincoln Legacy Lecture Series, and the faculty fellowship program. The Center will seek additional grant and gift funding to support student-engaged learning opportunities and research initiatives.

### **Accreditation and Licensure**

*1050.30(b)(3)[applicable only to units of instruction]: Appropriate steps shall be taken to assure that professional accreditation needed for licensure or entry into a profession as specified in the objectives of the unit of instruction is maintained or will be granted in a reasonable period of time.*

No specialized accreditation or licensure is required.

### **Program Information**

*1050.30(b)(2)[applicable only to units of instruction]: A) The information which the institution provides for students and the public shall include the following: i) An accurate description of the unit of instruction, including its objectives, length, and residency requirements if any; ii) Schedule of tuition, fees, and all other charges and expenses necessary for completion of the unit of instruction, cancellation and refund policies; iii) Student rights and responsibilities; iv) A statement regarding the transferability of college credits, including the fact that the decision to accept transfer credits is determined by the receiving institutions; v) A statement as to how the institution will advise students on the nature of the transfer process, including the importance of consulting with institutions to which the student may seek*

*to transfer; vi) Evidence of arrangements for the transfer of courses or credits or both to institutional counterparts, when these arrangements exist; these arrangements are also known as articulation agreements; vii) A statement of the institution's most recent graduation rates and the number of graduates and enrollments as provided by the institution to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and any submission of data to satisfy Board reporting requirements; and viii) Other material facts concerning the institution and the unit of instruction as are likely to affect the decision of the student to enroll. B) The information listed in subsection (b)(2)(A) shall be available to prospective students prior to enrollment and shall be included in the institution's catalog of programs.*

Detailed information about the Center will be published on the University's website.

### **Staff Conclusion**

The staff concludes that the Center for Lincoln Studies proposed by the University of Illinois Springfield meets the criteria to implement the Board of Higher Education Act (110 ILCS 205/et.seq.) as set forth in 23 Illinois Administrative Code, Ch. II, Section 1050.30, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education policies pertaining to assessment and accreditation or licensure.

## University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

**Proposed Degree Title in the Region of Authorization:** Bachelor of Arts in Media in the Prairie Region

Projected Enrollments and Degrees

First Year Enrollment	Fifth Year Enrollment	Degrees Awarded Fifth Year
5	35	12

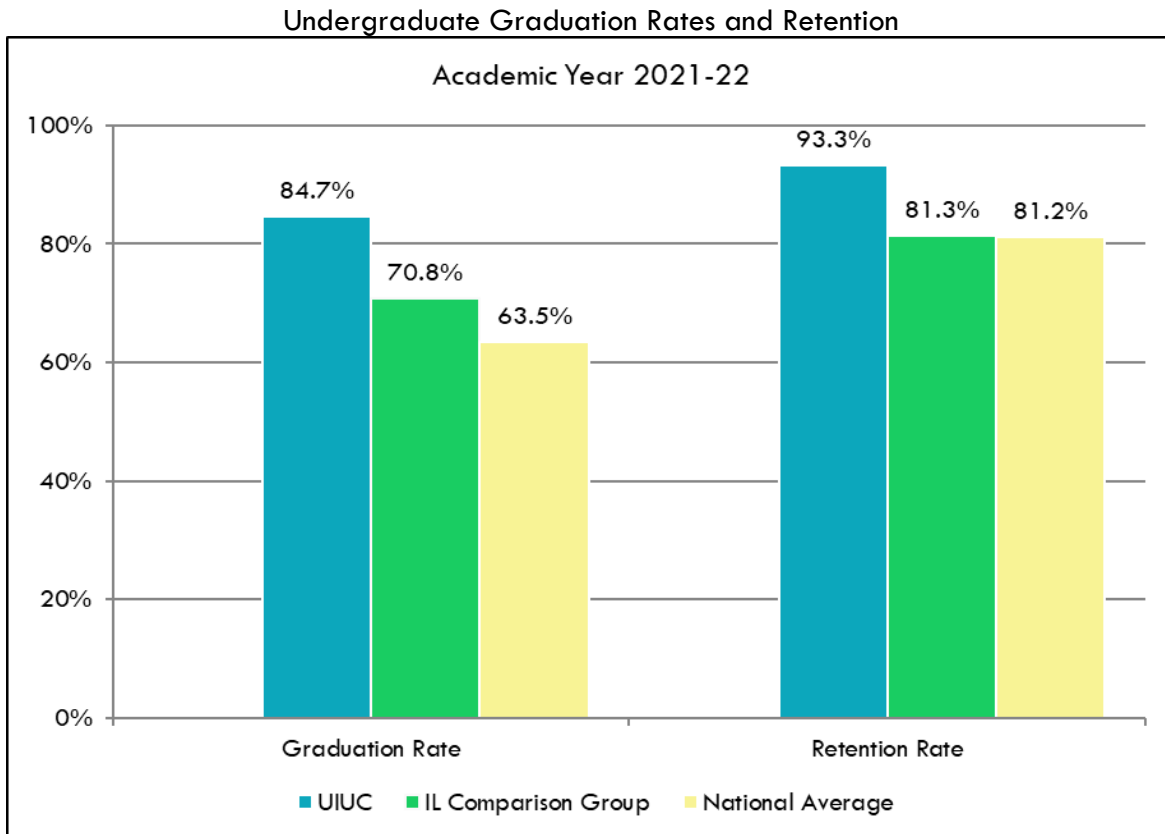
### Background

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC or the University) is seeking authorization to offer a Bachelor of Arts in Media (BA in Media or Media) in the Prairie region. The program will be housed in the College of Media and jointly administered by the Charles H. Sandage Department of Advertising, the Department of Journalism, and the Department of Media & Cinema Studies. The proposed program is an evolution from the undergraduate minor in Media, launched in 2020, and it will be comprised of courses from the established programs within the College of Media. The Bachelor of Arts in Media aligns with the University's mission to provide access to education as it was designed as an online degree completion program to support non-traditional students. This program will only be open to transfer students or previous UIUC students applying for reentry. The program will help upskill and reskill the current workforce. The curriculum will provide opportunities for students to participate in experiential learning experiences. Graduates of this interdisciplinary program will be prepared for careers in "high growth" career fields, as defined by the Illinois Department of Employment Security, in areas such as public relations, market research and analysis, film and video editing and camera operations, and technical communications.

### Institutional Data

*1050.30(b)(1)(H): Success in student progression and graduation rates across all existing approved programs, and success rates in programs preparing students for certification and licensure, shall be consistent with expectations in higher education and the appropriate related field of study. At a minimum, the Board shall consider these factors based on results for similar institutions. (i) Graduation rates, certificate and degree completion rates, retention rates, and pass rates for licensure and certification aligned with thresholds set by State or national regulatory bodies. (ii) The success rate shall be, at a minimum, higher than those of the lowest quartile of these measures for similar Illinois institutions defined as open versus competitive enrollment institutions and primarily associate versus primarily baccalaureate-granting institutions. Exceptions may be made to the lowest quartile if an institution is above the national average for these measures using the same comparison categories of institutions.*

This section includes information about institutional and student success measures for the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. The institution's rates will be compared to Illinois institutions from within a select comparison group and against the national standards or averages. For a proposed undergraduate program, this section will include undergraduate graduation rates, first to second year retention rates, student loan default rates, and any applicable licensure passage rates. For a proposed graduate program, this section will primarily focus on student loan default data since this measure also includes graduate students in the calculation.



*Source: National System for Education Statistics (NCES), US Department of Education*  
*Note: University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign is in the four-year, selective Illinois comparison group.*  
*Higher percentages are positive indicators.*

### Undergraduate Graduation Rate

The graduation rate measures the rate at which entering freshmen graduate within 150 percent of normal program length. Data is provided for six-year graduation rates for first-time, full-time bachelor's degree-seeking students and three-year graduation rates for full-time associate degree-seeking students. The national standard for graduation rates is reported annually by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

### Undergraduate Retention Rate

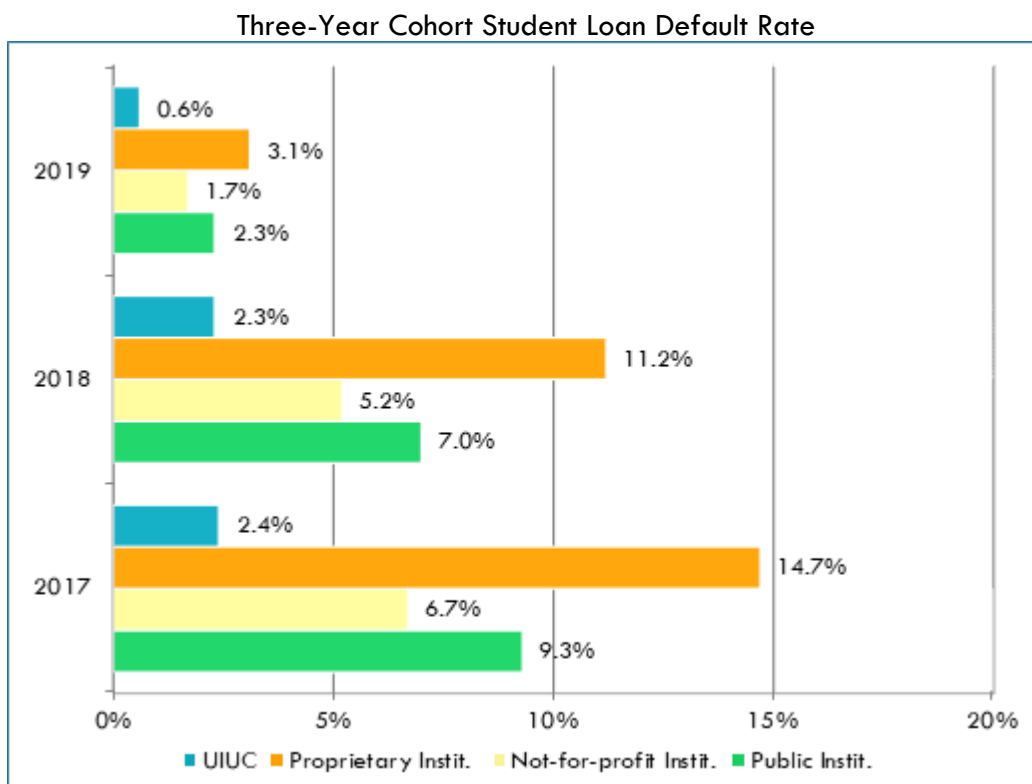
Retention rates examine the percentage of first-time degree seeking students enrolled in the fall of the prior year that are still enrolled in the fall of the current year. The national standard for retention rates is reported annually by NCES.

### Undergraduate Completions per 100 FTE

Academic Year 2021-22	University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign	Comparable Illinois Institutions
	24	23.7

The full-time equivalent (FTE) data is a unit of measurement intended to represent one student enrolled full time for one academic year. The calculation is based upon credit/contact hours offered at an institution divided by a standard minimum (12 credit hours) full-time course load. The

completions per 100 FTE data are included to provide a holistic view of completion across different student populations. For the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, the undergraduate completion per 100 FTE is not an accurate indicator. The majority of students at the University are full-time, and substantial numbers double major and take more than 12 (up to 18) credit hours, and the standard calculation does not account for these factors.



Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), US Department of Education

Note: Due to the pause on federal student loan payment that began in March 2020, the cohort default rates for fiscal years 2020 and 2021 are zero percent for the institution and all institution types. The national cohort default rate for fiscal year 2019 was 2.3 percent and zero percent for fiscal years 2020 and 2021. A lower number is a positive indicator.

The three-year cohort student loan default rate is the percentage of a school's borrowers who enter repayment on certain Federal Loan Programs during a particular federal fiscal year, October 1 to September 30, and default or meet other specified conditions prior to the end of the second following fiscal year.

## Need

1050.30(a)(6): A) The unit of instruction, research or public service is educationally and economically consistent with the educational priorities and needs of the State of Illinois. B) The unit of instruction, research or public service meets a need that is not currently met by existing institutions and units of instruction, research or public service.

The proposed interdisciplinary Media program provides a foundation for graduates to find positions in "high growth areas," as defined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), such as public relations, film and video editing and camera operations, market research and analysis, and technical communications. These

positions are found in various sectors including business, education, government, and non-profit organizations. The Media program will provide graduates with foundational skills and knowledge in data analysis, content creation, project management, and communications.

For media-related occupations, the BLS shows that median annual salaries are above the national average of \$48,060 per year. Similarly, the IDES projects a positive outlook for careers in the media field. The size of the industry varies greatly; however, the interdisciplinary nature of the proposed program would prepare graduates to enter the media and communications workforce.

<b>Illinois Employment Projections, 2022-2032</b> Media-Related Occupations						
Occupation Title	Employment			Average Annual Job Openings Due to...		
	2022	2032	Change (%)	Growth	Replacements (transfers & exits)	Total
Market Research Analysts and Specialists (13-1161)	38,248	42,351	4,103 (10.73%)	410	3,607	4,017
Media and Communication Workers (27-3000)	26,236	26,300	64 (0.24%)	6	2,389	2,395
Public Relations Specialists (27-3031)	8,676	9,099	423 (4.88%)	42	696	738
Technical Writers (27-3042)	1,267	1,307	40 (3.16%)	4	103	107
Camera Operators/TV/Video/Motion (27-4031)	404	413	9 (2.23%)	1	34	35
Film and Video Editors (27-4032)	1,091	1,205	114 (10.45%)	11	97	108
<b>All Occupations</b>	<b>6,369,370</b>	<b>6,538,492</b>	<b>2.66</b>	<b>16,912</b>	<b>691,808</b>	<b>708,720</b>

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security

<b>U.S. Employment Projections, 2023-2033</b> Media-Related Occupations				
Occupation Title	2023 Median Annual Wage	Employment, 2023	Employment, 2033	Employment Change (%)
Market Research Analysts and Specialists (13-1161)	\$74,680	903,400	978,300	74,900 (8.3%)
Media and Communication Workers (27-3000)	\$66,320	821,900	850,500	28,600 (3.5%)
Public Relations Specialists (27-3031)	\$66,750	308,000	327,200	19,200 (6.2%)
Technical Writers (27-3042)	\$80,050	50,100	52,100	2,000 (4%)
Camera Operators/TV/Video/Film (27-4031)	\$61,800	38,200	38,900	700 (1.9%)
Film and Video Editors (27-4032)	\$66,600	47,200	49,400	2,200 (4.7%)
<b>All Occupations</b>	<b>\$48,060</b>	<b>167,849,800</b>	<b>174,589,000</b>	<b>6,739,200 (4.0%)</b>

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. Employment Projections

The proposed program was developed to assist non-traditional students in completing a bachelor's degree with the potential to upskill or reskill to enhance their career prospects. This innovative, interdisciplinary program will equip graduates with an increasingly in-demand skill set for the evolving workforce.

### **A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth**

The University of Illinois (UI) System's Access 2030 Strategic Plan aligns with the goals of IBHE's *A Thriving Illinois*. In IBHE's *Goal 1, Equity, to close equity gaps for students who have historically been left behind*, the UI System has a goal to increase the number of graduates from underrepresented groups by 50 percent by the end of the decade. UIUC's diversity, equity, and inclusion work is led by the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (OVCDEI). The office has implemented a variety of efforts and programs to strategically support and improve equity on campus. In July 2020, the University pledged \$2 million annually for the Chancellor's "Call to Action to Address Racism and Social Injustice." The program funded 25 projects focused on three research areas: systemic racism and social justice; law enforcement and criminal justice reform; and disparities in health and health care. In October 2022, OVCDEI hosted an inaugural Research Symposium to present findings and outcomes. In fall 2023, the institution administered a campuswide climate assessment to understand the degree to which students feel safe, accepted, and valued. The survey resulted in working groups focusing on developing frameworks and implementing plans to improve the campus experience for students.

UIUC is focused on closing the graduation gap and increasing student success as evidenced by active participation in recent nationwide efforts. The American Talent Initiative (ATI) set a goal of expanding student access at high graduation rate institutions to enroll and graduate 50,000 additional high-achieving, low and moderate-income students from ATI participating institutions by 2025. UIUC also actively participated in the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities Powered by Publics Initiative. This complimentary program's goals are centered around expansion of access to higher education for students from all backgrounds. Through The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) Powered by Publics, the University led the Big Ten Academic Alliance Cluster to study student retention and persistence with a focus on course completion. Studying rates of failure and withdrawal in foundation courses helped UIUC identify barriers faced by students and determine additional support services needed for student success. In spring 2023, this work culminated in an ongoing project called the Inclusive Course Redesign Initiative. Through the initiative, faculty from a variety of disciplines have engaged in inclusive course redesign of their courses. Working with staff in the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning, faculty are intentionally designing materials and activities to be more welcoming and accessible to all students.

The College of Media prioritizes access and equity and aligns its actions with efforts at the institutional level to help close equity gaps for members of traditionally underrepresented groups. The proposed program directly supports the UI System's Access 2030 strategic plan to increase graduates from underrepresented groups by 50 percent by 2030. The online nature of the program allows students from all backgrounds to enroll, expanding the representation within UIUC. The degree completion program will be an excellent option for students who qualify for the UI System's Transfer Guarantee Program. The program guarantees admission into any of the UI System campuses if the student graduated from an Illinois high school, earned at least 36 graded, transferable semester hours at the time of UI application, with a minimum grade point average of 3.0 in all transferable coursework while meeting the English language proficiency requirement. The online accessibility of the BA in Media will enable students from both urban and rural backgrounds to enroll in the proposed program.



Moreover, the University supports the efforts of *A Thriving Illinois: Equity, Strategy 3, to increase and retain faculty, staff, and administrators of color*. The Distinguished Faculty Recruitment Program has a stated goal of increasing underrepresented minority faculty. Since 2017, the System has committed \$20 million to this program for the recruitment of new, tenured, or rising faculty from a range of disciplines who can transform the University through exceptional scholarship and teaching. A criterion for this award is that the selected faculty members will enhance diversity in the unit and in the College. Even though faculty hiring is a department and college-level decision, the campus has devoted significant resources to incentivize hiring activities that support diversity, recruitment, and retention goals. Such examples are the Targets of Opportunity Program (TOP) and the Dual Career Academic Couples (DCAC) program. TOP provides recurring funds for salary support for hires that enhance campus diversity and the DCAC program provides recurring matching funding if the partner is hired into a tenure-track position.

The UI System and UIUC are committed to implementing strategies from the Access 2030 Strategic Plan which aligns with IBHE's *A Thriving Illinois: Goal 2, Sustainability, to build a stronger financial future for individuals and institutions by finding ways to reduce the financial burden of education on students and their families*. Annually, the University provides over \$519 million in financial aid funding to undergraduate students, funding \$203 million by the institution, with 72 percent of students receiving some type of aid. UIUC has developed programs and initiatives to increase college accessibility and affordability for students. The Illinois Promise program covers tuition, campus fees, housing, and books for Illinois residents whose family income is at or below the federal poverty level. The Illinois Commitment program combines federal, state, and institutional grants to cover tuition and campus fees for students who are Illinois residents and have an annual family income of \$75,000 or less. The program covers tuition and campus fees for new freshmen for up to four years, eight semesters of continuous enrollment, and tuition and campus fees for up to three years and six semesters of continuous enrollment for new transfer students. The Chancellor's Access Grant provides \$5,000 in stackable grants for historically underrepresented Illinois residents to use with other awards. The University also offers scholarships to high achieving newly admitted freshmen from historically underrepresented groups through the President's Award Program (PAP). The goal of the program is to ensure and enrich the diversity of the student body. To be eligible for consideration, students must be Illinois residents and have demonstrated outstanding academic achievement while graduating from an Illinois high school. The President's Award Program and PAP Honors have provided financial support for historically underrepresented students in the UI System. PAP awards range from \$5,000 to \$10,000 per year for four years. Additionally, UIUC participates in the AIM HIGH Grant program which provides merit-based financial assistance to students who qualify. The proposed BA in Media program also seeks to support *Sustainability* through its program design. The program was specifically developed to support working adults, enabling students to work full time while completing coursework. The College of Media also updated its policies by removing the limit of transfer hours students may count toward their major requirements. In addition, students in the proposed program will not be required to attend full time like residential students. These policy changes will help improve flexibility of the program and potentially reduce the time for students to earn the degree.

Supportive of *Goal 3 of A Thriving Illinois, Growth, to increase talent and innovation to drive economic growth*, the University has strong business and industry partnerships through statewide initiatives such as the Discovery Partners Institute (DPI) and the Illinois Innovation Network (IIN). DPI's Tech Talent Lab and immersion programs engage with Chicago's technology workforce allowing students to interact with Chicagoland technology and innovation culture. Students make meaningful connections with regional employers and industries, University research teams, civic and non-profit organizations, and startups that will lead to employment and talent retention in the region. IIN works

to enrich the student experience through short-term boot camps around topics such as artificial intelligence, data science, entrepreneurship, and more. These intensive programs are related to topics that are key to the 21st century economy and provide a foundation for continued study.

### **Comparable Programs in Illinois**

While there are other communications programs in Illinois, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign would be the only institution in Illinois to offer a program in the Communication Management and Strategic Communication Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code. There are currently no comparable undergraduate programs in the state.

### **Mission and Objectives**

*1050.30(a)(1): A) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with the mission of the college or university. B) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with what the unit title implies.*

The program is consistent with the purpose, goals, objectives, and mission of the University. The requested degree title reflects the program's objectives and curriculum.

### **Curriculum and Assessment**

*1050.30(b)(1) [applicable only to units of instruction]: A) The caliber and content of the curriculum must assure that the objectives of the unit of instruction will be achieved. B) The breadth and depth of the curriculum must be consistent with what the title of the unit of instruction implies. C) The admission and graduation requirements for the unit of instruction must be consistent with the stated objectives of the unit of instruction. D) Institutions must show the capacity to develop, deliver and support academic programs. Procedures and policies that will assure the effective design, conduct and evaluation of the degree programs under the academic control of the institution must be developed. Assessment plans must demonstrate that the institution has identified clear and appropriate program and student learning goals and has defined appropriate outcomes. Appropriate data must be collected and may be requested by the Board to show the level of student learning that has occurred as a result of participation in the institution's programs of study.*

*1050.30(a)(2): The design, conduct and evaluation of the unit of instruction, research or public service are under the direct and continuous control of the sponsoring institution's established processes for academic planning and quality maintenance.*

### **Admission Requirements**

The proposed online degree completion BA in Media program is restricted to transfer students or reentry students who have been separated from the University for at least one semester. Applicants must meet the general transfer admissions criteria and have a minimum college GPA of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale. Prospective students may also utilize the UI System's Transfer Guarantee Program. The program guarantees admission into any of the UI System campuses if the student graduated from an Illinois high school, earned at least 36 graded, transferable semester hours at the time of UI application, with a minimum grade point average of 3.0 in all transferable coursework while meeting the English language proficiency requirement. International students, whose primary language is not English, must have a minimum Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score of 100.

## Curriculum

The proposed program is designed as an online degree completion program for students with some college credits seeking to earn a bachelor's degree. The interdisciplinary curriculum is comprised of courses from advertising, journalism, and media & cinema studies. Students will use cutting-edge tools and technology to analyze and evaluate media content. Students will have foundational courses to understand the contemporary media landscape as well as exposure to applied training in skills necessary for careers in the field. The curricular design embraces *A Thriving Illinois* as the program promotes educational access while fostering career growth and increased financial opportunities for graduates. Students will have the option of selecting a Media elective based on their area of interest.

The proposed Bachelor of Arts in Media is a 120-credit hour program that requires students to complete general education requirements along with a 45-credit hour residency requirement and at least 40 total hours of upper division coursework. The curriculum consists of foundational courses in media coupled with 300 and 400 level electives. The program requires a capstone course focusing on cultural, economic, historical, political, and social themes and issues that influence or are influenced by the media Assessment of Student Learning

The proposed program will assess student learning by utilizing guidelines from the University's Council on Learning Outcomes and Assessment. The assessment will include reviews of student work for all major courses by the faculty director of the proposed program, biennial reviews of syllabi by the College Courses & Curriculum committee, and an evaluation of students in high-impact experiential learning opportunities such as internships, research with faculty programs, and public engagement activities. Faculty set individual student outcomes and corresponding levels for mastery. Faculty expect that student performance benchmarks in courses will align with students in other majors in the College of Media, and graduates of the proposed program will be sufficiently prepared for employment in the media industry. Student outcomes will be measured through the campus Illini Success Survey, which captures career and educational data of recent graduates. The faculty director will meet annually with major program faculty to review learning objectives and make recommendations to enhance student learning.

## Program Assessment

The College of Media will holistically review the proposed BA in Media program utilizing established standards and processes of the College including ongoing evaluation practices and a formal progress report at the end of its third year. Program metrics will include a comparison of the proposed program's student participation rates in experiential learning opportunities (e.g., internships, research with faculty, and public engagement projects) and events such as Media Career Services programming, virtual talks, and film screenings. The student participation rates will be compared with other College of Media programs. Additional program metrics will include graduation rates, time-to-degree completion rates, and job placement or career advancement rates. The College of Media will also incorporate student survey feedback into the assessment review process.

## Facilities (space, equipment, instructional materials)

*1050.30(a)(4): A) Facilities, equipment and instructional resources (e.g., laboratory supplies and equipment, instructional materials, computational equipment) necessary to support the high-quality academic work in the unit of instruction, research or public service are available and maintained. B)*

*Clinical sites necessary to meet the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service. C) Library holdings and acquisitions, owned or contracted for by the institution, that are necessary to support high quality instruction and scholarship in the unit of instruction, research and public service, are conveniently available and accessible, and can be maintained.*

Since the proposed program will be offered entirely online, no classroom space is needed. The existing facilities are adequate for faculty use. Faculty will utilize existing production and studio space in Gregory Hall as well as resources in the Center for Innovation in Teaching & Learning to develop online courses. Current library collections, resources, and services are sufficient to support the proposed program. The University possesses appropriate library resources with access to online databases, books, journal holdings, and other electronic resources to support instruction and scholarly work, including a dedicated Communications librarian.

### **Faculty and Staff**

*1050.30(a)(3): A) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff ensure that the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are met. B) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff, as evidenced by level of degrees held, professional experience in the field of study and demonstrated knowledge of the field, ensure that they are able to fulfill their academic responsibilities. At a minimum, faculty shall have a degree from an institution accredited by a U.S. Department of Education and/or Council for Higher Education Accreditation recognized accrediting body or a degree from another country evaluated for U.S. equivalency in the discipline they will teach or for which they will develop curricula at least one level above that of the courses being taught or developed. C) The involvement of faculty in the unit of instruction, research or public service is sufficient to cover the various fields of knowledge encompassed by the unit, to sustain scholarship appropriate to the unit, and to assure curricular continuity and consistency in student evaluation. E) Support personnel, including but not limited to counselors, administrators, clinical supervisors, and technical staff, that are directly assigned to the unit of instruction, research or public service, have the educational background and experience necessary to carry out their assigned responsibilities.*

The College of Media will deliver the program utilizing existing tenure-track and specialized faculty from the three academic departments. The University has identified institutional policies that ensure faculty and staff possess the training, credentials, and other related qualifications to provide instruction in the proposed program. A formal faculty evaluation process is in place.

Through a partnership with the University System Office and departments, the provost supports the Underrepresented Faculty Recruitment Program in making available non-recurring funds for research to enhance offers of employment. Additional retention efforts include programming and development activities for executive officers and faculty members across ranks. Programming and resources for unit executive officers provide the knowledge and skills necessary for leadership, including ways to enhance their ability to support and mentor faculty within their units, particularly faculty members of color. The Office of the Provost also coordinates several leadership development programs to increase the pool of potential academic leaders on campus with an intentional focus on supporting faculty members from marginalized and underrepresented groups to explore campus leadership and administrative roles.

## **Fiscal and Personnel Resources**

*1050.30(a)(5): A) The financial commitments to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are sufficient to ensure that the faculty and staff and support services necessary to offer the unit of instruction, research or public service can be acquired and maintained. B) Projections of revenues necessary to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are based on supportable estimates of state appropriations, local tax support, student tuition and fees, private gifts, and/or governmental grants and contracts.*

The proposed program will not request new state funds. The University has adequate faculty, staff, and other instructional resources to administer the proposed program. The program will be supported by existing faculty and staff. The College of Media recently hired a program coordinator whose duties include serving as administrative support and academic advisor for the proposed program. The College of Media Career Services Office will be able to properly accommodate the planned increase in students.

## **Accreditation and Licensure**

*1050.30(b)(3)[applicable only to units of instruction]: Appropriate steps shall be taken to assure that professional accreditation needed for licensure or entry into a profession as specified in the objectives of the unit of instruction is maintained or will be granted in a reasonable period of time.*

The proposed Bachelor of Arts in Media does not require specialized programmatic accreditation or licensure.

## **Program Information**

*1050.30(b)(2)[applicable only to units of instruction]: A) The information which the institution provides for students and the public shall include the following: i) An accurate description of the unit of instruction, including its objectives, length, and residency requirements if any; ii) Schedule of tuition, fees, and all other charges and expenses necessary for completion of the unit of instruction, cancellation and refund policies; iii) Student rights and responsibilities; iv) A statement regarding the transferability of college credits, including the fact that the decision to accept transfer credits is determined by the receiving institutions; v) A statement as to how the institution will advise students on the nature of the transfer process, including the importance of consulting with institutions to which the student may seek to transfer; vi) Evidence of arrangements for the transfer of courses or credits or both to institutional counterparts, when these arrangements exist; these arrangements are also known as articulation agreements; vii) A statement of the institution's most recent graduation rates and the number of graduates and enrollments as provided by the institution to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and any submission of data to satisfy Board reporting requirements; and viii) Other material facts concerning the institution and the unit of instruction as are likely to affect the decision of the student to enroll. B) The information listed in subsection (b)(2)(A) shall be available to prospective students prior to enrollment and shall be included in the institution's catalog of programs.*

Detailed information about the proposed program including a description of the admission policies, University policies, tuition, fees, and curriculum will be published on the University's website.

## Staff Conclusion

The staff concludes that the Bachelor of Arts in Media proposed by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign meets the criteria to implement the Board of Higher Education Act (110 ILCS 205/et.seq.) as set forth in 23 Illinois Administrative Code, Ch. II, Section 1050.30, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education policies pertaining to assessment and accreditation or licensure.

**Proposed Degree Title in the Region of Authorization:** Bachelor of Science in Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering + Data Science in the Prairie Region

Projected Enrollments and Degrees

First Year Enrollment	Fifth Year Enrollment	Degrees Awarded Fifth Year
16	75	15

## Background

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC or University) is seeking authorization to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering + Data Science (BS in NPRE + DS) in the Prairie region. The program will be housed in the Department of Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering within the Grainger College of Engineering. The BS in NPRE + DS is part of a new series of undergraduate degrees at UIUC that fuses data science with other disciplines. In December 2021, the University was approved to offer four “+ Data Science” degree programs in Accountancy, Finance, Information Science, and Astronomy in the Prairie region. The Bachelor of Science in Business + Data Science, Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering + Data Science, Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts and Sciences and Molecular and Cellular Biology + Data Science, and Bachelor of Science in Materials Science Engineering + Data Science programs were also approved in December 2022, November 2024, November 2024, and March 2025, respectively. The proposed program will also include core data science coursework having fewer technical prerequisites and requirements than most programs in computer science, mathematics, or statistics. In turn, the BS in NPRE + DS program will be more accessible to students from various backgrounds. This program proposal is in response to the University’s ongoing examination of its academic portfolio and a response to emerging student demand, societal need, and economic opportunity. In addition, the University’s 2018 Strategic Plan, “The Next 150,” endeavors to “establish Illinois as the global leader in digital transformation at the service of society” through and in part by bolstering the institution’s strength in areas related to data science and “providing all Illinois students with the opportunity to have meaningful exposure to data science.” In recognition of the interdisciplinary and outward-looking nature of data science, the University developed the “X + Data Science Majors” to offer students the opportunity to study data science while engaging with a programmatic academic major domain. The “X + Data Science” family of degrees will prepare Illinois students to lead society’s digital transformation.

The evolution of the workforce is moving toward career fields with interdisciplinary skills and the BS in NPRE + DS will prepare students for this change. The blend of data science with nuclear, plasma, and radiological engineering training will help prepare the next generation of workers. Data science has rapidly emerged as a field with a broad-based demand across many areas of economic activity and scholarship. Being able to gather, organize, interpret, and analyze large amounts of data is becoming an essential skill. There are currently no other programs like the proposed program in Illinois. Thus, the program is poised to position graduates to be in demand by

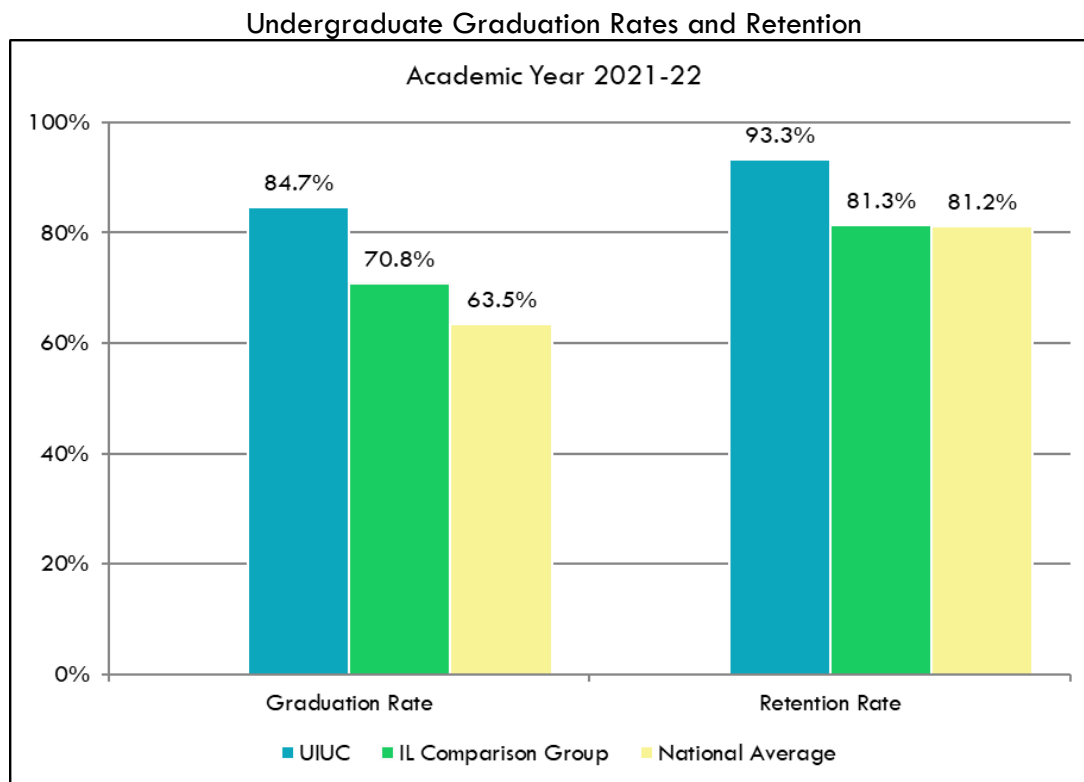


employers and earn high salaries.

## Institutional Data

*1050.30(b)(1)(H): Success in student progression and graduation rates across all existing approved programs, and success rates in programs preparing students for certification and licensure, shall be consistent with expectations in higher education and the appropriate related field of study. At a minimum, the Board shall consider these factors based on results for similar institutions. (if) Graduation rates, certificate and degree completion rates, retention rates, and pass rates for licensure and certification aligned with thresholds set by State or national regulatory bodies. (ii) The success rate shall be, at a minimum, higher than those of the lowest quartile of these measures for similar Illinois institutions defined as open versus competitive enrollment institutions and primarily associate versus primarily baccalaureate-granting institutions. Exceptions may be made to the lowest quartile if an institution is above the national average for these measures using the same comparison categories of institutions.*

This section includes information about institutional and student success measures for the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. The institution's rates will be compared to Illinois institutions from within a select comparison group and against the national standards or averages. For a proposed undergraduate program, this section will include undergraduate graduation rates, first to second year retention rates, student loan default rates, and any applicable licensure passage rates. For a proposed graduate program, this section will primarily focus on student loan default data since this measure also includes graduate students in the calculation.



Source: National System for Education Statistics (NCES), US Department of Education  
Note: University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign is in the four-year, selective Illinois comparison group.  
Higher percentages are positive indicators.



## Undergraduate Graduation Rate

The graduation rate measures the rate at which entering freshmen graduate within 150 percent of normal program length. Data is provided for six-year graduation rates for first-time, full-time bachelor's degree-seeking students and three-year graduation rates for full-time associate degree-seeking students. The national standard for graduation rates is reported annually by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

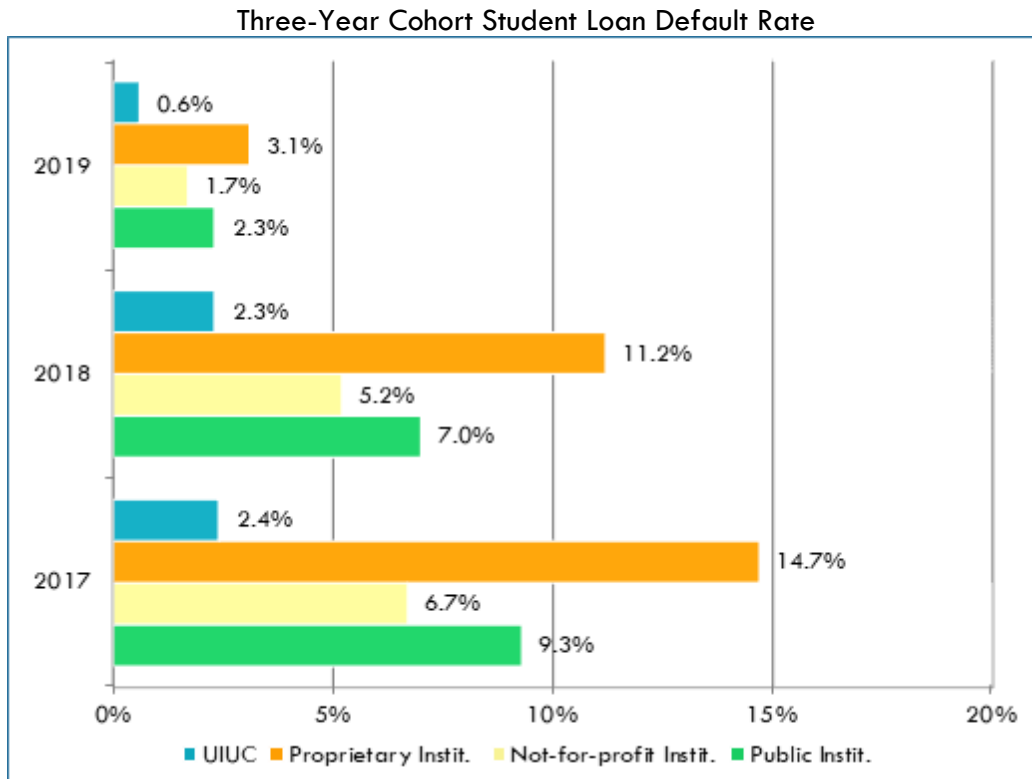
## Undergraduate Retention Rate

Retention rates examine the percentage of first-time degree seeking students enrolled in the fall of the prior year that are still enrolled in the fall of the current year. The national standard for retention rates is reported annually by NCES.

### Undergraduate Completions per 100 FTE

Academic Year 2021-22	University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign	Comparable Illinois Institutions
	24	23.7

The full-time equivalent (FTE) data is a unit of measurement intended to represent one student enrolled full time for one academic year. The calculation is based upon credit/contact hours offered at an institution divided by a standard minimum (12 credit hours) full-time course load. The completions per 100 FTE data are included to provide a holistic view of completion across different student populations. For the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, the undergraduate completion per 100 FTE is not an accurate indicator. The majority of students at the University are full-time, and substantial numbers double major and take more than 12 (up to 18) credit hours, and the standard calculation does not account for these factors.



Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), US Department of Education

Note: Due to the pause on federal student loan payment that began in March 2020, the cohort default rates for fiscal years 2020 and 2021 are zero percent for the institution and all institution types. The national cohort default rate for fiscal year 2019 was 2.3 percent and zero percent for fiscal years 2020 and 2021. A lower number is a positive indicator.

The three-year cohort student loan default rate is the percentage of a school's borrowers who enter repayment on certain Federal Loan Programs during a particular federal fiscal year, October 1 to September 30, and default or meet other specified conditions prior to the end of the second following fiscal year.

## Need

1050.30(a)(6): A) The unit of instruction, research or public service is educationally and economically consistent with the educational priorities and needs of the State of Illinois. B) The unit of instruction, research or public service meets a need that is not currently met by existing institutions and units of instruction, research or public service.

Data scientists transform raw data into meaningful, actionable conclusions, which is a necessity for modern industries. Businesses and government agencies rely on data science professionals to analyze large amounts of complex raw and processed information to find patterns that help drive strategic business decisions. Data science is emerging as a subject of significant importance in many domains. There is a demand for coding-intensive data scientists as well as those who can work in application domains specifically in nuclear, plasma, and radiological engineering areas such as power generation, plasma-materials processing, semi-conductor design and fabrication, fusion development, detector development, and medical imaging device design. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), data science is a growing career market nationwide. In addition, Illinois has one of the largest percentages of job openings related to data

science and analytics in comparison to other parts of the country. The proposed program was developed in response to a review of UIUC's academic portfolio coupled with student demand and workforce needs. This innovative, interdisciplinary program will equip students with an increasingly in-demand skill set for the workforce and meet graduate program qualifications.

The BLS projects a 36 percent growth in data science occupations and a slight decline of less than one percent for nuclear engineers from 2023 to 2033. However, the BLS still projects about 700 job openings each year for nuclear engineers. BLS projects that occupations in data science will outpace the average growth rate for all occupations, which is only four percent. The national median earning rate is \$48,060 per year, while data scientists earn \$108,020 annually, and nuclear engineers earn \$125,460. The proposed program will position graduates to be competitive for well-paying careers.

### **A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth**

The University of Illinois (UI) System's Access 2030 Strategic Plan aligns with the goals of IBHE's *A Thriving Illinois*. In IBHE's *Goal 1, Equity*, to close equity gaps for students who have historically been left behind, the UI System has a goal to increase the number of graduates from underrepresented groups by 50 percent by the end of the decade. UIUC's diversity, equity, and inclusion work is led by the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (OVCDEI). The office has implemented a variety of efforts and programs to strategically support and improve equity on campus. In July 2020, the University pledged \$2 million annually for the Chancellor's "Call to Action to Address Racism and Social Injustice." The program funded 25 projects focused on three research areas: systemic racism and social justice; law enforcement and criminal justice reform; and disparities in health and healthcare. In October 2022, OVCDEI hosted an inaugural Research Symposium to present findings and outcomes. In fall 2023, the institution administered a campuswide climate assessment to understand the degree to which students feel safe, accepted, and valued. The survey resulted in working groups focusing on developing frameworks and implementing plans to improve the campus experience for students.

UIUC is focused on closing the graduation gap and increasing student success as evidenced by active participation in recent nationwide efforts. The American Talent Initiative (ATI) set a goal of expanding student access at high graduation rate institutions to enroll and graduate 50,000 additional high-achieving, low and moderate-income students from ATI participating institutions by 2025. UIUC also actively participated in the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities Powered by Publics Initiative. This complimentary program's goals are centered around expansion of access to higher education for students from all backgrounds. Through The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) Powered by Publics, the University led the Big Ten Academic Alliance Cluster to study student retention and persistence with a focus on course completion. Studying rates of failure and withdrawal in foundation courses helped UIUC identify barriers faced by students and determine additional support services needed for student success. In spring 2023, this work culminated in an ongoing project called the Inclusive Course Redesign Initiative. Through the initiative, faculty from a variety of disciplines have engaged in inclusive course redesign of their courses. Working with staff in the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning, faculty are intentionally designing materials and activities to be more welcoming and accessible to all students.

Additionally, within the Grainger College of Engineering, programs such as the Morrill Engineering Program (MEP), Women in Engineering, and the Academic Redshirt in Science and Engineering (ARISE) support students from underserved and underrepresented backgrounds enrolled in engineering majors at the University. These programs are designed to facilitate

successful student engagement and retention through peer mentoring, community building, proactive advising, and academic support. Each program offers opportunities for students to experience the onset of their adjustment to the University with others from similar backgrounds. MEP engages first-year students from underrepresented backgrounds in its mentoring course (ENG 111) that promotes academic skill-building, professional development, and campus engagement while using peer mentors as role models for best practices. The ARISE program helps students develop academic study skills and creates opportunities for career and curricular exploration. The Department of Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering actively monitors the progress of students throughout the semester and proactively reaches out to students who are struggling. This effort is led by the chief advisor of the department who will partner with the associate head of undergraduate programs to appropriately act on concerns. Grainger College of Engineering also features an embedded mental health counselor. These broad and multi-layered approaches help ensure that all students are supported administratively, academically, and emotionally, which contributes to the overall well-being of students and their progress toward degree completion.

The UI System and UIUC support the efforts of *A Thriving Illinois Equity Strategy 3 to increase and retain faculty, staff, and administrators of color*. The Distinguished Faculty Recruitment Program has a stated goal of increasing underrepresented minority faculty. Since 2017, the System has committed \$20 million to this program for the recruitment of new, tenured, or rising faculty from a range of disciplines who can transform the University through exceptional scholarship and teaching. A criterion for this award is that the selected faculty members will enhance diversity in the unit and in the College. Even though faculty hiring is a department and college-level decision, the campus has devoted significant resources to incentivize hiring activities that support diversity, recruitment, and retention goals. Such examples are the Targets of Opportunity Program (TOP) and the Dual Career Academic Couples (DCAC) program. TOP provides recurring funds for salary support for hires that enhance campus diversity in STEM fields, and the DCAC program provides recurring matching funding if the partner is hired into a tenure-track position. These funds from the Provost's Office actively support diverse hiring and retention efforts. The Grainger College of Engineering and the Department of Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering offer additional resources to support and retain faculty. The Collins Scholar Program is a support program for new engineering faculty to help ensure an efficient and productive start to careers at UIUC. The program provides a culture of support for teaching, research, and service in a relaxing and collegial environment while meeting frequently to discuss instructional design, research-based teaching strategies, and innovative assessment techniques.

The UI System and UIUC are committed to implementing strategies from the Access 2030 Strategic Plan which aligns with IBHE's *A Thriving Illinois: Goal 2, Sustainability, to build a stronger financial future for individuals and institutions by finding ways to reduce the financial burden of education on students and their families*. Annually, the University provides over \$519 million in financial aid funding to undergraduate students, funding \$203 million by the institution, with 72 percent of students receiving some type of aid. UIUC has developed programs and initiatives to increase college accessibility and affordability for students. The Illinois Promise program covers tuition, campus fees, housing, and books for Illinois residents whose family income is at or below the federal poverty level. The Illinois Commitment program combines federal, state, and institutional grants to cover tuition and campus fees for students who are Illinois residents and have an annual family income of \$75,000 or less. The program covers tuition and campus fees for new freshmen for up to four years, eight semesters of continuous enrollment, and tuition and campus fees for up to three years and six semesters of continuous enrollment for new transfer students. The Chancellor's Access Grant provides \$5,000 in stackable grants for historically underrepresented Illinois residents to use with other awards. The University also offers scholarships to high achieving newly admitted

freshmen from historically underrepresented groups through the President's Award Program (PAP). The goal of the program is to ensure and enrich the diversity of the student body. To be eligible for consideration, students must be Illinois residents and have demonstrated outstanding academic achievement. The President's Award Program and PAP Honors have provided financial support for historically underrepresented students in the UI System. PAP awards range from \$5,000 to \$10,000 per year for four years. Additionally, UIUC participates in the AIM HIGH Grant program which provides merit-based financial assistance to students who qualify.

The Grainger College of Engineering and the Department of Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering have additional scholarship incentives especially for incoming, first-year students. Funds are provided by donors for this targeted purpose to help recruit the best and brightest students nationally. In this targeted group, the College and department have traditionally used additional funds to incentivize the recruitment of women, historically underrepresented, and first-generation students, making higher education more affordable while keeping a focus on equity.

The proposed BS in NPRE + DS program will contribute to Goal 3 of *A Thriving Illinois, Growth, to increase talent and innovation to drive economic growth*. Students in the proposed program will have access to the Grainger College of Engineering Career Services (ECS). ECS bridges college and community relations by delivering relevant career exploration, development, and recruitment services to all students in the College. ECS builds and maintains industry relationships through strategic engagement and intentional outreach and collaboration. Illinois is the most nuclear state in the country with more nuclear power plants than any other state. A large number of the Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering Department's graduates are employed in the state. It is expected that graduates of the proposed program will continue this trend and be employed in Illinois.

In addition, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign has strong business and industry partnerships through statewide initiatives such as the Discovery Partners Institute (DPI) and the Illinois Innovation Network (IIN). DPI's Tech Talent Lab and immersion programs engage with Chicago's technology workforce allowing students to interact with Chicagoland technology and innovation culture. Students make meaningful connections with regional employers and industries, University research teams, civic and non-profit organizations, and startups that will lead to employment and talent retention in the region. IIN works to enrich the student experience through short-term boot camps around topics such as artificial intelligence, data science, entrepreneurship, and more. These intensive programs are related to topics that are key to the 21st century economy and provide a foundation for continued study. Additionally, the University is planning to build a new data science center focused on creating knowledge through statistics, data analysis, and machine learning to accelerate job creation and economic growth.

### **Comparable Programs in Illinois**

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign would be the first institution in Illinois to offer the Bachelor of Science in Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering + Data Science since there are currently no comparable undergraduate programs in the state. The BS in NPRE + DS is an innovative and distinctive program poised to position graduates to meet evolving workforce needs by incorporating a data science degree program with nuclear, plasma, and radiological engineering studies.

## Mission and Objectives

*1050.30(a)(1): A) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with the mission of the college or university. B) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with what the unit title implies.*

The program is consistent with the purpose, goals, objectives, and mission of the University. The requested degree title reflects the program's objectives and curriculum.

## Curriculum and Assessment

*1050.30(b)(1) [applicable only to units of instruction]: A) The caliber and content of the curriculum must assure that the objectives of the unit of instruction will be achieved. B) The breadth and depth of the curriculum must be consistent with what the title of the unit of instruction implies. C) The admission and graduation requirements for the unit of instruction must be consistent with the stated objectives of the unit of instruction. D) Institutions must show the capacity to develop, deliver and support academic programs. Procedures and policies that will assure the effective design, conduct and evaluation of the degree programs under the academic control of the institution must be developed. Assessment plans must demonstrate that the institution has identified clear and appropriate program and student learning goals and has defined appropriate outcomes. Appropriate data must be collected and may be requested by the Board to show the level of student learning that has occurred as a result of participation in the institution's programs of study.*

*1050.30(a)(2): The design, conduct and evaluation of the unit of instruction, research or public service are under the direct and continuous control of the sponsoring institution's established processes for academic planning and quality maintenance.*

## Admission Requirements

Applicants interested in the proposed Bachelor of Science in Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering + Data Science program must meet the general admission requirements of the University and the Grainger College of Engineering. Requirements will be similar to those of the established Bachelor of Science in Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering program. The admission process includes a review of an applicant's extracurricular activities, related experiences, and optional test scores, if provided. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions evaluates the strength of the applicant's academic record and recommends applicants take the most challenging academic coursework available. The minimum general first-year academic admission requirements include:

- English: Four years
- Math: At least three to three and a half years
- Social Sciences: Two years
- Lab Sciences: Two years
- Language other than English: Two years
- Flexible academic units: Two years

Inter-college transfer student requirements for UIUC include applicants participating in the Engineering Undeclared Program, who may be reviewed for transfer into the BS in NPPE + DS program. Students will need to demonstrate an interest in the major by earning grades of at least a B or better in introductory courses such as CHEM 102, 103; MATH 221 and 231; PHYS 211; and

STAT 107, while maintaining a cumulative and specialized GPA of at least a 3.0 or higher.

Off-campus transfer students will follow the guidelines and application processes for Grainger College of Engineering for the BS in NPRE + DS program. Non-UIUC students must apply and be admitted directly into the College at the time of transfer. The minimum GPA is 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. All required technical course transfer work for the program must be completed with a grade of a B or better before applying. Applicants must also complete the prerequisite coursework in appropriate terms while taking at least 15 or more credit hours each semester.

This innovative, interdisciplinary program will equip students with an increasingly in-demand skill set for the workforce or to meet graduate program qualifications. By integrating key principles from both disciplines, this program will produce graduates who are uniquely prepared to address the complex challenges of society's rapidly evolving workforce landscape.

## Curriculum

The proposed BS in NPRE + DS curriculum provides a broad and diverse, but complimentary, set of engineering disciplines with a wide variety of applications that are vital to society such as engineering production, plasma processing of materials, fusion development, biomedical research and healthcare, nuclear safeguards, and radiation detection. The areas of study and research in nuclear, plasma, and radiological engineering involve modeling, simulation, numerical analysis, and the use of computational methods which are practices that produce a large quantity of data. The proposed program recognizes the interdisciplinary importance and benefits of combining data science with the domain specific nuclear, plasma, and radiological engineering discipline. It adds breadth in the direction of data science literacy and competency.

The program is designed for students to gain foundational knowledge in nuclear, plasma, radiologic engineering, and data science. The proposed program will focus on teaching safe and reliable nuclear energy production which relies on multifaceted engineering disciplines for design and analysis of large complex systems. Students will also learn the plasma process used for a myriad of applications including semiconductor production and harnessing the power of nuclear fusion, along with the intersection of radiation technologies, medicine, and security.

The proposed Bachelor of Science in Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering + Data Science is a 128-credit hour program which requires the traditional core sequence in nuclear, plasma, and radiological engineering curriculum with additional data science coursework requirements and a practicum. Major-specific coursework is comprised of three components:

1. Data science coursework (29 hours)
2. Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering coursework (70 hours)
3. Capstone course, NPRE 458, a meaningful research and discovery experience (four hours).

In addition to the 103 credit hours above, all students must complete the University's general education requirements, and any electives needed to reach the 128-credit hour degree requirement. Students may choose one of three concentration options from: power, safety and the environment; plasma and fusion science and engineering; or radiological, medical, and instrumentation applications. Each concentration requires students to acquire a depth of understanding based upon the student's specific educational and professional interests. The capstone course will demonstrate the student's proficiency in the engineering design process. The proposed program, including engineering course hours, aligns with the requirements of the Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology (ABET).



## Assessment of Student Learning

As part of the ABET accredited assessment process, the Department of Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering has established an assessment process for the existing Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering program. The proposed BS in NPRE + DS will follow this protocol. Likewise, the data science specific outcomes will adhere to departmental established processes.

For engineering assessments, work products for student learning objectives are determined approximately once every two years by each instructor in consultation with the associate head for undergraduate programs. Each semester, instructors collect course work products and distill those into a numerical score, which determines the percentage of students obtaining mastery for each individual work product. The instructor generates a document that includes the performance of students in the course with respect to the outcomes and number of students that achieved mastery (the level of mastery is 75 percent or higher).

In data science related areas, course and student outcomes are directly and quantitatively measured in courses. Faculty in each course will identify problem sets, exam questions and other assignments that relate meaningfully to student learning outcomes. For the data science specific outcomes, the curriculum committee will collaborate with instructors to collect assessment information about students in the proposed program. Adjustments and changes to lectures, problem sets, course projects and course emphasis are based on student performance on specific outcomes.

The chief academic advisor in the Department of Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering will monitor students' academic performance and notify, engage, and support those who are on academic probation. The associate head of undergraduate programs, with the curriculum subcommittee, will review course outcome satisfaction result metrics to ensure satisfactory performance and will follow up if goals are not met.

## Program Assessment

The proposed program will continue the established assessment standards and processes of the Department of Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering. Quantitative assessments, based on student outcomes and learning objectives, are performed once per academic year in each of the core engineering courses to identify areas for program improvement. Learning objectives and student achievement will be thoroughly assessed as part of the standard engineering accreditation process. Specifically, the proposed program will be evaluated for ABET accreditation on three or six-year intervals, like other engineering degrees on campus and reviewed based on ABET's standards.

## Facilities (space, equipment, instructional materials)

*1050.30(a)(4): A) Facilities, equipment and instructional resources (e.g., laboratory supplies and equipment, instructional materials, computational equipment) necessary to support the high-quality academic work in the unit of instruction, research or public service are available and maintained. B) Clinical sites necessary to meet the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service. C) Library holdings and acquisitions, owned or contracted for by the institution, that are necessary to support high quality instruction and scholarship in the unit of instruction, research and public service, are conveniently available and accessible, and can be maintained.*

Existing facilities are adequate to support the proposed program. The data science core will be delivered by the School of Information Science, the Siebel School of Computing and Data Science, and the Mathematics, and Statistics departments, while the Grainger College of Engineering will deliver nuclear, plasma, and radiological engineering courses. The majority of courses are scheduled in classrooms located on or near the Bardeen Quad between Engineering Hall and the Grainger Engineering Library. Classroom spaces for active learning are also available in the Campus Instructional Facility and the Illinois Flexible Learning Experience classrooms, which help facilitate innovative technology and teaching approaches. The Department of Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering recently invested in an expansion to the Talbot Laboratory facility which houses the administrative offices, teaching laboratories, and instructional spaces that will directly support the proposed program.

Current library collections, resources, and services are sufficient to support the proposed program. There is no fiscal impact on the University Library for the creation and sustainability of the BS in NPRE + DS program. The University possesses appropriate library resources with access to online databases, books, journal holdings, and other electronic resources to support instruction and scholarly work.

### **Faculty and Staff**

*1050.30(a)(3): A) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff ensure that the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are met. B) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff, as evidenced by level of degrees held, professional experience in the field of study and demonstrated knowledge of the field, ensure that they are able to fulfill their academic responsibilities. At a minimum, faculty shall have a degree from an institution accredited by a U.S. Department of Education and/or Council for Higher Education Accreditation recognized accrediting body or a degree from another country evaluated for U.S. equivalency in the discipline they will teach or for which they will develop curricula at least one level above that of the courses being taught or developed. C) The involvement of faculty in the unit of instruction, research or public service is sufficient to cover the various fields of knowledge encompassed by the unit, to sustain scholarship appropriate to the unit, and to assure curricular continuity and consistency in student evaluation. E) Support personnel, including but not limited to counselors, administrators, clinical supervisors, and technical staff, that are directly assigned to the unit of instruction, research or public service, have the educational background and experience necessary to carry out their assigned responsibilities.*

Existing faculty will provide instruction for the proposed program. The University has identified institutional policies that ensure faculty and staff possess the training, credentials, and other related qualifications to provide instruction in the proposed program. A formal faculty evaluation process is in place. The data science courses for the BS in NPRE + DS program will be supported by several departments including Computer Science in the Grainger College of Engineering, Mathematics and Statistics in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Information Sciences in the School of Information Sciences.

Through a partnership with the University System Office and departments, the provost supports the Underrepresented Faculty Recruitment Program in making available non-recurring funds for research to enhance offers of employment. Additional retention efforts include programming and development activities for executive officers and faculty members across ranks. Programming and resources for unit executive officers provide the knowledge and skills necessary for leadership, including ways to enhance their ability to support and mentor faculty within their units, particularly faculty members of color. The Office of the Provost also coordinates several

leadership development programs to increase the pool of potential academic leaders on campus with an intentional focus on supporting faculty members from marginalized and underrepresented groups to explore campus leadership and administrative roles.

### **Fiscal and Personnel Resources**

*1050.30(a)(5): A) The financial commitments to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are sufficient to ensure that the faculty and staff and support services necessary to offer the unit of instruction, research or public service can be acquired and maintained. B) Projections of revenues necessary to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are based on supportable estimates of state appropriations, local tax support, student tuition and fees, private gifts, and/or governmental grants and contracts.*

The proposed program will not request new state funds. The University has adequate faculty, staff, and other instructional resources to administer the proposed program. The program will be supported by existing faculty and staff. The Grainger College of Engineering Undergraduate Programs Office and the Engineering Career Services Office will accommodate the planned increase in students for advisement and placement.

### **Accreditation and Licensure**

*1050.30(b)(3)[applicable only to units of instruction]: Appropriate steps shall be taken to assure that professional accreditation needed for licensure or entry into a profession as specified in the objectives of the unit of instruction is maintained or will be granted in a reasonable period of time.*

The Department of Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering at UIUC will seek ABET accreditation for the proposed BS in NPRE + DS program. ABET accreditation will provide assurance that the NPRE core of the program aligns with quality standards for graduates entering the workforce. The University's engineering programs are accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET.

### **Program Information**

*1050.30(b)(2)[applicable only to units of instruction]: A) The information which the institution provides for students and the public shall include the following: if) An accurate description of the unit of instruction, including its objectives, length, and residency requirements if any; ii) Schedule of tuition, fees, and all other charges and expenses necessary for completion of the unit of instruction, cancellation and refund policies; iii) Student rights and responsibilities; iv) A statement regarding the transferability of college credits, including the fact that the decision to accept transfer credits is determined by the receiving institutions; v) A statement as to how the institution will advise students on the nature of the transfer process, including the importance of consulting with institutions to which the student may seek to transfer; vi) Evidence of arrangements for the transfer of courses or credits or both to institutional counterparts, when these arrangements exist; these arrangements are also known as articulation agreements; vii) A statement of the institution's most recent graduation rates and the number of graduates and enrollments as provided by the institution to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and any submission of data to satisfy Board reporting requirements; and viii) Other material facts concerning the institution and the unit of instruction as are likely to affect the decision of the student to enroll. B) The information listed in subsection (b)(2)(A) shall be available to prospective students prior to enrollment and shall be included in the institution's catalog of programs.*

Detailed information about the proposed program including a description of the admission policies, University policies, tuition, fees, and curriculum will be published on the University's website.

## **Staff Conclusion**

The staff concludes that the Bachelor of Science in Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering + Data Science proposed by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign meets the criteria to implement the Board of Higher Education Act (110 ILCS 205/et.seq.) as set forth in 23 Illinois Administrative Code, Ch. II, Section 1050.30, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education policies pertaining to assessment and accreditation or licensure.

**Proposed Center Title in the Region of Authorization:** Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning

*New Administrative Unit:* The proposal is for the establishment of the Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning. The Center will serve as a research unit to investigate the intersection of emerging technologies in education and the science of how people learn.

## **Background**

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC or the University) is seeking authorization to establish the Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning (CRITEL) in the Prairie region. The Center is a proposed research unit that will be housed in the College of Education focusing on the intersection of emerging technologies in education and the science of how people learn. The Center will develop new technologies that support learning and conduct scientific investigations on the impacts of these technologies on individuals, institutions, and communities through core activities including providing tangible support for faculty and students conducting “basic” and “use-inspired” research on how people learn with new technologies; creating opportunities and resources for affiliate faculty and students to design and build new technologies; facilitating partnerships and cultivating relationships that will allow for co-design and implementation studies in different educational contexts, such as schools, community centers, and museums; offering methodological expertise to those engaged in research and evaluation of learning technologies; leading dissemination efforts for research findings and innovative technologies that have the potential for local and global impact; and fostering a research community that foregrounds issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice as they pertain to the use and study of emerging technologies in education (e.g., the digital divide, algorithmic biases).

Serving primarily as a research unit, the Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning will not have a direct instruction component. However, the Center will engage in cross disciplinary collaboration with several departments and units on campus, functioning as a research hub and support center for the development of more culturally responsive and inclusive educational technologies. Faculty in the College of Education will lead the research and practice activities of the Center with a focus on four themes:

1. Learning and Interactivity Research - Conduct scientific investigations of how people learn in the context of interactive digital technologies such as investigating the effects of interactivity in digital environments on learning, exploring learning contexts and curricular designs involving digital environments, supporting socioemotional learning with technology, and discussing contexts and advancements in online learning environments.

2. Innovative Technology Design - Develop new digital learning tools that push the frontiers of technology, such as building multi-device platforms for individual and group learning, developing tools for artificial intelligence (AI) applications in education and cybersecurity, applying machine learning, video analysis, and sensor technologies to enhance educational experiences, creating amplified and immersive learning experiences, and developing novel assistive technologies for learning.
3. Impact and Policy - Work with community and industry partners to improve the policy and practice of digital technology use such as developing research-practice partnerships to enhance teacher professional development in using digital technologies for STEM, investigating the impacts of technology programs in schools, and developing action research with justice-centered pedagogies.
4. Digital Access and Equity - Explore motivation, engagement, and STEM achievement along with developing technologies to support the learning of minoritized youth and multilingual learners, as well as technologies that are culturally responsive to people in places historically underrepresented such as the Global South.

These overlapping themes encompass a range of topics related to educational technologies that address emerging trends and issues in national and global circles, while also serving as a guiding framework to further innovations toward ethical, equitable, and scalable models in technologies for learning. The themes and activities of the Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning are well aligned with the University's goal of becoming a preeminent public research university that combines scholarly expertise with world-class infrastructure, fuses disciplines, sparks collaborations, and nurtures the next generation of scholars. The Center will embody this spirit of interdisciplinarity by creating support structures that nurture cross-departmental, cross-college, and cross-campus partnerships. As a Center that serves the University community, CRITEL will provide resources and educational opportunities to empower faculty and students to instigate and support maximally impactful educational technology research and design.

## Need

*1050.30(a)(6): A) The unit of instruction, research or public service is educationally and economically consistent with the educational priorities and needs of the State of Illinois. B) The unit of instruction, research or public service meets a need that is not currently met by existing institutions and units of instruction, research or public service.*

The world is in a period of rapid development of new interactive technologies that can expand human experience and augment our practice and performance in profound ways. These include technologies that are becoming more immersive (e.g., virtual reality and augmented reality), more intelligent (e.g., AI and technologies driven by data science), and more mobile (e.g., wearable and embedded devices and sensors) than ever before. While many of these technologies have found commercial success, their effective application to educational contexts is still in its infancy. This is partially due to the dearth of rigorous research on the efficacy of these emerging technologies in authentic educational contexts. In addition, theories of how people learn have not kept pace with the interactive possibilities of new technologies. While some non-profit organizations and academic units have conducted educational technology research, there is a lack of design-focused research that seeks to create learning technologies in partnership with educational practitioners and technology engineers that can be shared locally, nationally, and internationally.

The mission of the Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning is to engage in interdisciplinary research and design and provide opportunities and resources for faculty and students from across campus to come together to create more effective and impactful educational technologies. While there are pockets of work happening on campus that are pertinent to the understanding of technology-enhanced learning, these efforts occur frequently in isolation of each other, inhibiting natural synergies and potential collaborations that could lead to scaled-up and more ambitious efforts. The Technology Innovations in Educational Research and Design (TIER-ED) initiative, funded in 2018 by the Investment for Growth program and administered by the Office of the Provost at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, has taken preliminary steps to build this interdisciplinary research and design capacity on the campus, but achieving the University's national and international research aspirations necessitates a more entrenched and enduring infrastructure with dependable resources and services for faculty and students, cost-recovery mechanisms, and amplified channels of communication.

The Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning was conceived with a concerted focus on responding to the urgency of designing tools for learning and instruction that are maximally impactful and culturally responsive in educational contexts. The College of Education is uniquely positioned to provide national leadership in this area given the foundation that was established by TIER-ED, existing academic programs (e.g., the Digital Environments for Learning, Teaching, and Agency (DELTA) graduate program), research strengths in associated technological areas (e.g., immersive technologies and computer-supported collaborative learning), and the College's expertise in educational equity and social justice established through the University's Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment (CREA). Further, in 2023, the National Science Foundation awarded UIUC with a \$20 million grant to establish the Inclusive and Intelligent Technologies for Education (INVITE) Institute, based in the College of Education. The INVITE Institute seeks to change how educational technologies interact with learners by developing responsive and inclusive AI techniques that track and promote non-cognitive skills associated with academic success. These recent initiatives and successes, along with the existing research in education technology across all departments, will enable the College of Education to bring considerable experience and credibility to this area of research and design.

The Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning will promote the development of new technologies that support learning and teaching in both formal and informal contexts. The Center will be closely aligned with the College of Education's Office of Research, including the Bureau of Educational Research (BER). The proposed Center will leverage BER's network of research partnerships and staff to support the development and submission of external funding proposals. CRITEL will also develop partnerships with other colleges on campus, including the Grainger College of Engineering and the Gies College of Business.

### **A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth**

The proposed Center supports *A Thriving Illinois: Goal 1, Equity, to close the equity gap for students who have historically been left behind*. The core aim of the Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning is to address pressing issues of access and equity in digital learning technologies for underserved communities. While there has been much attention given to the possibilities of digital technologies to enhance and expand access to educational interventions and opportunities, there are ways that these technologies can limit access (e.g., reducing the availability of face-to-face and responsive teaching for underserved students). CRITEL will conduct research on motivation, engagement, and STEM achievement in an effort to develop technologies to support the learning of minoritized youth and multilingual learners, as well as



technologies that are culturally responsive to people in places historically underrepresented such as the Global South. Rather than making equity and social justice an afterthought to the design, development, and dissemination of new technologies, the Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning will provide guidance and resources to foreground these issues. In addition, the College of Education faculty have been working to integrate culturally responsive teaching standards across teacher education programs to ensure that graduates are prepared to engage with diverse populations.

Aligned with the mission of the Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning, many faculty in the College of Education have external funding allocated toward broadening participation in STEM for underrepresented populations. The College of Education also has the only endorsement in the state in computer science education, which aims at using equitable STEM practices to ensure all students have access to high-quality computing experiences. A critical component of the Center's mission is to support and elevate the work of faculty and students who are designing technology-based solutions that address issues of social inequity in learning environments. This entails working with communities as partners at the design stage, while ensuring that communities benefit from the research. The predecessor of the Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning, TIER-ED, supported several projects with an equity agenda including the design of a digital toy for children with disabilities, creating digital tools to support undergraduate students of color in STEM majors, and designing multiple low-cost educational interventions for children in the Global South. As a campus-recognized Center, CRITEL will have the capacity to capitalize on these efforts through collaborations with the Campus-Community Compact. Partnering with the Compact will allow for greater access to embedding the work of the Center in schools and community centers at the local level.

Design education and data science education are two areas in which Illinois has invested heavily in recent years, and the work of the Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning will leverage these strengths to create better technologies for learning. The Center will provide research and design activities for students that will augment academic programs in the College of Education and other units. Providing meaningful opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in the area of educational technology design and research is a key aim of the Center. The TIER-ED initiative granted numerous fellowships to students to give them time and resources to develop new technologies and contribute to impactful research. The Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning projects will continue to give students research assistantship opportunities as well as work with University partners to establish internships and other career paths.

The College of Education has a long-standing commitment to recruiting and nurturing leaders from diverse backgrounds. This commitment has garnered the College the distinction as one of the largest producers of scholars of color who hold key positions in academia nationally and internationally. The College continually ranks above institutional averages on measures of diversity for both faculty and students. In 2024, the College hired an inaugural associate dean for faculty affairs to support the career development of faculty, particularly faculty of color. Additionally, two dean's fellows have been appointed to focus on faculty development and graduate student diversity and inclusion to further support the University's retention efforts for faculty and students.

In contributing to *A Thriving Illinois: Goal 2, Sustainability, to build a stronger financial future for individuals and institutions by finding ways to reduce the financial burden of education on students and their families*, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign has developed programs and initiatives to increase college accessibility and affordability for students. The Illinois Commitment



program provides scholarships and grants to cover tuition and campus fees for students who are Illinois residents and have a family income of \$75,000 or less. The University also offers scholarships to high achieving, newly admitted freshmen from historically underrepresented groups through the President's Award Program (PAP). The goal of the program is to ensure and enrich the diversity of the student body. To be eligible for consideration, students must be Illinois residents and have demonstrated outstanding academic achievement while graduating from an Illinois high school.

The College of Education has a history of collaborative synergies to build sustainability across campus and maximize long-term impact in the community. The College of Education has a long-standing commitment to conducting timely and innovative research in the area of technology-enhanced learning. The College has teaching and research collaborations with numerous units around campus, including joint programs with the Grainger College of Engineering. The College of Education continues to support cross-campus collaborations that promote interdisciplinary work. The Bureau of Educational Research, for example, hosts opportunities for faculty to interact and learn with colleagues around campus. Recent and upcoming events include interactions with colleagues from Engineering, Medicine, and the Institute of Genomic Biology. The Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning will harness these efforts to increase the proposed Center's impact.

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign has strong partnerships with businesses through statewide initiatives including the Discovery Partners Institute (DPI) and the Illinois Innovation Network (IIN), which closely align with *A Thriving Illinois: Goal 3, Growth, to increase talent and innovation to drive economic growth*. As a key gubernatorial initiative, DPI's Tech Talent Lab and immersion programs engage with Chicago's technology workforce allowing students to interact with Chicagoland technology and innovation culture. One of the priorities of the Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning is to develop new technologies that have the potential to become part of the educational infrastructure of the State of Illinois (with the possibility of commercialization). CRITEL anticipates working with the Discovery Partners Institute and the Illinois Innovation Network to provide research and employment opportunities related to educational technology. While the educational technology sector is growing rapidly, there is still a tremendous need for innovation in tools that effectively address the unique needs of learners in Illinois. Industry-driven educational technology solutions are often efficiency driven and offer a one-size-fits-all approach. The Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning aims to work with business partners and demonstrate the value of design approaches that incorporate the voices of students and teachers. The College of Education is exploring partnerships with the Gies College of Business to create avenues for innovation and entrepreneurship in educational technology. There is also a strong possibility of CRITEL collaborating with the Illinois Workforce and Education Research Collaborative on researching the impact of new technologies on districts and schools in Illinois.

### **Comparable Units in Illinois**

Currently, no unit at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign has the capacity to support the full lifespan of learning technology design, research, and evaluation. The proposed Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning will leverage the creativity and interdisciplinary expertise of the University to design solutions to critical problems in education such as creating technology-enhanced interventions that are accessible to all and are culturally responsive. Comparatively, the UIUC's existing Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL) serves as a resource for enhancing campus instruction, however, it is not within CITL's scope to conduct formal and publishable research on the efficacy of educational technologies nor design novel

technologies with applications outside of higher education (e.g., pre-K to 12 contexts, and informal learning environments). Likewise, units such as the Center for Social & Behavioral Science (CSBS) and the Center for Immersive Computing (IMMERSE) all have some complementary components and overlapping interests with the proposed Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning, but none have the precise focus on understanding how people learn with emerging technologies or the capacity and expertise to support large-scale educational technology research. The Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning will work to forge relationships with these units to share resources and limit redundancies. Many of these relationships already exist through TIER-ED and the networks of individual researchers. There is also a unique opportunity for CRITEL to engage more purposefully with state-level entities such as the Learning and Technology Center (LTC) of Illinois, a program of the Illinois State Board of Education that aims to support meaningful technology in K-12 learning environments across the state.

### **Mission and Objectives**

*1050.30(a)(1): A) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with the mission of the college or university. B) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with what the unit title implies.*

The College of Education shares a commitment to expanding models of teaching and learning through its research, teacher education, graduate student preparation and outreach activities. A core part of this mission is harnessing the power of technology to revolutionize learning, personalize education, enhance accessibility, and pave the way for a more inclusive future for all. The Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning will be a key component of enacting this mission. The aim of CRITEL is to become a hub of research and innovation for investigating the ways new technologies impact learning and education.

### **Assessment of Outcomes**

*1050.30(a)(2): The design, conduct and evaluation of the unit of instruction, research or public service are under the direct and continuous control of the sponsoring institution's established processes for academic planning and quality maintenance.*

The Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning will be evaluated through a set of internal and external outcomes based upon input from the Center director, dean of the College of Education, associate dean for research, faculty, student affiliates, and the inaugural steering committee. Core outcomes that will drive the internal focus of CRITEL include:

- Developing stronger cohesion and identity within the College of Education and across campus for research on, and design of, technologies for learning. Some potential targets include increases in the number of interdisciplinary grant submissions and research publications, outreach efforts with units across campus, and recognition of the Center and its work in newsletters and other campus communications.
- Increasing the affiliate membership of the Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning by 25 percent greater than the current number of TIER-ED affiliates within one year. A more nuanced target is to seek increased participation across each of the four themes and to achieve some degree of balance between the themes in terms of representation and effort.
- Working with the College of Education Marketing and Communication and Advancement teams to create viable and lasting revenue streams to support the core activities of the Center (e.g., seed funding).

- Establishing lasting connections with the State of Illinois (e.g., the Learning Technology Center) that may entail regular contact (e.g., monthly check-in meetings) and potentially concrete collaborations such as external funding proposals.

The external outcomes of CRITEL are:

- Generating research products (e.g., journal articles, white papers, conference proceedings) that describe key findings related to learning and interactivity. The Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning will maintain a website that will organize and disseminate these research products for public consumption.
- Increasing activity around external funding proposals resulting from Center-facilitated collaborations with faculty and external partners.
- Developing tangible products that can be implemented in local educational contexts or potentially in places of high need and special interest (e.g., the Global South, a special education classroom).

The steering committee will play a significant role in the formative evaluation of the quality of the Center. Members of the steering committee will be selected by the Center director in consultation with the College of Education dean. The steering committee will evaluate the organizational structure of CRITEL, including improvements related to faculty and staff support and recommendations for new resources. The Center will submit an annual report that details the unit's research and public engagement activities.

### **Facilities (space, equipment, instructional materials)**

*1050.30(a)(4): A) Facilities, equipment and instructional resources (e.g., laboratory supplies and equipment, instructional materials, computational equipment) necessary to support the high-quality academic work in the unit of instruction, research or public service are available and maintained. B) Clinical sites necessary to meet the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service. C) Library holdings and acquisitions, owned or contracted for by the institution, that are necessary to support high quality instruction and scholarship in the unit of instruction, research and public service, are conveniently available and accessible, and can be maintained.*

The University's existing facilities are sufficient to house the proposed Center. CRITEL will occupy the four-office suite in the Children's Research Center (CRC) near the south end of Research Park on the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's campus. This space is administered by the College of Education's facilities team, which is currently used as an office and meeting space for affiliated researchers and students. Additionally, there are other spaces within the College of Education that can support the Center's research and community building activities. These spaces include the O'Leary Center, a flexible work and meeting space in the lower level of the building, and the Illinois Design Ecologies and Learning (IDEAL) Lab on the first floor. The IDEAL Lab is a room-sized data collection instrument that is already being used by learning technology researchers to collect naturalistic data from collaborative groups, classrooms, and simulations.

The University possesses appropriate library resources with access to online databases, books, journal holdings, and other electronic resources to support the needs of CRITEL. The University Library holds thousands of book titles, journals, and databases with a significant yearly allocated budget for materials and subscriptions. The circulating and non-circulating library collection holds materials necessary to support the Center's research activities including key texts, special collections, and research collections.

## Faculty and Staff

*1050.30(a)(3): A) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff ensure that the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are met. B) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff, as evidenced by level of degrees held, professional experience in the field of study and demonstrated knowledge of the field, ensure that they are able to fulfill their academic responsibilities. At a minimum, faculty shall have a degree from an institution accredited by a U.S. Department of Education and/or Council for Higher Education Accreditation recognized accrediting body or a degree from another country evaluated for U.S. equivalency in the discipline they will teach or for which they will develop curricula at least one level above that of the courses being taught or developed. C) The involvement of faculty in the unit of instruction, research or public service is sufficient to cover the various fields of knowledge encompassed by the unit, to sustain scholarship appropriate to the unit, and to assure curricular continuity and consistency in student evaluation. E) Support personnel, including but not limited to counselors, administrators, clinical supervisors, and technical staff, that are directly assigned to the unit of instruction, research or public service, have the educational background and experience necessary to carry out their assigned responsibilities.*

The proposed organizational structure of the Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning within the College of Education includes a Center director, coordinator, and theme leads. The Center director will coordinate the unit's activities and functions, have overall responsibility for enacting the charter of the Center, manage relationships with internal and external units, and communicate about the Center's progress and budgetary status to the College of Education and University leadership. The director will report to the dean of the College of Education and work closely with the Center's steering committee consisting of five faculty members representing the College of Education and other units or entities. The steering committee will meet each semester to assess progress of the Center and make strategic recommendations.

The Center coordinator will administer the research and logistical processes of the unit including managing seed funding programs, establishing relationships with schools and industry partners, providing oversight of the Center's facilities and equipment, managing student research assistants and hourly workers, and coordinating with the Office of Research and the College of Education's shared service finance and human resources teams regarding budgetary and human resources matters.

Faculty will serve as theme leads from academic departments within the College of Education guiding the research agenda which consists of four themes. Initially, the role of the theme lead will entail steering the authorship of a white paper that defines the theme and securing other faculty and student researchers on campus. Inaugural theme leads will be appointed through the consensus of the director, coordinator and steering committee. Theme leads will serve staggered two-year terms. Faculty in the College of Education and across campus have an abundance of expertise in researching issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion and will guide the development of more culturally responsive and inclusive technologies.

The Diversity Realized by Visioning Excellence (DRIVE) and the Target of Opportunity (TOP) programs at UIUC provide resources to incentivize hiring activities that support diversity, recruitment, and retention goals. The TOP program provides salary support for hires that enhance campus diversity, including faculty from underrepresented groups and women in STEM fields. The DRIVE program identifies candidates through a search process for open faculty positions and provides postdoctoral students with an opportunity to build a foundation of scholarship that will prepare them for tenure-track positions. Through these programs, the College of Education has

hired a number of faculty from underrepresented groups and recruited post-doctoral fellows from indigenous backgrounds with expertise in tribal and higher education.

### **Fiscal and Personnel Resources**

*1050.30(a)(5): A) The financial commitments to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are sufficient to ensure that the faculty and staff and support services necessary to offer the unit of instruction, research or public service can be acquired and maintained. B) Projections of revenues necessary to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are based on supportable estimates of state appropriations, local tax support, student tuition and fees, private gifts, and/or governmental grants and contracts.*

The University has adequate faculty, staff, and other resources to support the proposed Center. The operational expenditures for CRITEL include personnel costs for the director, four faculty theme leads, and a part-time coordinator. In addition, a small budget will be allocated for expenses associated with the Center's supplies, services, and equipment. Given the strategic importance of CRITEL, the College of Education will provide up to \$50,000 in the first year, up to \$30,000 in the second year, and up to \$20,000 in the third year of the Center's operation in addition to funding the annual cost of the director's stipend.

The Center will also be supported by indirect cost recovery (ICR) funds from sponsored research projects, gifts and corporate contributions, and consulting services provided by CRITEL to other entities across UIUC's campus. The dean and the executive committee in the College of Education are currently developing policies and guidelines around ICR distribution for campus-recognized centers and institutes. A percentage of ICR funds from faculty affiliated with educational technology-focused research projects will be applied to the recurring costs of the Center.

Gifts and corporate contributions earmarked for funding educational technology initiatives will be allocated to the Center. For example, the Advancement Office of the College of Education recently received a \$100,000 gift from an UIUC alumnus to support TIER-ED and educational technology innovation. Center leadership will continue to pursue additional gifts and sponsorships.

Revenue is expected from consulting services provided by CRITEL to other entities across UIUC's campus. There is substantial expertise within the Center for designing, executing, and analyzing studies and evaluations of educational technologies in a variety of contexts (e.g., schools, community centers, and museums). Such evaluations are increasingly in demand, and the College of Education often receives requests for specific projects and initiatives from other units on campus such as the Grainger College of Engineering and the Carle Illinois College of Medicine. The Center will be equipped to offer these services, either independently or in conjunction with other entities within the College such as the Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment.

### **Accreditation and Licensure**

*1050.30(b)(3)[applicable only to units of instruction]: Appropriate steps shall be taken to assure that professional accreditation needed for licensure or entry into a profession as specified in the objectives of the unit of instruction is maintained or will be granted in a reasonable period of time.*

No specialized accreditation or licensure is required.

## Program Information

*1050.30(b)(2)[applicable only to units of instruction]: A) The information which the institution provides for students and the public shall include the following: i) An accurate description of the unit of instruction, including its objectives, length, and residency requirements if any; ii) Schedule of tuition, fees, and all other charges and expenses necessary for completion of the unit of instruction, cancellation and refund policies; iii) Student rights and responsibilities; iv) A statement regarding the transferability of college credits, including the fact that the decision to accept transfer credits is determined by the receiving institutions; v) A statement as to how the institution will advise students on the nature of the transfer process, including the importance of consulting with institutions to which the student may seek to transfer; vi) Evidence of arrangements for the transfer of courses or credits or both to institutional counterparts, when these arrangements exist; these arrangements are also known as articulation agreements; vii) A statement of the institution's most recent graduation rates and the number of graduates and enrollments as provided by the institution to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and any submission of data to satisfy Board reporting requirements; and viii) Other material facts concerning the institution and the unit of instruction as are likely to affect the decision of the student to enroll. B) The information listed in subsection (b)(2)(A) shall be available to prospective students prior to enrollment and shall be included in the institution's catalog of programs.*

Detailed information about the proposed Center will be published on the University's website.

## Staff Conclusion

The staff concludes that the Center for Research and Innovation in Technology-Enhanced Learning proposed by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign meets the criteria to implement the Board of Higher Education Act (110 ILCS 205/et.seq.) as set forth in 23 Illinois Administrative Code, Ch. II, Section 1050.30, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education policies pertaining to assessment and accreditation or licensure.

**Proposed Department Title in the Region of Authorization:** Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery in the Prairie Region

*New Administrative Unit:* The proposal is for the authorization of the Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery. The Carle Illinois College of Medicine seeks to create the Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery specializing in the academic, research, and clinical aspects of cardiovascular health.

## Background

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC or the University) requests authorization to establish the Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery (the Department). The Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery will be composed of cardiology, cardiac surgery, vascular surgery, and interventional radiology faculty that are currently under the umbrella of the Clinical Sciences Department within the Carle Illinois College of Medicine (CI MED). The proposed Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery will be instrumental to advancing the clinical, academic, and research components of CI MED. This new department will be composed primarily of faculty specializing in cardiovascular medicine and surgery, who will deliver specialized education, clinical care, and research initiatives in alignment with the University of Illinois



Urbana-Champaign's mission.

The Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery exists to enhance educational quality, streamline administrative processes, foster collaboration, and support faculty excellence. The Department aims to provide a focused and high-quality educational experience for students, tailored to the complexities of cardiovascular medicine and surgery. This involves specialized instruction that meets the unique needs of learners in the field. By transitioning cardiovascular medicine and surgery from a section within the broader Clinical Sciences Department to a dedicated department, the University seeks to reduce administrative challenges and create a more efficient, supportive environment for faculty development and student education. The restructuring will promote interdisciplinary collaboration within CI MED, ensuring that the various specialties work together to enhance healthcare delivery and advance medical research. In addition, the Department will oversee the recruitment, development, and retention of highly qualified faculty, ensuring consistency in tenure-track and non-tenure-track promotions across CI MED, while allowing flexibility to address the specific needs of cardiovascular medicine and surgery faculty.

The Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery will play a central role in instruction, with faculty delivering both didactic and clinical education to medical students, residents, and fellows. The Department's involvement in teaching is critical, as it ensures that cardiovascular-specific knowledge and skills are effectively imparted to the next generation of healthcare providers. The creation of the Department directly supports the University's mission by enhancing educational quality, fostering faculty development, and advancing medical research while improving healthcare outcomes for the state's population. The Department's objectives are consistent with the University's focus on excellence in education, research, and public service, particularly in areas of heart disease treatment and prevention.

## Need

*1050.30(a)(6): A) The unit of instruction, research or public service is educationally and economically consistent with the educational priorities and needs of the State of Illinois. B) The unit of instruction, research or public service meets a need that is not currently met by existing institutions and units of instruction, research or public service.*

The proposed Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery at the Carle Illinois College of Medicine represents a strategic initiative to address critical regional and state healthcare needs while aligning closely with the already established Heart and Vascular Institute at Carle Health. This alignment is designed to enhance the recruitment of clinical faculty and strengthen the connection between academic research and clinical practice, ultimately improving healthcare outcomes in Illinois. Illinois faces significant challenges in healthcare, particularly in cardiology, where there is a growing demand for specialized services and a shortage of medical professionals in central Illinois. The clinical cardiology department at Carle Foundation Hospital is a leader in providing high-quality care and creating a corresponding academic department at CI MED is intended to build upon this success. By aligning the medical school's academic efforts with Carle's clinical strengths, the Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery will help bridge the gap between cutting-edge research and practical, patient-centered care. The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign is uniquely positioned to drive this initiative. The new Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery will facilitate the recruitment of top clinician faculty, leveraging the University's research capabilities to support and expand the clinical services offered at Carle. This synergy between research and clinical practice is expected to attract significant federal funding and other resources, further solidifying Illinois' position as a leader in medical



innovation and patient care.

Demand for cardiovascular services is rapidly increasing, particularly in rural and geographically dispersed areas like central Illinois, where an aging population is increasing the need for innovative cardiac care. The enhanced collaboration between CI MED and Carle Foundation Hospital is poised to benefit from the enhanced collaboration between CI MED and Carle Health, with the Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery playing a crucial role in training the next generation of physician innovators. These physicians will be equipped not only in clinical care but also in leveraging the latest research and technological advances, ultimately improving healthcare delivery across the rural communities of central Illinois.

This integration of academic and clinical expertise will enable the development of innovative care models that can be applied both within Illinois and beyond, improving patient outcomes and reducing healthcare costs. The Department's focus on recruiting clinical faculty will ensure that these innovations are grounded in real-world clinical experience, making them more effective and relevant to the population's needs.

### **A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth**

The proposed Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery will support *Goal 1, Equity, of A Thriving Illinois to close the equity gaps for students who have been left behind.* CI MED is dedicated to advancing equity and access to educational opportunities, with a particular focus on supporting students from underrepresented backgrounds. In alignment with the University, CI MED has devised a comprehensive plan to implement systemic solutions that will enhance access and create meaningful opportunities for service to underserved communities. These initiatives are designed to provide ongoing support for students throughout their academic journey, ensuring they are well-prepared, well-supported, and empowered to succeed.

One of the key strategies being explored is the implementation of summer bridge programs. These programs are designed to ease the transition into medical school for underrepresented students by offering foundational courses, study skills workshops, and orientations to the demands of medical school life. For example, the proposal for a School of Medicine's Summer Pre-Matriculation Program would provide a six-week intensive preparation course covering anatomy, biochemistry, and effective study strategies. The program will be closely monitored through pre- and post-program assessments, student feedback surveys, and the academic performance of participants in their first semester. Recognizing the importance of personalized support, the College is also implementing proactive, comprehensive, and tailored advising programs. Advisors will be assigned to underrepresented students to provide personalized academic and career guidance. Regular check-ins, progress reports, and student satisfaction surveys will be used to measure the effectiveness of these advising programs.

In addition to academic support, the Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery is committed to fostering a sense of social responsibility and community engagement through service-learning initiatives. These programs integrate community service projects with academic coursework, allowing students to develop a deeper connection to the communities they serve. For instance, the Community Health Initiative enables students to work with local clinics in underserved areas, providing health education and basic medical services. The impact of these service-learning experiences will be measured through community feedback, student reflections, and faculty evaluations.

To cultivate a supportive environment, the Department will establish learning communities, cohort-based groups that provide academic support and foster a sense of belonging among underrepresented students. The Health Equity Scholars Learning Community offers a seminar series, mentorship, and collaborative projects focused on addressing health disparities. Attendance, participation, and academic outcomes will be tracked to ensure these learning communities are effective, with regular feedback from participants guiding ongoing improvements.

With a foundational understanding that students cannot succeed academically without their basic needs being met, the Department will provide resources such as housing assistance, food security programs, and mental health services to ensure that students can focus on their studies. For example, the Student Wellness and Support Center offers emergency grants, counseling services, and a food pantry for students in need. The effectiveness of these support services will be evaluated using utilization rates, student satisfaction surveys, and retention data.

To monitor the success of these initiatives, the Department will establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework. This will involve collecting comprehensive data on academic performance, retention rates, student satisfaction, and program participation. Regular reviews will be conducted to assess the impact of each program and identify areas for improvement. Additionally, feedback from students, faculty, and staff will be gathered through surveys and focus groups, ensuring that the programs remain responsive to the needs of the community.

The Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery will support *Goal 2, Sustainability, of A Thriving Illinois to build a stronger financial future for individuals and institutions by finding ways to reduce the financial burden of education on students and their families*. CI MED plans to maximize the effectiveness and efficiencies of the new administrative unit by implementing a strategic and streamlined approach that focuses on a clear delineation of roles while fostering collaboration across departments. This approach ensures that University administrative functions such as curriculum development, faculty affairs, and student services, will remain with the College while clinical administrative functions, including patient care management, clinical staffing, and healthcare operations will be handled by Carle Health, thereby avoiding unnecessary duplication and enhancing overall operational effectiveness. Moreover, the College's budget demonstrates a proactive approach to accessibility by providing scholarships. These initiatives aim to make the degree program financially attainable for deserving yet financially challenged students and their families. Importantly, the budget anticipates that a significant portion, 30 percent, of potential tuition is given to students through scholarships, further underscoring the institution's commitment to fostering an inclusive and accessible educational environment.

The proposed Department will contribute to *Goal 3, Growth, of A Thriving Illinois to increase talent and innovation to drive economic growth*, by reinforcing and promoting the public good throughout the state in focusing on several core areas that address pressing societal needs, particularly in the realm of healthcare and community well-being. One of the ways the Department will advance public good is through civic engagement. By establishing strong partnerships with local organizations, government agencies, and non-profit organizations, the Department will actively participate in community service projects that have a tangible impact on the lives of residents. These initiatives will include health awareness campaigns designed to educate and empower communities, improving public health outcomes across diverse populations. Additionally, the proposed Department will integrate service-learning into its curriculum, providing students with opportunities to apply their academic knowledge to real-world challenges. Students will not only gain practical experience but also contribute meaningfully to the communities they serve through projects that focus on enhancing urban access to healthcare, promoting public health, and fostering environmental

sustainability.

Addressing societal challenges requires innovative and interdisciplinary approaches, and the Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery is dedicated to fostering solutions to society's challenges through collaborative efforts. The Department will encourage interdisciplinary research initiatives that bring together faculty, students, and external partners to tackle critical issues such as healthcare disparities, environmental sustainability, and economic inequality. By leveraging the expertise and resources across various disciplines, the Department aims to develop innovative solutions that can be implemented at local, state, and national levels.

Additionally, the proposed Department will support entrepreneurship and innovation as key drivers of societal change. Through targeted programs that encourage the development of startups and social enterprises, students and faculty will be empowered to create businesses and initiatives that proactively address societal challenges. These efforts will be supported by incubators, pitch competitions, and partnerships with industry leaders, ensuring that the most promising ideas have the resources and support needed to succeed. In fulfilling its mission to address societal needs, the Department will prioritize the training of future healthcare leaders. The Department will prepare students to become informed and engaged citizens, equipped with the critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and leadership skills necessary to navigate and address the complexities of modern society. These future leaders will be instrumental in advancing public health, reducing healthcare disparities, and promoting social justice within their communities.

### **Comparable Units in Illinois**

While other institutions in Illinois offer cardiology programs, there are only two related, but distinctly different, units of administration at public universities. The University of Illinois Chicago's Center for CardioVascular Research exists to promote cardiovascular health, reduce disability and death from heart and vascular disease, and to provide training for future basic and clinician-scientists. The center supports research in basic, translational, and clinical cardiovascular sciences on the Medical Campus at the University of Illinois Chicago. Northeastern Illinois University's Center for Exercise Science and Cardiovascular Research has an athletic, rather than medical-surgical, focus. The proposed Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery at CI MED is unique due to its close alignment with the thriving Heart & Vascular Institute at Carle Foundation Hospital and the multidisciplinary nature of the Department which will include both clinical and surgical cardiovascular specialists. The interdisciplinary structure of this department will improve patient care and provide unique educational and innovation opportunities. This collaboration between a leading academic institution and a top-tier clinical provider is unmatched in Illinois, providing a model for how academic and clinical entities can work together to improve healthcare outcomes.

Other medical schools, such as Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine and the University of Chicago's Pritzker School of Medicine, have strong cardiology programs, but Carle Health has Integrated regional health system. This makes the proposed Department at CI MED distinct in its ability to translate academic research directly into clinical practice, enhancing the care provided to patients in central Illinois and surrounding areas.

The establishment of the Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery at CI MED, in close collaboration with Carle Health, is expected to complement rather than compete with existing cardiology programs in the state. By filling a unique niche that combines academic research with clinical practice, the Department will enhance the overall landscape of cardiology education and care in Illinois. The Department's innovative approach will likely serve as a model for other

institutions, encouraging similar collaborations that can improve healthcare outcomes across the state.

Institution	Academic Unit	Sector
University of Illinois Chicago	Center for CardioVascular Research	Public
Northeastern Illinois University	Center for Exercise Science and Cardiovascular Research	Public

### **Mission and Objectives**

*1050.30(a)(1): A) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with the mission of the college or university. B) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with what the unit title implies.*

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and CI MED are deeply committed to advancing the University's mission and statewide educational goals. The proposed Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery aligns its strategic initiatives with the University's overarching objectives, focusing on key areas such as fostering scholarship, discovery, innovation, and societal impact. These efforts are measured through a comprehensive performance management system, which includes indicators such as research expenditures, student outcomes, and community engagement initiatives. By tracking these metrics, the Department will provide clear evidence of its contributions to the University's mission and statewide priorities.

### **Assessment of Outcomes**

*1050.30(a)(2): The design, conduct and evaluation of the unit of instruction, research or public service are under the direct and continuous control of the sponsoring institution's established processes for academic planning and quality maintenance.*

The University employs various tools and processes to ensure the quality and performance of its colleges and administrative units. Regular reviews of numerous metrics, measuring different parameters of excellence, are conducted through a strategic planning and evaluation process. This includes gathering student assessments of individual faculty, as well as student and stakeholder assessments of the programs and program elements delivered by faculty. The Department's contributions will be evaluated within the broader framework of CI MED's strategic plan, which aligns with the University's strategic goals. These include fostering scholarship, discovery, and innovation; providing transformative learning experiences; making a significant societal impact; and stewarding resources for strategic investment.

As part of the comprehensive assessment strategy, the Department will focus on specific measures outlined in CI MED's strategic plan, which include creating and implementing a faculty engagement support infrastructure, growing support for student-led healthcare research, developing innovative curricular tracks, and enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts through targeted recruitment and retention strategies. The Department will measure educational impact and contribute to CI MED's educational mission by delivering specialized cardiology education and ensuring students receive a rigorous, relevant, and cutting-edge curriculum. The Department's contribution to faculty development will be measured by reducing the number of faculty in the Clinical Sciences Department and having a more manageable number of faculty in

the Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery. Faculty members will be offered more targeted professional support to enhance faculty satisfaction and retention, which will ultimately benefit student learning outcomes. The success of the Department will be measured through a combination of research outputs, funding ratios, community impact, and collaborative initiatives that align with the strategic goals of both CI MED and the University. By setting clear targets and systematically tracking progress, the Department will ensure its contributions are significant and far-reaching, both within the academic community and beyond.

## **Facilities**

*1050.30(a)(4): A) Facilities, equipment and instructional resources (e.g., laboratory supplies and equipment, instructional materials, computational equipment) necessary to support the high-quality academic work in the unit of instruction, research or public service are available and maintained. B) Clinical sites necessary to meet the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service. C) Library holdings and acquisitions, owned or contracted for by the institution, that are necessary to support high quality instruction and scholarship in the unit of instruction, research and public service, are conveniently available and accessible, and can be maintained.*

The University's existing facilities are sufficient for the proposed Department. The Carle Illinois College of Medicine's primary instructional, administrative, and student facility is located in the Medical Sciences Building on the University's campus. The building underwent a renovation which was completed in June 2021. The first floor includes problem-based learning rooms, a learning resource center, the Student Affairs suite, and the dean's suite. The second floor houses an auditorium, student designated spaces for studying and interaction, standardized patient rooms, and the faculty office suite. Anatomy labs and larger classroom spaces are located on the third floor and student innovation labs are in the basement. The College also operates at Carle Health, a clinical network where most clinical rotations occur. CI MED has dedicated space on the Carle Foundation Hospital campus. This space includes two student lounges and office space for Academic Affairs and Student Affairs.

## **Faculty and Staff**

*1050.30(a)(3): A) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff ensure that the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are met. B) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff, as evidenced by level of degrees held, professional experience in the field of study and demonstrated knowledge of the field, ensure that they are able to fulfill their academic responsibilities. At a minimum, faculty shall have a degree from an institution accredited by a U.S. Department of Education and/or Council for Higher Education Accreditation recognized accrediting body or a degree from another country evaluated for U.S. equivalency in the discipline they will teach or for which they will develop curricula at least one level above that of the courses being taught or developed. C) The involvement of faculty in the unit of instruction, research or public service is sufficient to cover the various fields of knowledge encompassed by the unit, to sustain scholarship appropriate to the unit, and to assure curricular continuity and consistency in student evaluation. E) Support personnel, including but not limited to counselors, administrators, clinical supervisors, and technical staff, that are directly assigned to the unit of instruction, research or public service, have the educational background and experience necessary to carry out their assigned responsibilities.*

The University has policies and procedures in place to ensure the selection and retention of quality faculty and staff. The dean of the College serves as the chief academic officer for Carle Health. The dean ensures that the curriculum and administrative structures are aligned with the goals

of both institutions. This dual role underscores the importance of integrated leadership in achieving a cohesive and collaborative academic environment.

The Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery will be fully integrated within CI MED, adopting the standard academic structure of other departments at the University. The department head, who will report directly to the dean, will oversee the department's operations and administration of activities, ensuring that policies and programs related to education, research, service, and public outreach are effectively implemented and aligned with the College's and University's strategic goals. The dean, in turn, reports to the provost of the University who serves as chief academic officer to the executive vice president and chief medical officer of Carle Health.

An executive committee, composed of faculty representatives, will support the department head and play a vital role in departmental governance. This committee will serve as a conduit between the faculty and the department head, advising on policies, budget preparation, and other key areas of departmental management. An associate head may also be appointed to assist the department head and ensure continuity of leadership in their absence.

CI MED benefits from a highly qualified faculty with extensive experience in medical education, supported by the expertise of faculty from other Colleges and research units within the University. Faculty qualifications are continuously enhanced through ongoing professional development, annual evaluations, and a clear promotion pathway. Reward structures are designed to be competitive with those of peer institutions, with specific recognition for clinical faculty who contribute significantly to the College's mission. The University's promotion and tenure policies ensure that faculty are recognized and rewarded for their contributions to teaching, research, and service.

### **Fiscal and Personnel Resources**

*1050.30(a)(5): A) The financial commitments to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are sufficient to ensure that the faculty and staff and support services necessary to offer the unit of instruction, research or public service can be acquired and maintained. B) Projections of revenues necessary to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are based on supportable estimates of state appropriations, local tax support, student tuition and fees, private gifts, and/or governmental grants and contracts*

The College is sustained through the integral support of Carle Health, serving as a key partner, supplemented by campus resources and philanthropic contributions. In addition to these sources, research and tuition revenues will play a vital role in sustaining CI MED's operations, with the proposed departments providing essential infrastructure. Notably, the College is steadfast in aligning with the expectations of the Liaison Committee on Medical Education, ensuring that student tuition constitutes less than 30 percent of all revenues.

The establishment of the Department will not require any additional resources beyond those needed to employ a part-time administrative support position. The funding currently allocated to the Clinical Sciences department in CI MED, including the funding required for staffing, space, equipment and operating activities, is included as part of the College's overall operating budget. A portion of this funding will be dispersed to the four new departments. The revenues necessary to support the departments are revenues identified as part of the overall College budget and consist of three primary sources: annual operating support from Carle Health, revenue from student tuition, annual operating support from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign campus, and support from philanthropic sources. No new state resources will be needed to establish the Department.



## Accreditation and Licensure

*1050.30(b)(3) [applicable only to units of instruction]: Appropriate steps shall be taken to assure that professional accreditation needed for licensure or entry into a profession as specified in the objectives of the unit of instruction is maintained or will be granted in a reasonable period of time.*

The proposed Department is an administrative unit that will be housed in the Carle Illinois College of Medicine. CI MED was granted full accreditation status in February 2025 by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), an accrediting agency for medical education programs in the United States and Canada. The LCME will conduct a comprehensive review of the College every seven years for reaccreditation.

## Program Information

*1050.30(b)(2)[applicable only to units of instruction]: A) The information which the institution provides for students and the public shall include the following: i) An accurate description of the unit of instruction, including its objectives, length, and residency requirements if any; ii) Schedule of tuition, fees, and all other charges and expenses necessary for completion of the unit of instruction, cancellation and refund policies; iii) Student rights and responsibilities; iv) A statement regarding the transferability of college credits, including the fact that the decision to accept transfer credits is determined by the receiving institutions; v) A statement as to how the institution will advise students on the nature of the transfer process, including the importance of consulting with institutions to which the student may seek to transfer; vi) Evidence of arrangements for the transfer of courses or credits or both to institutional counterparts, when these arrangements exist; these arrangements are also known as articulation agreements; vii) A statement of the institution's most recent graduation rates and the number of graduates and enrollments as provided by the institution to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and any submission of data to satisfy Board reporting requirements; and viii) Other material facts concerning the institution and the unit of instruction as are likely to affect the decision of the student to enroll. B) The information listed in subsection (b)(2)(A) shall be available to prospective students prior to enrollment and shall be included in the institution's catalog of programs.*

Detailed information about the proposed Department will be published on the University's website.

## Staff Conclusion

The staff concludes that the Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery proposed by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign meets the criteria to implement the Board of Higher Education Act (110 ILCS 205/et.seq.) as set forth in 23 Illinois Administrative Code, Ch. II, Section 1050.30, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education policies pertaining to assessment and accreditation or licensure.

**Proposed Department Title in the Region of Authorization:** Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery

**New Administrative Unit:** The proposal is for the authorization of the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery. The Carle Illinois College of Medicine (CI MED) seeks to create the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery. This new department will be



composed primarily of faculty specializing in Neurology and Neurosurgery, who will deliver specialized education, clinical care, and research initiatives in alignment with the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's mission.

## Background

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC or The University) requests authorization to establish the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery (the Department). The Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery will be housed within the existing Clinical Sciences Department of the Carle Illinois College of Medicine (CI MED) and will be composed primarily of neurology and neurosurgery faculty who will deliver the clinical, academic, and research components of the CI MED educational experience specific to their area of expertise. This structure was established in accordance with CI MED's approved bylaws and under the guidance of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, which approved the creation of CI MED on March 1, 2016, and its Doctor of Medicine degree on March 14, 2017. The Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery will be integral to advancing the clinical, academic, and research components of CI MED, specifically in the field of neurologic medicine. This new department will play a central role in instruction, with faculty delivering both didactic and clinical education to medical students, residents, and fellows. The Department's involvement in teaching is critical, as it ensures that neurology-specific knowledge and skills are effectively imparted to the next generation of healthcare providers.

By transitioning neurology from a section within the broader Clinical Sciences Department to a dedicated department, CI MED will be able to streamline administrative processes and reduce administrative challenges to create a more efficient, supportive environment for faculty development and student education. This restructuring will promote interdisciplinary collaboration within CI MED, ensuring that the various specialties work together to enhance healthcare delivery and advance medical research alongside the mission to provide a focused and high-quality educational experience for students, tailored to the complexities of neurologic medicine. As a new administrative unit, the Department will oversee the recruitment, development, and retention of highly qualified faculty, ensuring consistency in tenure-track and non-tenure-track promotions across CI MED, while allowing flexibility to address the specific needs of neurology faculty. The establishment of the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery is a strategic initiative that will significantly contribute to the University's mission by enhancing specialized education, supporting faculty development, and advancing research in neurology.

## Need

*1050.30(a)(6): A) The unit of instruction, research or public service is educationally and economically consistent with the educational priorities and needs of the State of Illinois. B) The unit of instruction, research or public service meets a need that is not currently met by existing institutions and units of instruction, research or public service.*

Illinois faces significant challenges in healthcare, particularly in neurology, where there is a growing demand for specialized services and a shortage of medical professionals in central Illinois. The clinical neurology department at Carle Foundation Hospital is a leader in providing high-quality care, and creating a corresponding academic department at CI MED is intended to build on this success. By aligning the medical school's academic efforts with Carle's clinical strengths, the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery will help bridge the gap between cutting-edge research and practical, patient-centered care. This alignment directly supports the Illinois Board of Higher Education's *A Thriving Illinois* goals, particularly in enhancing educational attainment and

healthcare access throughout the state.

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, as a public research institution and the only Illinois university affiliated with the American Association of Universities (AAU), is uniquely positioned to drive this initiative. The new Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery will facilitate the recruitment of top clinician faculty, leveraging the University's research capabilities to support and expand the clinical services offered at Carle. This synergy between research and clinical practice is expected to attract federal funding and other resources, further solidifying Illinois' position as a leader in medical innovation and patient care.

The demand for neurology services is rapidly increasing, particularly in rural and geographically dispersed areas like central Illinois, where an aging population and rising rates of neurologic conditions are increasing the need for specialized care. The enhanced collaboration between CI MED and Carle Foundation Hospital is poised to benefit greatly from the enhanced collaboration between CI MED and Carle Health, with the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery playing a crucial role in training the next generation of physician innovators. These physicians will be equipped not only in clinical care but also in leveraging the latest research and technological advances, ultimately improving care delivery across the rural communities of central Illinois. This integration of academic and clinical expertise will enable the development of innovative care models that can be applied both within Illinois and beyond, improving patient outcomes and reducing healthcare costs. The Department's focus on recruiting clinician faculty will ensure that these innovations are grounded in real-world clinical experience, making them more effective and relevant to the population's needs.

### **A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth**

The proposed Department will support *Goal 1, Equity, of A Thriving Illinois to close the equity gaps for students who have been left behind.* At the institution level, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's diversity, equity, and inclusion work is led by the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (OVCDEI). The OVCDEI's goals, ongoing assessments, and initiatives impact students as well as faculty and staff, and student-focused programming sets the tone for the efforts as they relate to all of A Thriving Illinois' equity strategies. In fall 2023, the institution administered a campus-wide climate assessment instrument to understand the degree to which students feel safe, accepted, and valued. This assessment included students' perceptions of the quality of their interactions with peers, faculty members, and administrators. The University is partnering with the Association of American Universities, external organizations, and peer institutions to ensure the survey instrument is state of the art, includes questions that shed light on multiple axes of diversity, and generates data that can be shared and benchmarked against peer institutions to understand challenges that are unique to the University as well as those that are common to peer universities. As of May 2024, the campus received preliminary reports from the survey and developed four working groups (assessment, faculty and staff, students, and communication) to guide University administration with this initiative. The working groups are tasked with developing frameworks for effectively socializing the climate survey, results, and implementation plans to the campus; disseminating reports to the University community and academic and administrative units; and assessing opportunities for campus- and unit-level responses to the reports.

The Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery will support *Goal 2, Sustainability, of A Thriving Illinois to build a stronger financial future for individuals and institutions by finding ways to reduce the financial burden of education on students and their families.* CI MED plans to maximize the

effectiveness and efficiencies of the new administrative unit by implementing a strategic and streamlined approach that focuses on a clear delineation of roles while fostering collaboration across departments. This approach ensures that University administrative functions such as curriculum development, faculty affairs, and student services, will remain with the College while clinical administrative functions, including patient care management, clinical staffing, and healthcare operations will be handled by Carle Health, thereby avoiding unnecessary duplication and enhancing overall operational effectiveness. Moreover, the College's budget demonstrates a proactive approach to accessibility by providing scholarships. These initiatives aim to make the degree program financially attainable for deserving yet financially challenged students and their families. Importantly, the budget anticipates that a significant portion, 30 percent, of potential tuition is given to students through scholarships, further underscoring the institution's commitment to fostering an inclusive and accessible educational environment.

The proposed Department will contribute to Goal 3, *Growth, of A Thriving Illinois to increase talent and innovation to drive economic growth* by reinforcing and promoting public good throughout the state by focusing on several core areas that address pressing societal needs, particularly in the realm of healthcare and community well-being. One of the key ways the Department will advance the public good is through civic engagement. By establishing strong partnerships with local organizations, government agencies, and non-profit organizations, the Department will actively participate in community service projects that have a tangible impact on the lives of residents. These initiatives will include health awareness campaigns designed to educate and empower communities, improving public health outcomes across diverse populations. Additionally, the proposed Department will integrate service-learning into its curriculum, providing students with opportunities to apply their academic knowledge to real-world challenges. Through projects that focus on enhancing urban access to healthcare, promoting public health, and fostering environmental sustainability, students will not only gain practical experience but also contribute meaningfully to the communities they serve.

Addressing societal challenges requires innovative and interdisciplinary approaches, and the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery is dedicated to fostering solutions to society's challenges through collaborative efforts. The proposed Department will encourage interdisciplinary research initiatives that bring together faculty, students, and external partners to tackle critical issues such as healthcare disparities, environmental sustainability, and economic inequality. By leveraging expertise and resources across various disciplines, the Department aims to develop innovative solutions that can be implemented at local, state, and national levels.

Additionally, the Department will support entrepreneurship and innovation as key drivers of societal change. Through targeted programs that encourage the development of startups and social enterprises, students and faculty will be empowered to create businesses and initiatives that proactively address societal challenges. These efforts will be supported by incubators, pitch competitions, and partnerships with industry leaders, ensuring that the most promising ideas have the resources and support needed to succeed. In fulfilling its mission to address societal needs, the Department will prioritize the training of future healthcare leaders. The Department will prepare students to become informed and engaged citizens, equipped with the critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and leadership skills necessary to navigate and address the complexities of modern society. These future leaders will be instrumental in advancing public health, reducing healthcare disparities, and promoting social justice within their communities.

## Comparable Units in Illinois

While other institutions in Illinois offer neurology programs, there is only one Unit of Administration with a related educational mission. Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIU) operates the Neuroscience Institute in the Central Region at the SIU School of Medicine. The SIU Neurosciences Institute differs from the proposed Department as the SIU Neuroscience Institute has an additional focus on Psychiatry. The proposed Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery at CI MED is uniquely positioned due to its close alignment with an already thriving clinical department at Carle Foundation Hospital and the neuroscience program at UIUC. This collaboration between a leading academic institution and a top-tier clinical provider is unmatched in the state, providing a model for how academic and clinical entities can work together to improve healthcare outcomes.

Other medical schools, such as Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine and the University of Chicago's Pritzker School of Medicine, have strong neurology programs, but lack the level of integration with a regional health system like Carle. This makes the proposed department at CI MED distinct in its ability to translate academic research directly into clinical practice, enhancing the care provided to patients in central Illinois and surrounding areas.

The establishment of the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery at CI MED, in close collaboration with Carle Health, is expected to complement rather than compete with existing neurology programs in the state. By filling a unique niche that combines academic research with clinical practice, the Department will enhance the overall landscape of neurology education and care in Illinois. The Department's innovative approach will likely serve as a model for other institutions, encouraging similar collaborations that can improve healthcare outcomes across the state.

## Mission and Objectives

*1050.30(a)(1): A) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with the mission of the college or university. B) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with what the unit title implies.*

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and CI MED are deeply committed to advancing the University's mission and statewide educational goals. The Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery aligns its strategic initiatives with the University's overarching objectives, focusing on key areas such as fostering scholarship, discovery, innovation, and societal impact. These efforts are measured through a comprehensive performance management system, which includes indicators such as research expenditures, student outcomes, and community engagement initiatives. By tracking these metrics, the Department will provide clear evidence of its contributions to the University's mission and statewide priorities.

The creation of the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery directly supports the University's mission by enhancing educational quality, fostering faculty development, and advancing medical research, all while improving healthcare outcomes for the state's population. The Department's objectives are consistent with the University's focus on excellence in education, research, and public service, particularly in areas that address critical societal needs including neurologic treatment and prevention.

## Assessment of Outcomes

*1050.30(a)(2): The design, conduct and evaluation of the unit of instruction, research or public service are under the direct and continuous control of the sponsoring institution's established processes for academic planning and quality maintenance.*

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign employs various tools and processes to ensure the quality and performance of its colleges. Regular reviews of numerous metrics, measuring various parameters of excellence, are conducted through a strategic planning and evaluation process. This includes gathering student assessments of individual faculty, as well as student and stakeholder assessments of the programs.

The University employs various tools and processes to ensure the quality and performance of its colleges and administrative units. Regular reviews of numerous metrics, measuring different parameters of excellence, are conducted through a strategic planning and evaluation process. This includes gathering student assessments of individual faculty, as well as student and stakeholder assessments of the programs and program elements delivered by faculty. The Department's contributions will be evaluated within the broader framework of CI MED's strategic plan, which aligns with the University's strategic goals. These include fostering scholarship, discovery, and innovation; providing transformative learning experiences; making a significant societal impact; and stewarding resources for strategic investment.

As part of the comprehensive assessment strategy, the Department will focus on specific measures outlined in CI MED's strategic plan, which include creating and implementing a faculty engagement support infrastructure, growing support for student-led healthcare research, developing innovative curricular tracks, and enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts through targeted recruitment and retention strategies. The Department will measure educational impact and contribute to CI MED's educational mission by delivering specialized cardiology education and ensuring students receive a rigorous, relevant, and cutting-edge curriculum. The Department's contribution to faculty development will be measured by reducing the number of faculty in the Clinical Sciences Department and having a more manageable number of faculty in the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery. Faculty members will be offered more targeted professional support to enhance faculty satisfaction and retention, which will ultimately benefit student learning outcomes. The success of the Department will be measured through a combination of research outputs, funding ratios, community impact, and collaborative initiatives that align with the strategic goals of both CI MED and the University. By setting clear targets and systematically tracking progress, the Department will ensure its contributions are significant and far-reaching, both within the academic community and beyond.

## Facilities

*1050.30(a)(4): A) Facilities, equipment and instructional resources (e.g., laboratory supplies and equipment, instructional materials, computational equipment) necessary to support the high quality academic work in the unit of instruction, research or public service are available and maintained. B) Clinical sites necessary to meet the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service. C) Library holdings and acquisitions, owned or contracted for by the institution, that are necessary to support high quality instruction and scholarship in the unit of instruction, research and public service, are conveniently available and accessible, and can be maintained.*

The University's existing facilities are sufficient for the proposed Department. The Carle Illinois College of Medicine's primary instructional, administrative, and student facility is located in the Medical Sciences Building on the University's campus. The building underwent a renovation which was completed in June 2021. The first floor includes problem-based learning rooms, a learning resource center, the Student Affairs suite, and the dean's suite. The second floor houses an auditorium, student designated spaces for studying and interaction, standardized patient rooms, and the faculty office suite. Anatomy labs and larger classroom spaces are located on the third floor, and student innovation labs are in the basement. The College also operates at Carle Health, a clinical network where most clinical rotations occur. CI MED has dedicated space on the Carle Foundation Hospital campus. This space includes two student lounges and office space for Academic Affairs and Student Affairs.

## **Faculty and Staff**

*1050.30(a)(3): A) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff ensure that the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are met. B) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff, as evidenced by level of degrees held, professional experience in the field of study and demonstrated knowledge of the field, ensure that they are able to fulfill their academic responsibilities. At a minimum, faculty shall have a degree from an institution accredited by a U.S. Department of Education and/or Council for Higher Education Accreditation recognized accrediting body or a degree from another country evaluated for U.S. equivalency in the discipline they will teach or for which they will develop curricula at least one level above that of the courses being taught or developed. C) The involvement of faculty in the unit of instruction, research or public service is sufficient to cover the various fields of knowledge encompassed by the unit, to sustain scholarship appropriate to the unit, and to assure curricular continuity and consistency in student evaluation. E) Support personnel, including but not limited to counselors, administrators, clinical supervisors, and technical staff, that are directly assigned to the unit of instruction, research or public service, have the educational background and experience necessary to carry out their assigned responsibilities.*

The University has policies and procedures in place to ensure the selection and retention of quality faculty and staff. The dean of the College serves as the chief academic officer for Carle Health. The dean ensures that the curriculum and administrative structures are aligned with the goals of both institutions. This dual role underscores the importance of integrated leadership in achieving a cohesive and collaborative academic environment.

The Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery will be fully integrated within CI MED, adopting the standard academic structure of other departments at the University. The department head, who will report directly to the dean, will oversee the department's operations, ensuring alignment with the College's and University's strategic goals. The dean, in turn, reports to the provost of the University who serves as chief academic officer to the executive vice president and chief medical officer of Carle Health.

An executive committee, composed of faculty representatives, will support the department head and play a vital role in departmental governance. This committee will serve as a conduit between the faculty and the department head, advising on policies, budget preparation, and other key areas of departmental management. An associate head may also be appointed to assist the department head and ensure continuity of leadership in their absence.

CI MED benefits from a highly qualified faculty with extensive experience in medical education, supported by the expertise of faculty from other Colleges and research units within the



University. Faculty qualifications are continuously enhanced through ongoing professional development, annual evaluations, and a clear promotion pathway. Reward structures are designed to be competitive with those of peer institutions, with specific recognition for clinical faculty who contribute significantly to the College's mission. The University's promotion and tenure policies ensure that faculty are recognized and rewarded for their contributions to teaching, research, and service.

### **Fiscal and Personnel Resources**

*1050.30(a)(5): A) The financial commitments to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are sufficient to ensure that the faculty and staff and support services necessary to offer the unit of instruction, research or public service can be acquired and maintained. B) Projections of revenues necessary to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are based on supportable estimates of state appropriations, local tax support, student tuition and fees, private gifts, and/or governmental grants and contracts*

The College is sustained through the integral support of Carle Health, serving as a key partner, supplemented by campus resources and philanthropic contributions. In addition to these sources, research and tuition revenues will play a vital role in sustaining CI MED's operations, with the proposed departments providing essential infrastructure. Notably, the College is steadfast in aligning with the expectations of the Liaison Committee on Medical Education, ensuring that student tuition constitutes less than 30 percent of all revenues.

The establishment of the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery will not require any additional resources beyond those needed to employ a part-time administrative support position. The funding currently allocated to the Clinical Sciences department in CI MED, including the funding required for staffing, space, equipment and operating activities, is included as part of the College's overall operating budget. A portion of this funding will be dispersed to the four new departments. The revenues necessary to support the departments are revenues identified as part of the overall College budget and consist of three primary sources: annual operating support from Carle Health, revenue from student tuition, annual operating support from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign campus, and support from philanthropic sources. No new state resources will be needed to establish the Department.

### **Accreditation and Licensure**

*1050.30(b)(3) [applicable only to units of instruction]: Appropriate steps shall be taken to assure that professional accreditation needed for licensure or entry into a profession as specified in the objectives of the unit of instruction is maintained or will be granted in a reasonable period of time.*

The proposed Department is an administrative unit that will be housed in the Carle Illinois College of Medicine. CI MED was granted full accreditation status in 2025 by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), an accrediting agency for medical education programs in the United States and Canada. The LCME will conduct a comprehensive review of the College every seven years for reaccreditation.

### **Program Information**

*1050.30(b)(2)[applicable only to units of instruction]: A) The information which the institution provides for students and the public shall include the following: i) An accurate description of the unit of instruction, including its objectives, length, and residency requirements if any; ii) Schedule of tuition,*



*fees, and all other charges and expenses necessary for completion of the unit of instruction, cancellation and refund policies; iii) Student rights and responsibilities; iv) A statement regarding the transferability of college credits, including the fact that the decision to accept transfer credits is determined by the receiving institutions; v) A statement as to how the institution will advise students on the nature of the transfer process, including the importance of consulting with institutions to which the student may seek to transfer; vi) Evidence of arrangements for the transfer of courses or credits or both to institutional counterparts, when these arrangements exist; these arrangements are also known as articulation agreements; vii) A statement of the institution's most recent graduation rates and the number of graduates and enrollments as provided by the institution to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and any submission of data to satisfy Board reporting requirements; and viii) Other material facts concerning the institution and the unit of instruction as are likely to affect the decision of the student to enroll. B) The information listed in subsection (b)(2)(A) shall be available to prospective students prior to enrollment and shall be included in the institution's catalog of programs.*

Detailed information about the proposed Center will be published on the University's website.

### **Staff Conclusion**

The staff concludes that the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery proposed by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign meets the criteria to implement the Board of Higher Education Act (110 ILCS 205/et.seq.) as set forth in 23 Illinois Administrative Code, Ch. II, Section 1050.30, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education policies pertaining to assessment and accreditation or licensure.

### **Proposed Department Title in the Region of Authorization:** Department of Oncology

*New Administrative Unit:* The proposal is for the authorization of the Department of Oncology, a new department in the Carle Illinois College of Medicine under the established Department of Clinical Sciences. The Department will serve as an integral component to advancing the academic, research, and clinical components of CI MED primarily housing faculty specializing in oncology who will deliver specialized education, clinical care, and research.

### **Background**

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC or the University) requests authorization to establish a Department of Oncology (the Department) within the Carle Illinois College of Medicine (CI MED) in the Prairie region. The University received approval from IBHE to establish the Carle Illinois College of Medicine on March 1, 2016, and subsequent authorization to offer and award a Doctor of Medicine degree in the Prairie region on March 14, 2017. The University obtained preliminary accreditation from the Liaison Committee for Medical Education (LCME) organization on October 11, 2017. As part of accreditation requirements, CI MED must have a sufficient number of organizational units to accomplish the mission of the medical school. On September 18, 2018, the University received IBHE approval to create a Department of Biomedical and Translational Sciences and the Department of Clinical Sciences. The University is currently seeking approval to create the following administrative departments within the existing Clinical Sciences Department: the Department of Oncology, the Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Surgery, the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery, and Department of Surgery and Digestive Health. The Department of Oncology will be composed primarily of

hematology/oncology, radiation oncology, surgical oncology, breast surgery, gynecologic oncology, and thoracic surgery faculty who will deliver the academic, research, and clinical components of the CI MED education. The Department will be composed primarily of faculty specializing in oncology, who will deliver specialized education, clinical care, and research initiatives in alignment with the University's mission.

## **Need**

*1050.30(a)(6): A) The unit of instruction, research or public service is educationally and economically consistent with the educational priorities and needs of the State of Illinois. B) The unit of instruction, research or public service meets a need that is not currently met by existing institutions and units of instruction, research or public service.*

The proposed Department of Oncology at the Carle Illinois College of Medicine will work toward addressing critical regional and state healthcare needs and align closely with the Clinical Oncology Department at Carle Health in improving quality care for patients. The addition of the Department of Oncology will enhance the recruitment of clinical faculty while strengthening the connections between academic research and clinical practice in efforts to improve healthcare outcomes in Illinois. The alignment of the academic departments in CI MED with Carle Health will bridge a gap between research and practical patient-centered care along with supporting the goals of *A Thriving Illinois*. The Department of Oncology will train the next generation of healthcare professionals to meet increasing demand for oncology services, ultimately improving cancer care delivery across the rural communities of central Illinois.

## **A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth**

The University of Illinois System (UI System) seeks to close equity gaps among Illinois residents. The proposed Department of Oncology will contribute to Goal 1, Equity of *A Thriving Illinois*, to close the equity gaps for students who have been left behind through its support of the UI System's Strategic Plan, Access 2030, which is designed to increase the number of graduates from underrepresented groups by 50 percent by the end of the decade. The University of Illinois Urban-Champaign's diversity, equity, and inclusion work is being led by the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (OVCDEI). OVCDEI's goals, assessments, and initiatives impact students, faculty and staff, and student-focused programming sets the tone for the institution's equity strategy. In July 2020, the University pledged \$2 million annually for the Chancellor's "Call to Action to Address Racism and Social Injustice." The program funded 25 projects focused on three research areas: systemic racism and social justice; law enforcement and criminal justice reform; and disparities in health and healthcare. In October 2022, OVCDEI hosted an inaugural Research Symposium to present findings and outcomes. In fall 2023, the institution administered a campuswide climate assessment to understand the degree to which students feel safe, accepted, and valued. The survey resulted in working groups focusing on developing frameworks and implementing plans to improve the campus experience for students.

UIUC is focused on closing the graduation gap and increasing student success as evidenced by active participation in recent nationwide efforts. The American Talent Initiative (ATI) set a goal of expanding student access at high graduation rate institutions to enroll and graduate 50,000 additional high-achieving, low and moderate-income students from ATI participating institutions by 2025. UIUC also actively participated in the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities Powered by Publics Initiative. This complimentary program's goals are centered around expansion of access to higher education for students from all backgrounds. Through The Association of Public

and Land-grant Universities (APLU) Powered by Publics, the University led the Big Ten Academic Alliance Cluster to study student retention and persistence with a focus on course completion. Studying rates of failure and withdrawal in foundation courses helped UIUC identify barriers faced by students and determine additional support services needed for student success. In spring 2023, this work culminated in an ongoing project called the Inclusive Course Redesign Initiative. Through the initiative, faculty from a variety of disciplines have engaged in inclusive course redesign of their courses. Working with staff in the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning, faculty are intentionally designing materials and activities to be more welcoming and accessible to all students.

The proposed Department of Oncology will support Goal 2, Sustainability of *A Thriving Illinois*, to build a stronger financial future for individuals and institutions by finding ways to reduce the financial burden of education on students and their families. Annually, the University provides over \$519 million in financial aid funding to undergraduate students, funding \$203 million by the institution, with 72 percent of students receiving some type of aid. UIUC has developed programs and initiatives to increase college accessibility and affordability for students. The Illinois Promise program covers tuition, campus fees, housing, and books for Illinois residents whose family income is at or below the federal poverty level. The Illinois Commitment program combines federal, state, and institutional grants to cover tuition and campus fees for students who are Illinois residents and have an annual family income of \$75,000 or less. The program covers tuition and campus fees for new freshmen for up to four years, eight semesters of continuous enrollment, and tuition and campus fees for up to three years and six semesters of continuous enrollment for new transfer students. The Chancellor's Access Grant provides \$5,000 in stackable grants for historically underrepresented Illinois residents to use with other awards. The University also offers scholarships to high achieving newly admitted freshmen from historically underrepresented groups through the President's Award Program (PAP). The goal of the program is to ensure and enrich the diversity of the student body. To be eligible for consideration, students must be Illinois residents and have demonstrated outstanding academic achievement while graduating from an Illinois high school. The President's Award Program and PAP Honors have provided financial support for historically underrepresented students in the UI System. PAP awards range from \$5,000 to \$10,000 per year for four years. Additionally, UIUC participates in the AIM HIGH Grant program which provides merit-based financial assistance to students who qualify.

The proposed Department of Oncology will continue to contribute to Goal 3, Growth, to increase talent and innovation to drive economic growth by impacting the state through stimulating broader economic growth through increased healthcare services, research funding, and community development. Projections indicate that the collaboration between CI MED and Carle Health could contribute \$1 billion annually to the Illinois economy by 2035, while supporting more than 7,600 jobs statewide. The proposed Department of Oncology at Carle Illinois College of Medicine will build upon the strengths of the established and thriving Clinical Department at Carle Foundation Hospital and contribute to the state's economic development, improve healthcare outcomes, and enhance the quality of life for Illinois residents.

### **Comparable Units in Illinois**

Other institutions in Illinois have oncology programs and departments, however the proposed Department of Oncology at CI MED will be closely aligned with the established clinical department at Carle Foundation Hospital and the Cancer Center at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. The relationship between the University and Carle Health is an integration that provides a model for how academic and clinical entities can work together to improve health care outcomes.

Two other medical schools within Illinois have strong oncology departments, including Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine, however, these programs are not integrated into a regional health system unlike the proposed Department of Oncology with Carle Health. The establishment of the proposed unit of administration at UIUC should not impact other programs as this is a restructuring of the current department.

### **Mission and Objectives**

*1050.30(a)(1): A) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with the mission of the college or university. B) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with what the unit title implies.*

The proposed Department of Oncology will contribute directly to CI MED's educational mission by delivering specialized education and ensuring that students receive a rigorous, relevant, and cutting-edge curriculum. The creation of the Department of Oncology supports the mission of the University by enhancing educational quality, fostering faculty development, and advancing medical research, while improving healthcare outcomes for Illinois residents. The proposed Department will align its objectives with the University's focus on excellence in education, research, and public service, particularly in areas that address critical societal needs such as cancer treatment and prevention.

### **Assessment of Outcomes**

*1050.30(a)(2): The design, conduct and evaluation of the unit of instruction, research or public service are under the direct and continuous control of the sponsoring institution's established processes for academic planning and quality maintenance.*

The proposed Department of Oncology will provide infrastructure and support to CI MED, while addressing healthcare challenges faced by rural communities of central Illinois with limited access to quality medical treatment. The proposed Department and its faculty will work with the Dean's Office, senior leadership, the Office of Student Affairs, and the Office of Academic Affairs to measure targeted metrics including enrollment, graduation rates, scholarly and research outputs, and the diversity of students, faculty, and staff. A significant focus will be placed on research activity measured through research awards, publications, presentations, expenditures, and interdisciplinary initiatives. These efforts will be systematically captured through the Campus Profile managed by the Division of Management Information. The metrics will then be reviewed against the targets established by the dean, in consultation with the provost, to ensure alignment with national norms. The proposed Department's contribution will be evaluated within the framework of CI MED's strategic plan.

### **Facilities**

*1050.30(a)(4): A) Facilities, equipment and instructional resources (e.g., laboratory supplies and equipment, instructional materials, computational equipment) necessary to support the high-quality academic work in the unit of instruction, research or public service are available and maintained. B) Clinical sites necessary to meet the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service. C) Library holdings and acquisitions, owned or contracted for by the institution, that are necessary to support high quality instruction and scholarship in the unit of instruction, research and public service, are conveniently available and accessible, and can be maintained.*

Facilities at the University are sufficient for housing the proposed Department. The main points of operation are located in the Medical Sciences Building, in Urbana, which was renovated in June 2021. This building is CI MED's primary student facility for instruction and administration. The building also includes problem-based learning rooms, a Learning Resource Center, Student Affairs, the dean's suite of offices, an auditorium, student study spaces, anatomy labs, faculty offices, standard patient rooms, and student innovation labs. Everitt Laboratory, in Urbana, is home to the Jump Simulation Center, which provides training for the Carle Illinois College of Medicine and hosts a simulated intensive care unit, operating room, virtual reality station, skills laboratory, patient clinical rooms, and debriefing and control rooms. The third location for the proposed Department is Carle Health's clinical network of healthcare facilities in central Illinois including locations in Bloomington, Normal, Champaign, Mattoon, Urbana, Monticello, Paxton, Mahomet, and Danville. The Carle Foundation Hospital in Urbana serves as the main location for clinical rotations and also has dedicated space for CI MED's Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and student lounge space. Classrooms, simulation labs, computer resources, and library services are sufficient for the proposed Department's needs.

### **Faculty and Staff**

*1050.30(a)(3): A) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff ensure that the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are met. B) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff, as evidenced by level of degrees held, professional experience in the field of study and demonstrated knowledge of the field, ensure that they are able to fulfill their academic responsibilities. At a minimum, faculty shall have a degree from an institution accredited by a U.S. Department of Education and/or Council for Higher Education Accreditation recognized accrediting body or a degree from another country evaluated for U.S. equivalency in the discipline they will teach or for which they will develop curricula at least one level above that of the courses being taught or developed. C) The involvement of faculty in the unit of instruction, research or public service is sufficient to cover the various fields of knowledge encompassed by the unit, to sustain scholarship appropriate to the unit, and to assure curricular continuity and consistency in student evaluation. E) Support personnel, including but not limited to counselors, administrators, clinical supervisors, and technical staff, that are directly assigned to the unit of instruction, research or public service, have the educational background and experience necessary to carry out their assigned responsibilities.*

The proposed Department of Oncology is an administrative department in the CI MED. The structure of the proposed unit is part of a larger initiative to establish 12 new clinical departments over the next five to seven years. The structure of the proposed Department of Oncology was designed to take into account the needs of CI MED as well as the clinical partner, Carle Health. Each entity has distinct research methods and compensation structures. The proposed structure is mirrored after the established Departments of Clinical Sciences and Biomedical and Translational Sciences to maintain consistency and build an environment which encourages collaboration while respecting the needs of the different specialties.

The organizational structure will be led by the Dean of the College who is serves as the Chief Academic Officer for Carle Health. The Dean is the main point of contact between the two entities who will ensure that the curriculum and administrative structures of the units are aligned with the goals for both organizations. The Dean and Chief Academic Officer dual position reports to the Provost of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign as well as the Executive Vice President and System Chief Medical Officer of the Carle Health. The proposed Department of Oncology will be led by the Department Head position who will report directly to the Dean, appointed through a consultative process involving the Dean and department faculty, will final approval by the University

of Illinois Board of Trustees. The Department Head is a critical role in ensuring administration of departmental activities, ensuring policies and program related to education, research, services, and public outreach are effectively implemented. An Executive Committee, comprised of faculty representatives, will support the proposed department head and play a role in departmental governance and serve as a conduit between the faculty and Department Head on items such as policies, budget, and other management issues. The proposed Executive Committee will create departmental bylaws including departmental procedures for faculty meetings, performance evaluations, guidelines for appointments, promotions, and tenure which ensure high standards of academic qualifications are maintained and are aligned with the University policies and procedures.

### **Fiscal and Personnel Resources**

*1050.30(a)(5): A) The financial commitments to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are sufficient to ensure that the faculty and staff and support services necessary to offer the unit of instruction, research or public service can be acquired and maintained. B) Projections of revenues necessary to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are based on supportable estimates of state appropriations, local tax support, student tuition and fees, private gifts, and/or governmental grants and contracts.*

CI MED is sustained through the integral support of Carle Health, campus resources, tuition revenues, research funds, and philanthropic contributions. The financial resources required for the proposed Department of Oncology do not substantially change the financial resource needs for the College. The funding currently allotted to the Clinical Sciences department in CI MED includes funding for staffing, space, equipment, and operating activities. Additional financial considerations include support for a portion of a department head budget line, administrative support, supplies, services, and equipment, which are expenses tied to the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Research and Innovation. The revenues necessary to support the Department are revenues identified as part of the overall College budget. No new state resources will be needed to establish the proposed Department.

### **Accreditation and Licensure**

*1050.30(b)(3) [applicable only to units of instruction]: Appropriate steps shall be taken to assure that professional accreditation needed for licensure or entry into a profession as specified in the objectives of the unit of instruction is maintained or will be granted in a reasonable period of time.*

The proposed Department is an administrative unit that will be housed in the Carle Illinois College of Medicine. CI MED was granted full accreditation status in February 2025 by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), an accrediting agency for medical education programs in the United States and Canada. The LCME will conduct a comprehensive review of the College every seven years for reaccreditation.

### **Program Information**

*1050.30(b)(2)[applicable only to units of instruction]: A) The information which the institution provides for students and the public shall include the following: i) An accurate description of the unit of instruction, including its objectives, length, and residency requirements if any; ii) Schedule of tuition, fees, and all other charges and expenses necessary for completion of the unit of instruction, cancellation*



and refund policies; iii) Student rights and responsibilities; iv) A statement regarding the transferability of college credits, including the fact that the decision to accept transfer credits is determined by the receiving institutions; v) A statement as to how the institution will advise students on the nature of the transfer process, including the importance of consulting with institutions to which the student may seek to transfer; vi) Evidence of arrangements for the transfer of courses or credits or both to institutional counterparts, when these arrangements exist; these arrangements are also known as articulation agreements; vii) A statement of the institution's most recent graduation rates and the number of graduates and enrollments as provided by the institution to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and any submission of data to satisfy Board reporting requirements; and viii) Other material facts concerning the institution and the unit of instruction as are likely to affect the decision of the student to enroll. B) The information listed in subsection (b)(2)(A) shall be available to prospective students prior to enrollment and shall be included in the institution's catalog of programs.

Detailed information about the proposed Department will be published on the University's website.

### **Staff Conclusion**

The staff concludes that the Department of Oncology proposed by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign meets the criteria to implement the Board of Higher Education Act (110 ILCS 205/et.seq.) as set forth in 23 Illinois Administrative Code, Ch. II, Section 1050.30, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education policies pertaining to assessment and accreditation or licensure.

**Proposed Department Title in the Region of Authorization:** Department of Surgery and Digestive Health

*New Administrative Unit:* The proposal is for the establishment of the Department of Surgery and Digestive Health. The department will serve as an administrative unit directly contributing to the Carle Illinois College of Medicine's educational mission by delivering specialized surgery and digestive health education and ensuring students receive a rigorous, relevant, and cutting-edge curriculum.

### **Background**

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC or the University) is seeking authorization to establish the Department of Surgery and Digestive Health (the Department) in the Prairie region. The proposed department is an administrative unit that will be housed in the Carle Illinois College of Medicine (CI MED) within the existing Clinical Sciences Department. CI MED is embarking on a significant initiative to establish 12 new clinical departments and up to three new non-clinical departments over the next five to seven years. This expansion is aligned with UIUC's Statutes and driven by a commitment to excellence in medical education, research, and patient care. The initial phase of this ambitious endeavor focused on creating specialty sections within the existing Clinical Sciences Department, which was completed in August 2023. The establishment of four new departments, with the Department of Surgery and Digestive Health being one of them, is a critical milestone.

The proposed Department of Surgery and Digestive Health was created in accordance with CI MED's bylaws and under the guidance of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), which approved the creation of CI MED on March 1, 2016, and its Doctor of Medicine degree on March 14, 2017. The proposed Department will be integral in advancing the clinical, academic, and



research activities of CI MED, specifically in the field of surgery and digestive health. This new Department will be composed primarily of faculty specializing in surgery and digestive health, who will deliver specialized education, clinical care, and research initiatives in alignment with the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's mission. Key objectives of the Department of Surgery and Digestive Health include:

- **Enhance Educational Quality:** The Department aims to provide a focused and high-quality educational experience for students, tailored to the complexities of surgery and digestive health. This involves specialized instruction that meets the unique needs of learners in this field.
- **Streamline Administrative Processes:** By transitioning Surgery and Digestive Health from a section within the broader Clinical Sciences Department to a dedicated department, the University seeks to reduce administrative challenges and create a more efficient, supportive environment for faculty development and student education.
- **Foster Collaboration:** The restructuring will promote interdisciplinary collaboration within CI MED, ensuring that various specialties work together to enhance healthcare delivery and advance medical research.
- **Support Faculty Excellence:** The Department will oversee the recruitment, development, and retention of highly qualified faculty, ensuring consistency in tenure-track and non-tenure-track promotions across CI MED, while allowing flexibility to address the specific needs of Surgery and Digestive Health faculty.

## Need

*1050.30(a)(6): A) The unit of instruction, research or public service is educationally and economically consistent with the educational priorities and needs of the State of Illinois. B) The unit of instruction, research or public service meets a need that is not currently met by existing institutions and units of instruction, research or public service.*

Illinois faces significant challenges in healthcare, particularly in surgery and digestive health, where there is a growing demand for specialized services and a shortage of medical professionals in central Illinois. The clinical Surgery and Digestive Health department at Carle Foundation Hospital is a leader in providing high-quality care, and creating a corresponding academic department at CI MED is intended to build on this success. By aligning the medical school's academic efforts with Carle's clinical strengths, the Department of Surgery and Digestive Health will help bridge the gap between cutting-edge research and practical, patient-centered care. This alignment directly supports the goals in IBHE's strategic plan, *A Thriving Illinois*, particularly in enhancing educational attainment and healthcare access throughout the state.

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, as the state's flagship public research institution and the only Illinois university affiliated with the American Association of Universities (AAU), is uniquely positioned to drive this initiative. The new Department of Surgery and Digestive Health will facilitate the recruitment of top clinician faculty, leveraging the University's research capabilities to support and expand the clinical services offered at Carle. This synergy between research and clinical practice is expected to attract significant federal funding and other resources, further solidifying the state's position as a leader in medical innovation and patient care.

The demand for surgical and digestive health services is rapidly increasing, particularly in rural and geographically dispersed areas like central Illinois, where an aging population increases the need for innovative care. The enhanced collaboration between CI MED and Carle Foundation Hospital is poised to benefit greatly from the enhanced collaboration between CI MED and Carle

Health, with the Department of Surgery and Digestive Health playing a crucial role in training the next generation of physician innovators. These physicians will be equipped not only in clinical care but also in leveraging the latest research and technological advances, ultimately improving care delivery across rural communities in central Illinois. This integration of academic and clinical expertise will enable the development of innovative care models that can be applied both within Illinois and beyond, improving patient outcomes and reducing healthcare costs. The Department's focus on recruiting clinician faculty will ensure that these innovations are grounded in real-world clinical experience, making them more effective and relevant to the population's needs.

### **A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth**

The proposed Department supports *A Thriving Illinois: Goal 1, Equity, to close the equity gap for students who have historically been left behind*. CI MED is dedicated to advancing equity and access to educational opportunities, with a particular focus on supporting students from underrepresented backgrounds. In alignment with the University, CI MED has devised a comprehensive plan to implement systemic solutions that will enhance access and create meaningful opportunities for service to underserved communities. These initiatives are designed to provide ongoing support for students throughout their academic journey, ensuring they are well-prepared, well-supported, and empowered to succeed.

One of the key strategies being explored is the implementation of summer bridge programs. These programs are designed to ease the transition into medical school for underrepresented students by offering foundational courses, study skills workshops, and orientations to the demands of medical school life. For example, the proposal for a School of Medicine's Summer Pre-Matriculation Program would provide a six-week intensive preparation course covering anatomy, biochemistry, and effective study strategies. The program will be closely monitored through pre- and post-program assessments, student feedback surveys, and the academic performance of participants in their first semester.

The College will also offer extended learning opportunities, including supplemental instruction sessions, peer tutoring, and review workshops. These initiatives are aimed at mitigating learning loss and ensuring that students remain on track through graduation. The impact of these programs will be assessed using academic performance data and attendance records, allowing for a clear understanding of their effectiveness on student grades and retention rates. To cultivate a supportive environment, the unit will establish learning communities, cohort-based groups that provide academic support and foster a sense of belonging among underrepresented students. The Health Equity Scholars Learning Community offers a seminar series, mentorship, and collaborative projects focused on addressing health disparities. Attendance, participation, and academic outcomes will be tracked to ensure these learning communities are effective, with regular feedback from participants guiding ongoing improvements.

To ensure that faculty and staff are equipped to support students from underrepresented and under-resourced communities, the unit will implement professional development programs. These programs, such as the Inclusive Teaching and Advising Workshop Series, will cover topics such as cultural competency, implicit bias, and supporting students with disabilities. The effectiveness of these workshops will be assessed through participant feedback, changes in advising and teaching practices, and improvements in student outcomes. Recognizing the importance of personalized support, the College is also implementing proactive, comprehensive, and tailored advising programs. Advisors will be assigned to underrepresented students to provide personalized academic and career guidance. Regular check-ins, progress reports, and student satisfaction surveys

will be used to measure the effectiveness of these advising programs.

The Carle Illinois College of Medicine has implemented a range of initiatives to increase and retain faculty, staff, and administrators of color, ensuring that diversity, equity, and inclusion are integral to the institution's culture and practices. CI MED's hiring practices are aligned with rigorous campus-wide standards, ensuring fairness and equity throughout the selection process. All academic hiring requires participants in the search process to complete unconscious bias training, which is supplemented by training materials that cover equal employment opportunity principles. To further embed diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) principles into hiring practices, each academic search committee includes a diversity advocate. This individual is responsible for monitoring and advocating for diversity as a core component of the selection process.

In collaboration with Carle Health, CI MED has established the Ambassadors Program, which introduces CI MED medical students to the Carle Health system. This program is specifically designed to encourage these students to consider returning to Carle Health as employees and faculty members at CI MED after completing their residency. The program has already shown success, with several recent graduates expressing their intent to join Carle Health and CI MED faculty, demonstrating its effectiveness in fostering a pipeline of diverse talent.

In alignment with *A Thriving Illinois: Goal 2, Sustainability, to build a stronger financial future for individuals and institutions by finding ways to reduce the financial burden of education on students and their families*, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign has developed programs and initiatives to increase college accessibility and affordability for students. The Illinois Commitment program provides scholarships and grants to cover tuition and campus fees for students who are Illinois residents and have a family income of \$75,000 or less. The University also offers scholarships to high achieving, newly admitted freshmen from historically underrepresented groups through the President's Award Program (PAP). The goal of the program is to ensure and enrich the diversity of the student body. To be eligible for consideration, students must be Illinois residents and have demonstrated outstanding academic achievement while graduating from an Illinois high school.

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign has strong partnerships with businesses through statewide initiatives including the Discovery Partners Institute (DPI) and the Illinois Innovation Network (IIN), which closely align with *A Thriving Illinois: Goal 3, Growth, to increase talent and innovation to drive economic growth*. The proposed Department's focus on healthcare innovation will play a crucial role in driving economic development within the state. By leveraging the Illinois Innovation Network, the unit will facilitate the commercialization of research findings, support the establishment of start-up companies, and develop partnerships with industry leaders. These efforts will lead to the creation of new technologies, products, and services that stimulate economic growth and enhance the state's reputation as a leader in healthcare innovation. The Department of Surgery and Digestive Health will contribute to workforce development by providing students with hands-on experiences in healthcare research and innovation. Through internships, collaborative projects, and entrepreneurship programs, students will gain the skills necessary to contribute to the state's economic development.

Experiential learning remains a cornerstone of CI MED's educational approach. The college is expanding partnerships with industry leaders and community organizations to offer an increased number of internships, apprenticeships, and hands-on learning experiences. CI MED's flagship initiative, the Medical Observations, Research Engagements, Experiences, and Education (MORE3) program, continues to expand, providing students with early and meaningful exposure to clinical and research settings. Furthermore, the College has significantly enhanced its service-learning

framework, nearly tripling the available service-learning hours to 731 by 2023. This enables students to participate in a broader range of service-learning activities that align with their career aspirations and personal interests.

Beyond its educational and healthcare contributions, the Department of Surgery and Digestive Health is expected to have a significant economic impact in Illinois. The collaboration between CI MED and Carle Health will not only create new opportunities for faculty and staff but also stimulate broader economic growth through increased healthcare services, research funding, and community development. Projections indicate that CI MED's initiatives could contribute over \$1 billion annually to the Illinois economy by 2035, supporting more than 7,600 jobs statewide. This economic impact extends beyond direct employment to include the development of new businesses and communities centered around the healthcare sector. The alignment between CI MED and Carle Health will ensure that the benefits of this growth are felt throughout central Illinois, improving the quality of life for all residents.

### **Comparable Units in Illinois**

While other institutions in Illinois offer Surgery and Digestive Health units, the proposed Department of Surgery and Digestive Health at CI MED will benefit from an already thriving clinical department at Carle Foundation Hospital. This collaboration between a leading academic institution and a top-tier clinical provider is unmatched in the state, providing a model for how academic and clinical entities can work together to improve healthcare outcomes. Other medical schools, such as Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine and the University of Chicago's Pritzker School of Medicine, have strong Surgery and Digestive Health programs, but lack the level of integration with a regional health system like Carle. This makes the proposed Department at CI MED distinctive in its ability to translate academic research directly into clinical practice, enhancing the care provided to patients in central Illinois and surrounding communities.

The establishment of the Department of Surgery and Digestive Health at CI MED, in close collaboration with Carle Health, is expected to complement rather than compete with existing surgery and digestive health programs in the state. By filling a unique niche that combines academic research with clinical practice, the Department will enhance the overall landscape of surgery and digestive health education and care in Illinois. The Department's innovative approach will likely serve as a model for other institutions, encouraging similar partnerships that can improve healthcare outcomes across the state.

### **Mission and Objectives**

*1050.30(a)(1): A) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with the mission of the college or university. B) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with what the unit title implies.*

The proposed Department of Surgery and Digestive Health directly supports the University's mission by enhancing educational quality, fostering faculty development, and advancing medical research. The Department's objectives are consistent with the University's focus on excellence in education, research, and public service, particularly in areas that address the critical societal needs for surgical treatment and digestive health and prevention.

## Assessment of Outcomes

*1050.30(a)(2): The design, conduct and evaluation of the unit of instruction, research or public service are under the direct and continuous control of the sponsoring institution's established processes for academic planning and quality maintenance.*

Through innovative approaches in surgical and digestive health care and research, the proposed Department will play a pivotal role in addressing the unique healthcare challenges faced by rural communities, improving access to cutting-edge treatments, and fostering partnerships that enhance rural health outcomes. These contributions will be assessed through various targeted metrics. A significant focus will be placed on research activity, which will be measured through research awards, publications, presentations, expenditures, and interdisciplinary initiatives, particularly those that involve multi-unit collaborations. To further drive innovation and discovery, the Department will set specific targets for the expected research outputs, such as the number of publications, patents, and other public service products. This approach ensures that the Department not only meets but exceeds expectations in fostering scholarship and innovation. In alignment with these efforts, the Department will also establish specific goals for securing funding, with a clear emphasis on increasing the ratio of external to internal funding. This focus on external funding sources is essential for sustaining the Department's long-term growth and impact, ensuring that it remains competitive on a national and international scale. The Department's success in these areas will be systematically captured, monitored, and made accessible through the Campus Profile managed by the Division of Management Information for the University. This data will be regularly reviewed against initial targets established by the dean, in consultation with the provost's office.

Additionally, the Department's contributions will be evaluated within the broader framework of CI MED's strategic plan, which aligns with the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's strategic goals of fostering scholarship, discovery, and innovation; providing transformative learning experiences; making a significant societal impact; and stewarding resources for strategic investment. The Department will focus on specific measures outlined in CI MED's strategic plan as part of this comprehensive assessment. These include creating and implementing a faculty engagement support infrastructure, growing support for student-led healthcare research, developing innovative curricular tracks, and enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts through targeted recruitment and retention strategies.

## Facilities (space, equipment, instructional materials)

*1050.30(a)(4): A) Facilities, equipment and instructional resources (e.g., laboratory supplies and equipment, instructional materials, computational equipment) necessary to support the high-quality academic work in the unit of instruction, research or public service are available and maintained. B) Clinical sites necessary to meet the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service. C) Library holdings and acquisitions, owned or contracted for by the institution, that are necessary to support high quality instruction and scholarship in the unit of instruction, research and public service, are conveniently available and accessible, and can be maintained.*

The University's existing facilities are sufficient for the proposed Department. The Carle Illinois College of Medicine's primary instructional, administrative, and student facility is located in the Medical Sciences Building on the University's campus. The building underwent a renovation which was completed in June 2021. The first floor includes problem-based learning rooms, a learning resource center, the Student Affairs suite, and the dean's suite. The second floor houses an auditorium, student designated spaces for studying and interaction, standardized patient rooms,

and the faculty office suite. Anatomy labs and larger classroom spaces are located on the third floor, and student innovation labs are in the basement. The College also operates at Carle Health, a clinical network where most clinical rotations occur. CI MED has dedicated space on the Carle Foundation Hospital campus. This space includes two student lounges and office space for Academic Affairs and Student Affairs.

The University possesses appropriate library resources with access to online databases, books, journal holdings, and other electronic resources to support the needs of the Department of Surgery and Digestive Health. The Provost's Office and the Carle Illinois College of Medicine have partnered with the University Library for two librarian positions with dedicated time to support CI MED, including a part-time Bioengineering and Engineering Medical Innovation librarian and a full-time Medical and Biomedicine librarian. In addition to financial support for dedicated library staff, recurring funding will be provided for library acquisitions specifically for CI MED. The availability of these resources ensures that necessary library materials and support services are available for CI MED students.

### **Faculty and Staff**

*1050.30(a)(3): A) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff ensure that the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are met. B) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff, as evidenced by level of degrees held, professional experience in the field of study and demonstrated knowledge of the field, ensure that they are able to fulfill their academic responsibilities. At a minimum, faculty shall have a degree from an institution accredited by a U.S. Department of Education and/or Council for Higher Education Accreditation recognized accrediting body or a degree from another country evaluated for U.S. equivalency in the discipline they will teach or for which they will develop curricula at least one level above that of the courses being taught or developed. C) The involvement of faculty in the unit of instruction, research or public service is sufficient to cover the various fields of knowledge encompassed by the unit, to sustain scholarship appropriate to the unit, and to assure curricular continuity and consistency in student evaluation. E) Support personnel, including but not limited to counselors, administrators, clinical supervisors, and technical staff, that are directly assigned to the unit of instruction, research or public service, have the educational background and experience necessary to carry out their assigned responsibilities.*

The proposed Department of Surgery and Digestive Health, an administrative unit within the Carle Illinois College of Medicine, will follow the structural model of other academic departments at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. The department head will report to the dean of the College, who in turn reports to the provost of the University. Additionally, the dean, serving as the chief academic officer, reports to the executive vice president and chief medical officer of Carle Health. This dual reporting structure is designed to enhance collaboration between the University and the health system, particularly in faculty-related activities and the functioning of academic departments.

The Department will collaborate closely with CI MED leadership, including the dean and various associate deans, to focus on recruiting, hiring, retaining, training, and evaluating faculty members responsible for developing and delivering the curriculum. Currently, CI MED has over 770 faculty members, 80 percent of whom are physician faculty, with the remaining 20 percent being University-based faculty. In addition to the existing faculty, approximately 120 new faculty members are in the approval process for the College's continued growth and partnership with community partners. These faculty members, along with their home departments, clinical sections, and business units, will be served by the proposed Department.



The Department of Surgery and Digestive Health will play a central role in instruction, with faculty delivering both didactic and clinical education to medical students, residents, and fellows. The Department's involvement in teaching is critical, as it ensures that surgical and digestive health-specific knowledge and skills are effectively imparted to the next generation of healthcare providers. CI MED benefits from a highly qualified faculty with extensive experience in medical education, supported by the expertise of faculty from other colleges and research units within the University. At CI MED, a three-tiered approach determines the frequency of evaluations. Faculty with direct involvement in the curriculum and student interactions receive annual reviews. Those with limited involvement are reviewed every three years, and those with minimal or no engagement may be exempt from review. The department chair or head is responsible for providing a written evaluation to the faculty member, which serves as the basis for discussing accomplishments and progress toward promotion.

Central to the College's mission is the commitment to culturally competent teaching and advising. CI MED provides ongoing professional development for faculty, staff, and administrators to ensure they are equipped to support UIUC's diverse student body. This includes targeted training in DEI practices essential for fostering an inclusive learning environment where all students feel valued and supported. CI MED also reviews position descriptions and advertisements to eliminate exclusionary language, assesses recruitment and outreach plans for their effectiveness in reaching underrepresented groups, and closely monitors the development of candidate pools based on objective criteria. Final hiring decisions are scrutinized to ensure alignment with the College's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

### **Fiscal and Personnel Resources**

*1050.30(a)(5): A) The financial commitments to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are sufficient to ensure that the faculty and staff and support services necessary to offer the unit of instruction, research or public service can be acquired and maintained. B) Projections of revenues necessary to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are based on supportable estimates of state appropriations, local tax support, student tuition and fees, private gifts, and/or governmental grants and contracts.*

Existing faculty, staff, and other resources are adequate to support the proposed Department. The College is sustained by Carle Health, serving as a key partner, and supplemented by campus resources and philanthropic contributions. In addition to these sources, research and tuition revenues provide funding for CI MED's operations. Notably, the College is steadfast in aligning with the expectations of the Liaison Committee on Medical Education, ensuring that student tuition constitutes less than 30 percent of all revenues.

The establishment of the Department of Surgery and Digestive Health will not require additional resources beyond those needed to employ a part-time administrative support position. The funding currently allocated to the Clinical Sciences department in CI MED for staffing, space, equipment and operating activities is part of the College's overall operating budget. A portion of this funding will be dispersed to the four new departments.

### **Accreditation and Licensure**

*1050.30(b)(3)[applicable only to units of instruction]: Appropriate steps shall be taken to assure that professional accreditation needed for licensure or entry into a profession as specified in the objectives of the unit of instruction is maintained or will be granted in a reasonable period of time.*

The proposed Department is an administrative unit that will be housed in the Carle Illinois College of Medicine. CI MED was granted full accreditation status in 2025 by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), an accrediting agency for medical education programs in the United States and Canada. The LCME will conduct a comprehensive review of the College every seven years for reaccreditation.

### **Program Information**

*1050.30(b)(2)[applicable only to units of instruction]: A) The information which the institution provides for students and the public shall include the following: i) An accurate description of the unit of instruction, including its objectives, length, and residency requirements if any; ii) Schedule of tuition, fees, and all other charges and expenses necessary for completion of the unit of instruction, cancellation and refund policies; iii) Student rights and responsibilities; iv) A statement regarding the transferability of college credits, including the fact that the decision to accept transfer credits is determined by the receiving institutions; v) A statement as to how the institution will advise students on the nature of the transfer process, including the importance of consulting with institutions to which the student may seek to transfer; vi) Evidence of arrangements for the transfer of courses or credits or both to institutional counterparts, when these arrangements exist; these arrangements are also known as articulation agreements; vii) A statement of the institution's most recent graduation rates and the number of graduates and enrollments as provided by the institution to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and any submission of data to satisfy Board reporting requirements; and viii) Other material facts concerning the institution and the unit of instruction as are likely to affect the decision of the student to enroll. B) The information listed in subsection (b)(2)(A) shall be available to prospective students prior to enrollment and shall be included in the institution's catalog of programs.*

Detailed information about the proposed Department will be published on the University's website.

### **Staff Conclusion**

The staff concludes that the Department of Surgery and Digestive Health proposed by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign meets the criteria to implement the Board of Higher Education Act (110 ILCS 205/et.seq.) as set forth in 23 Illinois Administrative Code, Ch. II, Section 1050.30, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education policies pertaining to assessment and accreditation or licensure.