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Comment #1 (Comments on Strategic Plan Draft): Received 3/8/21

Debra Meyer [REDACTED]

To: Ginger Ostro

I have read the draft of the strategic plan and provide the following two comments.

1. The term "equity" is used throughout the plan, specifically about "equity gaps" on page 4. Yet equity is not clearly defined in the context of the strategic plan and phrases like "equity gap" or "equity-driven" decisions are unclear. What is currently inequitable and what specifically will be measured to show increased equity? We have had equity goals for decades, but we have not strategically transformed our educational systems because structural racism remains deeply embedded in them. Providing access to educational systems through different pathways that continue to operate in historically discriminatory ways will result in "more of the same." Where in the strategic plan are structural system-wide changes being proposed? My reading of the plan was that pathways around inequities were being proposed rather than changes in the systems. I worry that these alternate pathways may create further inequities.
2. The central focus on the workforce was troublesome for me on several levels. I read the strategic plan's underlying assumption to be that higher education is present to benefit employers. This assumption also seems to conflate higher education with vocational education - two important, but different types of educational systems.

As a professor of Education, I read the section "State's Educator Workforce" with a keen interest. The language in this section suggests that there is something wrong with current teacher preparation programs in Illinois, which typically require 18 months to 2 years to complete, and that we need to prepare teachers faster with less coursework and clinical practice. Research shows that fully prepared teachers have a greater positive impact on their students earlier in their careers and these teachers choose to stay in the profession. What are competency-based teacher preparation programs? How are they different than current teacher preparation programs? What is the research on their outcomes for students? (i.e., which students have competency-based prepared teachers, which have full prepared teachers?).

If the strategic plan's goal is to improve the quality of and number of Illinois licensed educators, a missing part of the strategic plan seems to be opportunities for educators to earn advanced degrees and complete endorsement programs. Retaining teachers is vital and their continued learning and professional growth provide for longer, more fulfilling careers. Higher education could meet these needs by prioritizing advanced studies in areas of high need and insuring that all teachers can access advanced study without further debt. Teacher preparation may be a major

focus now because there is a teacher shortage, but a 10-year strategic plan should consider higher education's role in retaining teachers too.

Institutions of higher education that prepare teachers and provide advance degree work want to support a high quality, professional, long-term educator system in our state because that is what is best for P-12 students. Many of the goals in the "State's Educator Workforce" section could be achieved if institutions of higher education were provided more autonomy to do the work we know how to do and were supported state-wide by what makes our programs so placed-based (e.g., clinical placements and supervision). There are many different accredited teacher preparation programs in the state - none of which are fully enrolled. Perhaps by examining the current rules and regulations that "strap" traditional teacher preparation programs to a one-size-fits-all approach, we could be innovative if given the opportunity?

Illinois is very fortunate to already have a large, diverse system of higher education institutions. Strategically planning for the next 10 years is exciting. Looking forward I had hoped we would prioritize preparing informed and participatory citizens for our state and nation as much as we are on providing employees for employers. To meet goals of equity in the current social-political context will require that higher education focuses more on critical thinking and issues of equity regardless of institutional size, type, or curriculum.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Meyer

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she/her/hers

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Comment #2 (Feedback on Working Draft from Heartland Community College): Received 3/8/21

Cornille, Keith [REDACTED]

To: Ginger Ostro

On behalf of Heartland Community College, we wish to provide written feedback on the current “work in progress” draft of the IBHE Strategic Plan.

The faculty and staff of the college appreciate the efforts of all who have developed and continue to review the plan. We realize that creating a plan in such a collaborative manner can be time consuming as well as overwhelming, so thank you for allowing our voice to be heard.

Following are our thoughts and comments for consideration. We stand ready to provide clarity or further input if so desired.

Sincerely,

Keith Cornille

President

Heartland Community College

Areas of Strength

Priority 1

Strong focus on partnerships with business and industry

Recognition of the State’s Educator Workforce need

Focus on post-traditional age students 25+

Priority 2

Appreciate and support the focus of workforce development, though caution that balance in the plan needs to be articulated. As a community college, we believe that a balance in the academic portfolio between liberal arts and work ready/career technical-vocational education needs to be maintained.

Opportunities

Core Principles

We advocate for a Core Principle to directly address the impact that a diverse cultural representation in curriculum has on enriching the experience of equity, diversity and inclusion.

Priority 1

State’s Educator Workforce - The actions in this area speak to plans related to addressing the rural teacher pipeline, though nothing about actions to increase teachers of color. We advocate for a bullet/action to address this void.

Priority 2

Close Equity Gap - It is interesting that the “close equity gap” is the only area that notes “Affordability strategies are addressed elsewhere in the document” though, interestingly, the strategies and actions in Priority 3 do not speak to this issue at all.

The equity gap strategies and actions do not address systemic issues. We advocate for stronger language that includes dismantling systemic racism in policy, curriculum, programs and services.

Digital Divide -The recent pandemic has clearly demonstrated the void in adequate broad band/digital services throughout the state. We advocate for stronger language in closing the digital gap that is exacerbating the equity gaps.

Priority 3

Equity Gap - Throughout priority #2 there are numerous actions to address equity gaps, though the strategies in priority #3 do not speak of funding to address equity initiatives. Will these become unfunded mandates?

Affordability – This section of priority #3 does not speak at all about equity, diversity and inclusion yet, earlier in the plan, access and equity is discussed.

The dual credit cost model is broken and would not support the language in section #2 that talks about addressing expansion; the burden of funding such initiatives will hit the community colleges very hard.

Keith Cornille, Ed.D.

Heartland Community College

President



www.heartland.edu

Comment #3 (Materials for State Educator Workforce DWG): Received 3/9/21

From: Donovan, Marie [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 7:17 AM

To: Gehlhausen, Sophia [REDACTED] Berry, Matt
[REDACTED]

Evans, Andrea [REDACTED] FOX EMILY [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Ostro, Ginger [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Shanay Wright [REDACTED]

Cc: Bernoteit, Stephanie [REDACTED] Chase, Emily [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Subject: [External] Re: [EXT] Materials for State Educator Workforce DWG

I'm attaching comments from the IBHE Faculty Advisory Council, for whom I serve on this committee as their representative, about two of the proposals we've been discussing: the applied bachelor's at community colleges and the formation of an IHE consortium. You'll see I've separated them out by institution type, per proposal. I ask that Sophia et al. enter them into any record of this workforce's proceedings, so that the FAC's perspectives are known. Many thanks.

Please let me know if you've any questions about these comments, which I will summarize during our meeting at the appropriate junctures.

Sincerely,

m

Marie Ann Donovan, Ed.D.

Associate Professor of Teacher Education

Director, Program in Early Childhood Education

Representative, IL Board of Higher Education Faculty Advisory Council

2247 N Halsted Street, #303

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[REDACTED]

**TEACHER WORKFORCE WORKING GROUP
IBHE FACULTY ADVISORY COUNCIL FEEDBACK ON APPLIED BACHELOR'S
DEGREE AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES & IHE CONSORTIA FORMATION**

As of 3-9-21

Prepared by Dr. Marie Donovan, Faculty Advisory Council Representative

General Comments on the Teacher Shortage and How to Resolve It:

--IL State Senator Dave Koehler hit it the nail on the head with regard to dealing with the teacher shortage: To attract more people into teaching, they need to be paid better.

--Regarding both proposals: We don't need either of them. 4-year universities can handle both.

-- Why is the assumption that the lack of educators is because it is difficult to get a degree? While there may be some institutional barriers, they are similar to the hurdles in other fields. People are not going into education because the pay is too low, more so if the graduate has loans to pay off. If you want more teachers: 1) better pay; 2) reduce student costs via grants and scholarships (not loans) and lower tuition (the state could offer financial support for teacher ed programs); 3) improve working conditions; 4) work to elevate the social status of educators.

APPLIED BACHELOR'S DEGREE OFFERED AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES

From FAC Community College Representatives:

--The same arguments have been made with respect to nursing. A much better path, that works to the strengths of CC and 4YCs and to the advantage of students, is to set up a system that encourages CCs and 4YCs to work closely together to develop seamlessly integrated programs that include upper-level coursework on the CC campus taught by 4YC faculty.

--Having community colleges offer a "regular" bachelor's degree, in many ways, defeats the purpose of a community college and would have a negative impact on area universities. First, community colleges and universities need to partner (as we once did) where our students would complete their first two years at community college and then complete their majors at university. Secondly, I've been involved in our AAS programs. They are not required to take many of the courses that our AS and AA students are required to take that could have an impact on their skill set (and if they don't possess those skills, how are they prepared to teach children those necessary skills?) – especially where math and science are concerned. Most CTE AAS programs have no science at all (unless it's something like Vet Tech) and very little math (business math and statistics are generally the extent of it). Many of our students select an AAS program specifically because they are not having to take the "boring gen eds." Is that really who you want teaching your kids?

Two things should happen instead of creating a BAS. First, AAS programs need to replace at least some of the foundation classes of a program with transferable (IAI) classes. For example, [my college's] Office Professional AAS just replaced a BE 105 Business Presentations class (no IAI code) with SPEC 111 (does

have an IAI). They replaced COM 100 Fundamentals of Writing (no IAI code) with ENG 101 (does have an IAI code). While students who change their mind and decide to go on to university may not be able to transfer everything, it does give them at least some classes that could transfer as something other than an elective. Second, college advisors need to be honest and upfront with students when they are trying to decide what program to pursue. New students have absolutely no idea about the difference between an AS, AA, AAS, ALS, etc. Students are often not told that an AAS will not transfer. Advisors are often not well-versed, or do not communicate, the income potential for students who only receive an AAS. Too many of our CTE students have said that, had they known that adequate paying jobs would be so limited and so much of their AAS would not transfer, they would not have even considered the AAS. They would have pursued an AA or AS degree and they would have used their 27-30 hours of electives to complete one of the CTE certificates. It gives them the best of both worlds. The CTE certificate with a specific skill set that makes finding an office job a little easier – even while they are still going to school, and they transfer with a degree that really does give them the necessary credits to apply towards a BA or BS. However, having a bachelor's degree at a community college is not the answer. Just like community college should extend the knowledge and learning experience from what students get in high school, so too should university extend that knowledge gained at a community college.

From Four-year University FAC Representatives:

--I DO NOT support this proposal. The truth is that once CCs are permitted to develop bachelor's degrees in early childhood, other degrees will follow and it will become a death knell to teacher education degree programs in 4-year colleges. While this is not intended to be a protection of turfs, it is important to re-evaluate the mission of CCs and universities. The State will be moving away from the original mission of CCs and universities if this is permitted.

--I have serious concerns about community colleges being allowed to offer bachelor's degrees. Students do not have the same opportunities in community colleges to engage with faculty who are active researchers in their areas of expertise. Further, the same teacher licensing requirements – and yes, they are rigorous, but oh so necessary--need to be applied to all programs, no matter their geographical location. If this does not happen, then we may see the equity gap increasing, especially in the more rural areas of Illinois.

--It would not make sense for community colleges to offer bachelor's degrees if nearby state universities offer a degree in the field: there is only so much money to go around, and we should not set up a competing system that draws off of the same limited pool of funds. For example, Truman College should not offer a bachelor's degree in Education; nearby Northeastern Illinois University is not bursting at the seams and has the capacity for additional Education majors.

--I read the intent to develop/offer new bachelor's degrees in early childhood education in community colleges in Illinois. While that may seem a solution to curb the teacher shortage in early childhood classrooms, it is more likely to be a trap in terms of quality and well-preparedness of teachers who teach the tender minds. Young children need teachers with a strong foundation in not only content to teach, but also understanding of how children develop and learn in the 21st Century. We have a four-year program and very strong faculty, and we still do not seem to have enough time to get our students to the level we want them to be as they prepare to work with young children aged 0-8 years. As we know from brain research, the early years of development are super sensitive to exposure, perceptibility, initial interactions with caregivers, language development, development of cognition (and meta-cognition), developing concepts, social interactions, and being prepared for learning content the way content is organized from

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kindergarten onwards. Preparing a teacher for young children is actually preparing a psychologist, a caregiver/caretaker, a curriculum specialist, an assessment professional, an informed consumer and user of neuroscience research, a linguist, a cultural pluralist, a social worker, and more, ALL in one! Our [current] bachelor's degree program, which takes about 4 years, does not seem to have enough time to get these important components in place for our graduates. We go out of our way to do everything we can, at the personal and program levels, to ensure that our graduates are truly ready, equipped with what they need to begin to learn how to learn to be effective teachers of young children on a daily basis. The learning never ends. In order for the learning to continue effectively, a strong foundation is prerequisite! We know how important it is for young children to get the best prepared teachers - and we try to meet that goal, albeit with difficulty and a lot of sacrifice. Trying to prepare teachers of young children in quick/hurried, substandard ways is really taking steps backwards in education and in the future of the whole society. This is a dangerous move and a temporary, false solution to a fundamental problem. What we need is commitment and resources to prepare larger numbers of high-quality teachers for young children, by giving the pre-service teachers a strong foundation and high-quality learning, in the time- tested, closely monitored, enriched, and constantly evaluated programs at the university level.

--I have significant reservations about allowing CC to grant applied bachelor's degrees. It sets a concerning precedent, and teacher ed involves quite a lot of extra work for licensing, field placements, criminal background checks, and many other important protocols to ensure the safety and well-being of all involved. However, I would like to raise additional concerns.

First, each licensure granting institution has particular emphases that anchor students' learning experiences. For instance, at [my university], a theme that permeates every aspect of our program is the development of teacher-scholars for social justice. Indeed, the unique character of each program is what helps its graduates develop their own teaching identity and gives them something on which they can base their future professional decisions. My current research with first-year teachers bears this out: Our graduates at [my university] really do draw upon the dispositional education they received at our institution. No doubt the graduates from [other universities' programs] likewise draw upon the dispositions [they] develop with [their] students over their four years in the program. I would argue that these dispositions need time to develop--more time than two years in a community college. Furthermore, to enact this initiative is essentially saying that all teacher ed programs are interchangeable and can easily replicated in almost any setting. This is likewise a concern for the [IHE consortia idea]. Stripping the identity of teacher ed programs down to a few component parts is a disservice to education and minimalization of the complexity of the profession (and rather insulting besides).

But my most significant concern is this: To me, this sounds like an end-run around paying teachers what they're worth or compensating teachers fairly for the work they're doing. I have yet to hear a serious proposal to resolve the teacher shortage by offering to increase pay and benefits or even tuition forgiveness (besides programs like Golden Apple), especially in under-resourced schools. Yes, we have a governor who wants an increase in the base salary for teachers, but when will we hear a serious proposal for fairly compensating teachers for the work they do? No one seems to want to tackle that, but until we do, we will continue to encounter these kinds of initiatives that underplay the importance of the profession by slapping yet another Band-aid on a hemorrhaging wound.

--If CCs are able to do the bachelor's in ECE, for starters, this will drain ECE programs at WIU, NIU, and EIU, especially. I'd like to be proven wrong about this but can't stop being concerned about my four-year colleagues. I get that in the rural counties, it's hard for ECE staff with AAS degrees to 'move' anywhere, geographically and academically. But I'm not convinced this is the solution. I've worked with AAS holders who do succeed in earning their bachelor's and their licenses. But it takes a LOT of support for

them, a holistic advising and ongoing academic intervention approach. I'm not sure CCs are staffed to do this work. I also think that CCs are already so under-resourced that adding this on will only make them collapse. I can't imagine where the \$\$\$ needed to put all the reporting systems and faculty into place for these programs to thrive would come from. Some are thinking if they build it, students will come, I suspect. A two-year colleague thinks that the HLC wouldn't require the applied bachelor's faculty to have terminal degrees since it's an *applied* bachelor's. BUT teacher ed accrediting bodies require faculty with terminal degrees to be the majority. I don't see how the state of IL could skirt that requirement. I could be wrong about this, too, of course — as the teacher shortage grows, who knows how many accreditors will look the other way or grant waivers that eventually become new regulations.

IHE CONSORTIA FORMATION TO RESOLVE TEACHER SHORTAGE

From FAC Community College Representatives:

--Ummm.....I thought we already had this type of consortium – at least at the community college level. At [my college] we call them ICE students. It stands for Illinois Course Exchange, and it's coordinated through ILCCO. Basically, it does what is described above. A student going to [XXX institution] who needs a specific class that isn't being offered through [that institution] can take the class through [my institution]. The class shows on the [XXX institution's] transcript. I'm not sure if there's anything special about it listed, but all of this is done through a pre-arranged agreement between various community colleges. When the faculty enter grades for the student, we have to go through a special ICE/ILCCO site and enter the ICE students' grades there. They are not listed as part of our students, but they can be added to our courses. When we add an ICE student to a class, the person adding the student will also remove one of the seats so that our class cap isn't exceeded (unless we give permission for that). We've done that for years, and it's worked really well. The reverse has also happened. One of our students may need a course that a different community college is offering. They are entered as an ICE student.

-- Stop rewarding institutions for "owning" students. Develop a system that rewards institutions for working together in a manner that meets students' needs.

--Regarding the consortium to create articulating courses, this sounds very reminiscent of the Associates of Arts in Teaching degrees (AATs) we developed about 12 years ago. I served on the SMHEC consortium that worked on those articulations. It was a great experience and the degree plans were awesome. Unfortunately, advisors were allowed too much pull and these degree programs were cut based on "low enrollments". These programs were never properly advertised or supported. Is this similar to what the state is looking at developing? IAI provides a model as to how what is being proposed could be implemented.

From Four-year University FAC Representatives:

--While there may be value in creating a consortium, all the issues identified are real. I believe there are other models in which universities and CCs can come together to determine which courses may be completed at CCs, after which students can transfer to a university to complete a bachelor's degree. Working this way would require a total reorganization of which courses are completed in CCs and which ones are completed at 4-year colleges in order to grant a degree. (This model awards only a bachelor's degree after completion at a 4-year college; it does not grant an associate's degree.)

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--This may work, as long as community college advisors identify early in their students' academic careers those who are interested in teacher licensure. Often we will receive transfer students who are interested in our educator licensure program; however, because they did not identify themselves earlier, they will often find themselves needing an extra semester of work to complete the program. The issue of 'who owns' the student is always a problem, unfortunately. I'm working on a consortium right now with the U of I for training blind and visually impaired bilingual Spanish/English students to become medical interpreters, and the same issue of 'who owns' the student has already come up.

--I have fewer concerns about this initiative for two reasons. First, it does seem to create more equity for students who are not able to attend a four-year residential institution. Second, I think higher ed in general is heading more in the direction of consortia, so this may be a wave we are not able to fight. That said, I am still concerned about a few things. First, I wonder how students will get the dispositional education on which they will draw for much of their careers (see above). Second, I do think this type of initiative would require tremendous coordination if it were to be effective. To assume that each course in a teacher ed program is a stand-alone one-size-fits-all entity is wrong-headed. Courses need to build one upon the other and to communicate consistent pedagogies and (again) dispositions. Without this kind of coordination, we're back to the problem of stripping ed programs down to a few component parts that are interchangeable. I could foresee quite a bit of student frustration taking courses across a wide range of institutions, and it would be tough to teach these courses without knowing what coursework students have already completed and how one course builds upon another--I get a headache just thinking about how to enact this kind of program with any degree of integrity. Again, I see higher ed moving more toward consortial agreements, but I assume most of those agreements will focus on Gen Eds or minors/certificates rather than full degree programs, which feels a bit like a bridge too far for me right now.

--As for the consortium, the only thing we need to do is come to an agreement about the 3 or 4 courses that all community college would offer, then every 4-year university would accept those courses. Iowa went through this process in the last two years. Every community offers the same courses to teacher ed students, and all of the state universities accept those courses. We don't need to over complicate this.

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Comment #4 (On the slang Latinx): Received 3/9/21

Álvaro Castillo A. [REDACTED]

To: Ginger Ostro

Hello,

Please stop its usage, it is offensive and simply unnecessary.

Álvaro