



## **Faculty Advisory Council**

### **Illinois Board of Higher Education**

At Northern Illinois University

March 15, 2024

Approved on April 19, 2024

#### FAC members/Alternates Attending and Their Institutions

##### **In Person**

Angela Antonou	at-large (University of St. Francis)
Scott Banjavaic	University of Illinois – Chicago (alternate)
Tammie Bohnhoff	Olney Central College (alternate)
Cynthia Boyce	at-large (Lincoln Trail College)
Amy Carr	Western Illinois University
John Cooksey	at-large (Harry S. Truman College)
Lane Crothers	Illinois State University
Marie Donovan	at-large (DePaul University)
Alison Douglas	Elgin Community College
Sarah Garber	Rosalind Franklin University
Joao Goebel	National Louis University
Jack Haines	Joliet Junior College
Andy Howard	Illinois Institute of Technology (at-large alternate)
Dan Hrozencik	Chicago State University
Pratima Jindal	Waubensee Community College
Brooke Johnson	Northeastern Illinois University
Megan Klein	Oakton Community College
James Marshall	Rockford University
Nataka Moore	at-large (Adler University)
Laura Murdaugh	Kishwaukee College
Linda Saborio	Northern Illinois University
Mary Ellen Schiller	Roosevelt University
Shawn Schumacher	at-large (DeVry University-Addison)
Sue Wiediger	Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville

##### **On Zoom**

Gay Miller	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Ken Nickels	at-large (Black Hawk Community College)
Mike Phillips	at-large (Illinois Valley Community College)
Lichang Wang	Southern Illinois University-Carbondale

### **Representatives/Institutions Not Present**

No Representative	University of Illinois-Springfield
Eugene Dunkley	Greenville University
Chasity Gunn	Elgin Community College
Crystal Harris	Governors State University
Constance Mixon	Elmhurst College
J. Matthew Ward	Quincy University
Larry White	Eastern Illinois University

### **IBHE Board Members and Staff**

Daniel Abankwa, IBHE, Assistant Director of Academic Affairs (in person)  
Jill Gebke, IBHE Assistant Director of Academic Affairs (via Zoom)  
Nkechi Onwuameze, IBHE, Senior Associate Director of Academic Affairs

Shawn Schumacher called the meeting to order at 9:02. We shared introductions.

## Welcome from Dr. Lisa Freeman, NIU President

Dr. Lisa Freeman, President of Northern Illinois University, shared that she is always delighted to host FAC, because the faculty voice is so important at the state level. There is so much going on right now. She's been in Springfield three times in the past three weeks. She knows the presidents of almost all our institutions through work groups. She says we need to come together to serve students in Illinois. We've had a better spirit of co-operation across our institutions.

She mentioned one initiative that is born of a response to eliminate race-related decisions in hiring and admissions. HEFT is the Higher Education Futures Table working group convened by the Governor's Office. It is looking at ways to improve all university processes in ways that are systemic and scalable. But many who think they understand students and higher ed don't work directly with them. So it's important to have faculty voices there, to address well-intended systems that can risk losing things important to us for student success. Never confuse rigor for rigidity, but don't lose rigor either.

Simón Weffer will talk about the funding commission—the other big reason she has been in Springfield. The biggest thing coming out of it: a statement that our public universities have been underfunded for a long time. It's hurt our buildings, sidewalks, and students.

The service FAC is providing is so important and she knows it comes at a cost of time and travel.

## Reports Part I

Simón Weffer-Elizondo, NIU Associate Professor on the Public University Funding Commission

Simón Weffer-Elizondo was the sole faculty representative on the Illinois Commission on Equitable Public University Funding, serving also on its Technical Modeling Workgroup. He started by saying that they could have used more time on the funding commission, though it was two years long. He offered an overview for those who haven't read the report (and he encouraged us to read the final report). Creating a new funding formula was the aim—one unlike the old one, which worked from a head count and a percentage [of increase from last year's funding] alone, which cements the existing inequalities into the system. The aim was threefold: 1) create stability in funding for HE, 2) fund at an adequate level (he noted "Adequate" is an odd term; it means fully-funded. He wouldn't have chosen that term, but it was given to them); 3) use an equity lens for how funding is distributed and how it is going to cost more to provide services for students who need more of them to thrive (study skills, student services, mental health).

There were two components: how do we keep the lights on and the door open; and how do we do that with an equity lens? Currently, if you look at the state level, the state pays only 30-35% of the cost of attendance. In 2000, the state covered over 60%. The burden has shifted to our students. In our regional public comprehensive institutions especially, the costs become too high.

The idea would be that state money gets distributed in a manner similar to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) formula, where the schools with the most disadvantaged students get more funds first. We fill up the deep end of the pool first. The question is how big the adequacy gap might be. The estimate is of a \$1.5 billion dollar gap after HE underfunding for two decades. Simón was not surprised by that number, and it's actually worse than that because deferred maintenance isn't part of the equation. The legislators choked on the number of \$1.5 billion as it was.

The commission was audacious in what it built. They didn't have pay-to-play metrics (i.e., slashing funding if you don't enroll more African American students). They looked at 10-20 funding models; none is like ours.

Simón parting words for the commission and legislators: 1) Ask them to go above and beyond what they think we can do (as we do as faculty with our students). The commission provided different funding timelines, one with getting at adequacy in 15 years. That number is never going to happen. But there were other numbers that, from his perspective as a social movements and race scholar, becomes an advocacy question. 2) Simón himself has skin in the game. He has a child at UIC. He pointed out on the commission that there *is* inequality/inequity in the current form of funding.

*Q and A followed.*

*Who should be advocating? Legislators for their districts, families for their children; where we do fit in as faculty without sounding like we're whining all the time?*

Simón: We have to find the right frame as faculty which will resonate with legislators. This is an explicitly racialized formula: if you have members from these groups on campus, we are going to give you more funding. Hopefully this leads to a path that further diversifies all of our campuses, rather than ghettoizes our public universities. It puts a target on our backs. After the SCOTUS decision [that eliminated race-based admissions in 2023], the commission was paused for two months by the Governor's office (that's Simón's interpretation). SCOTUS has never stepped in at the level of state funding, though, so the work of the funding commission resumed.

On advocacy, there are three narratives we need around this funding model: 1) for legislators, to understand what this means. The equitable student share: we're not saying students don't pay anything, but what *is* equitable for students to pay? A student from a Tier-I ISBE school who is first generation who lives in high poverty rates community—those students shouldn't pay a dime, our model says. These are the students we should be going after. The enrollment cliff is middle-class white students, not the most vulnerable students. We would hopefully capture these students when the funding is adequate. Legislators have students and families that go to every campus across the state. There's a larger issue regarding the public on advocacy. We've ceded the ground to ISBE; they never get cut, even during the Rauner years. But HE is seen as discretionary funding.

Simón's last advocacy narrative: make the funding plausible on legal grounds. We do that by focusing on low-funded students. But every student in Illinois will have part of their education paid. No one is saying an upper-class white male student doesn't get paid. The Illinois Policy Institute is trying to poke all the holes. Here faculty can engage and work with their institutions and IBHE.

*Jennifer Delaney (former professor in higher ed administration at UIUC, and former public university representative to the IBHE) made many public comments, especially at technical modeling workgroup meetings. Were any of her ideas in them picked up by the commission?*

Simón said he was very disappointed that Jennifer Delaney was not on the panel with them, since she had real expertise on HE funding. Her comments were well-received in the technical modeling group and by many presidents in the larger funding commission group; there was more of a mixed bag of reception among outside stakeholders; Simón didn't know about legislators.

Jennifer was spot on; there very few things he disagreed with her about. He disagreed with some things on a technical level only because she wasn't involved in every meeting. They tried to incorporate some of her ideas, but some sticky issues became part of the horse-swapping—such as when to use head count data; and at other times to use FTE data. Current head count data is baked in with the fundamental inequalities; we wouldn't have had a precipitous decline in some institutions if there had been a stable funding model.

One topic he has been critical of and Jen and he aligned on: the formula not including room and board in the fundamental cost, because it's those last dollars that make the biggest difference. On some campuses, room and board is in the income stream. But if we want the most vulnerable to be able to attend college, we have to factor in those costs as well. Simón is the director of DEI for NIU's College of Arts and Sciences; they did some smaller climate surveys that found the percentage of students expressing both housing and food insecurity—5%--is a lot of students: among 16,000 students, that's at least 800, using self-reported data.

There were several things that Jennifer couldn't get through, and that many of them couldn't get through; it's a political process. Jennifer and he made some headway on adding funding on research (into the formula). Master's institutions were getting \$46 per student; that wasn't enough. One of Simón's big personal wins was moving that to \$600 per student and \$1800 at R1. This doesn't cover the actual cost of research. Many faculty are pulling money out of their pockets outside the STEM and well-funded social sciences areas, especially in the humanities. But by getting this into the model early, we can keep building up.

*Gay said she really appreciated Simón's advocacy. She thinks the most important part of the report relates to the very strong statement about how inadequate the state support for HE funding is. That is well-recognized in this report. The other details will hopefully get fixed through time.*

Simón: That's something many of us wanted to beef up even more. But growing up in Chicago, he has friends working in the legislative staff, and heard that this is falling on deaf ears. And that's where the narrative toward the general topic about how big the gap is: don't you want your kids to have the same opportunities in post-secondary education as in K-12?

*Is anyone hitting close to adequate funding in other states?*

Simón: "Adequacy" here is an odd phrase, but means "hitting that fully funded level." What's really interesting—the commission punted on medical education; many orders of higher funding are needed—this model is really based on undergraduate student funding. They didn't get at the differences among funding doctorates in anthropology, education, or medicine. Look at a place like Ohio, which funds medical education separately from the rest of HE. That's not a bad model to look at. Oregon had some interesting concepts trying to get at equity. Louisiana will slash funding if an institution doesn't get at a certain level of graduation rates. But that's a 5-8-year trend line to improve. So to start penalizing students would be problematic. Also problematic would be how to treat Chicago State; they are already at 85% African American. UIC has tremendously diversified the student body, but perhaps they need to pick up their graduation rates of African Americans. We tried to stay away from these performance-based models; they don't end up having the effects you'd like them to see—they fall sort of goals and lose funding.

*Dan was surprised how quickly the commission ended, especially since it was going to inform funding for this year. Is there an ongoing implementation group?*

Simón: You will have to talk to the co-chairs on the deadline. Part of it was there did need to be a deadline. His interpretation as a native Chicagoan: they had a robust implementation line. A larger group focused on policy and oversight, and a technical group followed, e.g., better data on students who are parents, or "non-traditional" students (though he doesn't know what that means anymore). The tricky point is about what crosses from technical upkeep into changing the model in a policy way that has to go to the legislators. It would be a similar model to what ISBE uses. But that parallel doesn't work on the choice and ability to move, which is different from K-12. It took K-12 twenty years to come up with their funding model; it took the HE funding commission less than two years. They are handing it off to the legislature now; we'll see what happens.

*Sue wanted to push back on the idea of everyone going to college as an expectation. One of the differences is that K-12 is mandatory, and college isn't.*

Simón thanked Sue for making this point, and clarified that [an assumption in the funding commission's work is that] everyone should be able to go to HE if they want to do so. Not attending shouldn't be a function only of finances. But in the larger ecosystem of post-secondary education, including certificates and badges, many students want to continue their education in some way, technical or applied or otherwise. Why can't we entertain discussions that everyone should be *able* to get at least 2 years of education beyond K-12? We've done a bad job of communicating the value-added dimensions of HE. The funding model got broken in the California system, too. Simón used to teach there. He thanked Sue for the correction, but thinks we've been underselling ourselves.

## IBHE Reports

Jill reported that one of the most exciting things for the agency is that Illinois was awarded a Lumina grant to limit barriers for transfer students.<sup>1</sup> The Common App has been successful in increasing enrollment. There is a Common App being designed for transfer students as well. It's more similar to a professional common app student—e.g., for medical school. There's a different technology for it. It is easier for transfer students and reduces barriers to applications.

On financial aid conversations and FAFSA data processing: the first batches of transfers of data began this weekend, and are slowly ramping up. It will take about two weeks to catch up. The institutions will then be able to start packaging financial aid, for current as well as prospective students. Incoming student FAFSA forms dropped 38% nationally this year since last year. So be aware and advocate for students. There's also difficulty helping families without social security numbers. This affects DACA students.

*Q: will the Common App for transfer students include private institutions?*

Jill clarified that the original intent is for the public universities.

## Guest Presentation: Bryan Flower, “Northern Illinois University’s Edible Campus Program: A Story of Food Systems Collaboration”

Bryan Flower is the Assistant Director of Food Systems Innovation at NIU and Director of Edible Campus. He is a chef by training; he worked around the world for Hilton International; he and his wife have a farm nearby with pigs and chickens, so they understood where *their* food came from. He's also been a higher ed educator for 20 years, including time as a dean for a culinary hospitality program in Chicago.

NIU is going to get a building put up for NIU's Center for Community Sustainability. Bryan was invited to lead the food systems portion of it. So they began to build innovation conversations, bringing in food

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<sup>1</sup> See this press release about the IBHE as winner of The Great Admissions Redesign Challenge: [https://www.ibhe.org/PressReleases/2024/Press\\_Release\\_IBHE\\_Lumina\\_FINAL.pdf#:~:text=The%20IBHE%20was%20awarded%20the%20funding%20to%20implement%2C,and%20the%20state%E2%80%99s%20participation%20with%20the%20Common%20App.](https://www.ibhe.org/PressReleases/2024/Press_Release_IBHE_Lumina_FINAL.pdf#:~:text=The%20IBHE%20was%20awarded%20the%20funding%20to%20implement%2C,and%20the%20state%E2%80%99s%20participation%20with%20the%20Common%20App.)

specialists from around the world. Another innovation was a hydroponic/aquaponic blend; that program went by the wayside, but actually led to the edible campus project.

Other universities like MSU (Michigan State?) and a school in North Carolina had raised-bed edible campus programs—adding food access to traditionally landscaped areas of the university. This is good from both a sustainability (less mowing) and food access perspective. Senator Durbin’s office in 2022 got \$500,000 from the Small Business Association office. They have a living learning lab focused on food systems that provides educational and practical opportunities for food access and understanding food systems. The program creates connections between health, wellness, and the environment in relation to our food systems. It’s also about reducing food insecurity for their students and the NIU community. A national survey suggested that 35-46% of students struggle with food insecurity at some point in their undergraduate years.

To make the program successful, they had to make it financially sustainable, so they found champions for the cause, like the Illinois Farm Bureau, Garden Prairie Organics, Feeding Illinois, Gordon Hardware, Ball Seeds, and Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds. The latter two donated seeds to FFA programs with greenhouses at the local high schools. Then NIU would take seedlings from the high schools. FFA then has plant sales to generate revenue, and anything unsold NIU uses. Then when looking for raised beds, they partnered with Feeding Illinois to find suppliers of raised beds with wood from Caterpillar. They are foldable and movable. They got 200 raised beds donated by Illinois Farm Bureau, and FI. Gordon Hardware provided tools. GPO provided compost. They took 80 yards of compost (that’s a lot) and blended it with topsoil on campus to create 160 yards of soil for 200 raised beds. Then they acquired Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds in Missouri with donated seeds.

Both NIU and the local community can harvest at the Founders Memorial Gardens near the library. They also put raised beds by Stevens Hall for a sustainable food systems certificate program. They harvested an average of 500 pounds of fresh produce. EC staff and student workers maintain the gardens.

Then they thought about how to produce *more* food for campus dining, the Huskies food pantry, etc. So they took a space near Anderson Hall and created the Anderson Market Garden. They used a no dig, no till system because the soil is where the health of the plant comes from, so they just aerate the soil with forks. There are more microbes in healthy soil in a spoon than there are people on the planet. They put down cardboard to suppress weeds, and put wood chips between the beds. They built twenty 60-foot long, 30-inch-wide no till beds. They used sustainable agriculture practices: organic standards, integrated pest management (marigolds keep bunnies away, etc.), electrified chicken fencing, and a five-zone irrigation system connected to blue tooth and sensors in the soil, which lets you know if you need to add water or not.

The DeKalb County Community Gardens (DCCG) and Opportunity House collaborate with Edible Campus’s Walnut Grove Vocational Farm on workshops. This provides opportunities to adults with developmental disabilities program. Edible Campus also built workshops for the community on how to worm farm, grow something, etc. Midwest Groundcovers provided hoops for a hoop house to extend the growing season for the Anderson Market Garden into mid-November.

Innovative Growers Equipment provide aeroponic equipment for production for cannabis, and expanded also to other areas. They provided aeroponic towers with light in the lower level of the library. Each can

hold 400 plants. They are working with an engineering professor to determine power usage (light amounts) vs. yield.

ComEd provided hydroponic pods, funding for site preparation and material for 16 months of growing and full training. The Electrical Power Research Institute put in sensors, etc. This will allow knowing how they draw on the grid. The data collected will help them know how to place hydroponics in deserts. They can grow 100 pounds of leafy greens food a week when fully operational. After 16 months of research, the pods belong to Edible Campus. This project provides workforce development and student employment opportunities, and field trips for high schools and communities.

Edible Campus serves student volunteer opportunities for class or hours needed. The Huskie give back program allows 7.5 hours of paid time per year to donate volunteer time. They collaborate with Student Affairs to raise funds for the NIU food pantry and Edible Campus Program to pay student workers (Bryan is chef for a fund-raising meal). They built a preservation program with the Pick Museum of Anthropology to offer a class in food preservation (canning, preserving); then all the food goes into the Huskies food pantry. A meal prep program offers students with no access to a kitchen to meal prep for the week for free, in partnership with the Nutrition program. They have done over 1000 meals since the program began late fall.

Various educational and research programs tie into the EC program, from perennial grain civic science research to molecular analysis of aeroponic-grown food to test the nutritional density of the produce and compare it to what is sold in the supermarket. They took carrots from Whole Foods and Walmart; the more nutrient-dense produce was from Walmart because its supply chain is faster and more efficient than Whole Foods' is. They grew over 3000 pounds of food in Market Food Gardens. It's a misnomer that commodity crops are more profitable than specialty crops. They grow food that can be used across cultures.

Impact assessment: they harvested 3012 pounds of produce from Market Garden, had 87 volunteer workers and substantial donations, and served 14 academic programs involved across seven colleges.

In the future, they hope to add 100 free-to-pick beds each year; develop micro credentialing/non-credit certification (ENVS), with additional classes for credit (ENVS/CHHS); add a 1000 sq foot greenhouse; add areas focused on nut and berry production; operate a vegetarian campus food truck (they began food truck Wednesdays last year, with 6-8 trucks); build the Huskie Mobile Aggregation Unit that is modeled off what we see in Europe, with mobile slaughter houses for livestock (this reduces the cost barriers to enter the industry in the northern Illinois region); build a sustainable composting program to help with food waste; and double the Market Garden in 2024.

Only 12% of what we produce in Illinois is currently consumed here.

## Guest Presentation by David W. Tretter, President, The Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities

Dave Tretter said the Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities represents 56 HE institutions. He himself is the product of two public universities. The current environment in Springfield



involves challenges in the General Assembly—the turnover is really historic. The average tenure is less than 4 years. Those who like term limits like this. But it affects legislators' experience and how well they understand the issues. For example, "education" is assumed to refer to K-12.

There has been a resurgence of appreciation for the economic value of HE. If you just follow the dollars of HE appropriation, we hit the high water mark in 2002, then had bumps. (He was originally a public budgeting guy—public budgeting is an oxymoron). Tuition went up, despite studies that conclude there is no relation between tuition increases and drops in state funding. He started in ISAC [the Illinois Student Assistance Commission] in the late 1980's so entered with an interest in student-based funding. The MAP programs funding has increased. Often recipients need more remedial work as well. There is a HE committee in both the House and the Senate. Some of the legislation comes and goes, some will never see the light of day. For instance, on the community college BA issue: from a policy perspective, it has been done in many other states. He had come in on the research side on the history of HE. If we were going to build a HE system here, it wouldn't look like what we have. But Illinois is very rich in the diversity of institutions, in geography, mission. Over the years the delivery of HE has changed. Our problem is that we have too many institutions of HE. We've lost 5 institutions in the past 6 years. Some would argue, "So what; that's the way the market is." But Dave's argument is that HE schools are larger institutions. If you took WIU out of Macomb, or EIU out of Charleston, those are fundamentally different towns. When you look at the options for a student to get into HE in some fashion—training, certifications, AA, BA/BS—do we have a system in place in Illinois that can accommodate that? We have *more* than that.

Students themselves are not interested in sector battles but in navigating the credentialing system. From a larger policy place, is HE a priority in the state? Aligning all those forces together is difficult because we are competitive with one another within and across public and private sectors. His son has left the state for HE—"guilty as charged." The reason we have the set of institutions we have in Illinois is if you look from 2012-2022, the base of total students (head count) went from 800,000 to 600,000. The HS grade numbers aren't dropping off *that* much. Students either aren't seeing the value of HE—we are up against some national narratives about how we're too liberal, overpriced, etc.—but something else is going on. We've rebounded a little bit, and the pandemic response was a factor. The state and federal (PELL) funding streams have gotten a little better for just needs-based students.

The IBHE funding commission report matters for state-wide planning for all of us.

*Q & A ensued.*

*What we can be hoping for budget-wise for HE?*

Dave has been a registered lobbyist for 35 years so take all he says with a grain of salt. The budget for HE by the Governor has built on increases of MAP in recent years. To fully fund would involve a lot more. But there's been a softening of applications, and not because the need is not out there. There has been little bump for CCs and public universities. If you're a real budget geek you can look at the pension requirements on the state side. He doesn't see a lot of controversy going forward. We've got a very strong Governor. There's some talk in the last week about supplemental and additional revenues. As an old policy budget guy, he doesn't expect a lot of these because in 2025-26 there is a predicted recession. Illinois has historically gone into recession later and come out of it later, but we're not as much of a

manufacturing economy as we were in the past. However, the budget reflects where we think the revenue streams will be.

The press release about the public university funding commission report suggests we need \$1.5 billion more in funding. In Springfield, you learn not to spend a lot of time talking about the past, even when it's relevant.

*Illinois has some of the largest corporations in the nation, and value HE graduates. Do they meet their tax obligations? Can they be brought to the table to help us find our way out of the budget issue?*

Dave said that's been an interesting challenge his entire career: connecting the business and HE sides. One complaint is that they can't find enough qualified college-educated workers, and some businesses are sitting very close to a HE institution. There *are* agreements with HE public and private institutions. Whether they are paying their due taxes is another matter; Dave suspects their accountants are doing all they can to prune back their tax responsibilities. We've *talked* about how to get these parties together to talk about this as a mutually beneficial relationship, but haven't protected that relationship. The companies' talent base is much wider than Illinois. If they're not tied to that, do they want to stay in Illinois? Or move to a no-tax state? We could be forceful about making those connections.

*Have you noticed an increase in the interest of college presidents of independents in dual enrollment—more than you would have a decade ago?*

Dave said they haven't talked about this. It hasn't been a large topic, though he's obviously aware of the issue. It's on a similar set of tracks as the CC BA issue.

*Dan said he was a Knox College grad; his sister went to Benedictine; Amy went to Carleton and we talk about what a great experience we had at a liberal arts college. Students don't seem to talk about them as much. Doesn't the state have an interest in supporting liberal arts colleges?*

Dave said that as a parent, he did his best to keep his son in Illinois (he's in Mississippi), and they visited Augustana and as they were pulling into the QC, his son said, "Ah, this is depressing." Dave replied, "This is Illinois; this is all depressing. You need to lower your expectations." His son was a soccer player and was recruited by some of the smaller campuses—of course, some students *want* the mega-institution experience. His son is taking a Philosophy class; but now he likes that class. If you're going to talk about the liberal arts, philosophy is at the top of the heap. It's not that this doesn't happen at a big school. We understand training people to do critical necessary tasks, but anyone working in HE knows that the modern students will have 7-10 jobs and need to go back to school for retraining. We have a hard time defining liberal arts, like we have trouble defining pornography. But if you've got a taste of that, he can think of two professors who got him thinking that way—one in undergrad, one in grad school. A student can do both (training for specific skills, the liberal arts). The LA is the most critical piece. He thinks what's not helping is the human interconnection that's lost to develop those CT skills. Even the time he was wasting drinking with his buddies, when he was an athlete—those all build together. Social media interrupts this. The demand for enrollment will get smaller, but there's a profound effect on towns that lose those colleges. The people living in the town don't appreciate the college until it goes away (gas stations, hotels close). 20-25 years Dave ago began doing work on the economic development side of HE; HE is the fourth or fifth largest industry in the state. We ought to be recognized for that. It's been

helpful working with his public HE counterparts on that. We're cultural entities in these communities. How to monetize that? Downstate the loss of a college is more noticeable in a community.

*Where's the disconnect? We've made these arguments for years. Why isn't there more money in HE?*

Dave: HE is the place to balance your budget as a state. A legislator told him if tuition goes up, and HE funding is cut, constituents are mad at the institution; they don't call him as a legislator to complain. A lesson for Dave on the disconnect regarding HE funding. If you were to do that in K-12, local taxpayers would draw the direct connection between state funding and the funding of their school district. How do we get *parents* (not just businesses) more engaged with legislators?

*There are two layers of the HE argument: its value to the community and the health of the student. We also tell people about the individual benefits of going to college. Many don't see a personal benefit. They could have gotten a high-paying job without going to college. How do you balance or reconcile those competing views?*

Dave: Academic backgrounds of Fortune 500 company leaders overwhelmingly have liberal arts degrees. You can go down a whole discussion of social class, but yes, it's challenging. You can make \$1 million more in your lifetime if you go to college. Yes, they make more money and pay more taxes, and don't depend as much on government services.... How do we measure these things when a student leaves college? A liberal arts major makes less three years out of college than someone with a welding certificate. What does it look like 15 years later? Maybe it's the same? We should measure those things, but it has to be longitudinal. We tend to measure by starting salaries ("we want our measurement and we want it *now!*"). IBHE has tried to align on the salary side with the Illinois Department of Employment Security, and early on the discussions were about the importance of looking a little further on. If we're sending critically thinking LA minds, they are going to start businesses, go back to continue their education. Someone has to be out there to "rinse and repeat" making these arguments over and over. Utilize successful graduates when they leave your campus.

## Guest Presentation: Pranav G. Kothari, Chair, Illinois Board of Higher Education

Pranav Kothari began with a comment about the Q on liberal arts education: they just had an IBHE Board meeting at Monmouth, and he was thinking about what an incredible educational opportunity there was for the 755 students attending there. There are 115 students on their football team, and they do well in their conference. One of the questions (he was an Economics major and in lots of liberal arts classes) is: what else are you doing as a student besides leaving with a credential? What are you doing in the summer and during the school year that is rounding out your experiences as a student and building your resume? Coming out of college with a degree is necessary but insufficient. He spends his day job in the K-12 space. Everyone should leave high school prepared for the option of college, even if you want to go right into the workforce instead. We know that the typical college student today is not the "traditional" 18-22-year-old. All the questions to Dave Tretter were really good.

Pranav shared what they were thinking about from the IBHE Board perspective. There is an interesting opportunity for dual enrollment, based on what he's seen work from other places. At the Board meeting one of the panels was about the enrollment cliff. He kept thinking: the focus is on how there are not enough 18-year-olds; nationally a 10% drop, maybe more in Midwestern states. What do we do with existing customers/students? How do we retain them?

Their big focus on the IBHE Board has been the Thriving Illinois plan—growth, sustainability, and equity. Equity plans are being submitted from each public university, and from some of the privates. His day job involves college access broadly. What does that equitable pathway look like for more of his students? There is a lot of data that tells us who's likely to be successful and who not. He wants to lose his ability to predict who will be successful, based on a student's zip code, high school, or academic preparation. Faculty at Georgia State helped to close equity gaps on very large campus; strong lessons emphasize the role of faculty in early warning systems, not creating a space where there are classes (like org chem in pre-med programs) that were chop courses—professors took pride in that, unfortunately. There's a significant role for faculty to be the eyes and ears. Students spend more time with faculty than anyone else on campus. Faculty have the most proximal data.

Simón Weffer-Elizondo already presented on the funding commission to the IBHE, for which Pranav is a co-chair as the IBHE Board president. Questions remain, like the role of the endowment of an institution in the funding formula. How do we accommodate the medical schools in the FF? Interesting to him was what you want IN and want OUT of the FF. One item was around faculty diversity: does that become part of the formula? He thought it needed to be a separate initiative. IBHE still runs faculty diversity programs now. He's amazed at the level of engagement in the conversations. It's just an unbelievable commitment—a movement in the right direction for a more significant, thoughtful approach. Putting the number of \$1.5 billion out there—we can plan according to that. There's a lot of catch up to do after years of underfunding, then it's about acceleration.

How do we ensure our HE institutions are really viable in Illinois? The formal role of the IBHE is program approval, but part of what's exciting about that is we ask what is the connection to the workforce; not that it's the sole deciding factor but it's informative. He doesn't want us to overcorrect—to suggest that HE is only about jobs to produce workers—but it's also a reality check, to balance out. He is working with John Atkinson [the former IBHE Board chair] in his new role as Chairman of Intersect Illinois [which "is the only statewide economic development organization focused on bringing new businesses, jobs, and investments to Illinois"<sup>2</sup>].

Pranav did a lot of work on college access and success before he came to Illinois, and has had many conversations about higher ed. He wants everyone to see higher education as a whole. ISAC sits on the Board; ICCB sits in on meetings. Students and families don't care whose agency does what. So we need a student-centered focus. We've had incredible student representatives on the IBHE Board. They are unfortunately named "traditional" and "non-traditional" board members; we might see about changing their names. The drumbeat we're having is around mental health for students. This isn't cry wolf stuff; it shows up in lots of different ways, including in the freedom of students to practice their religion freely.

*Q & A ensued.*

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.intersectillinois.org/>

*On dual credit: we need a lot more planning and structure. The current approach is “let’s just have more” without considering what is the best experience for students. But a lot of them take all their college courses on the HS campus; some high schools might limit what the teachers can teach, and students miss out on the broader college experience that you mentioned. It also seems there’s a new bill to update the Dual Credit Quality Act, but it seems very hit or miss. It feels like that’s not an overall plan for what we’d like dual credit to look like. For example, could we limit how many courses students can take at the HS? Other courses should be on a college campus?*

Pranav replied that in Ohio, he worked on a foundation doing a lot of early college work. They did a lot of the planning, making sure there is a clear game plan for what rigor worked like. They wanted students to spend time on a college campus, but they also have to help students *get to* the college campus (a logistical challenge). The University of Dayton had a strong early college program, but they had figured out the logistics—and often high school students were taking classes *with* regularly enrolled college courses. Pranav is a big believer in these opportunities to access early college credit. But we want to make sure the credits are valuable.

*We haven’t really heard from the IBHE Board about the work we’ve done on FAC about early college or about prior learning assessment. FAC has a position paper from 2020 on dual credit; in 2023 we developed an Early College Considerations document. We haven’t heard any feedback from the Board at all.*

Pranav had no reply.

*Any update on filling IBHE Board spot for a public university faculty representative?*

Pranav: The Board has a few vacancies. He doesn’t have a new timing on that, but will keep Shawn updated.

*Shawn and Lane noted that historically the appointment has been someone who has come from FAC*

Pranav said the Board wants to have a partnership with the IBHE staff. Their next Board meeting will be at the IBHE staff offices in Springfield. They would like more business representation on the IBHE Board; in Ohio, there were 4-5 corporate leaders who were really engaged about higher education. That’s not true here in Illinois. And we want a politically balanced board.

*The Thriving Illinois plan has a few points that tie into an FAC proposal to form a task force on Prior Learning Assessment to find out how much is being done, and what systems and policies are in place on campuses. What is working for us and what is working against us in HE in terms of bringing those adult learners, especially those we want, by acknowledging their learning that they bring? The IBHE staff don’t have enough resources to do all the work that needs to be done. We especially need to get moving on it because just last week Indiana issued their comprehensive analysis of what their vision is for PLA, getting into both policies and practices. We need that. A colleague at Oakton CC got together groups of provosts, transfer specialists, etc. and to the one they said, “We know that the next CC over does things differently. This isn’t good.” A simple thing: rewrite the system manual that currently says a CC in Illinois can’t even look at PL credit until a student has earned 15 credits at the CC. We need your help. We on FAC don’t want it dumped into some campus employee’s lap; the IBHE needs to coordinate it with us.*

Pranav: There are two related elements. One is that in the IBHE budget proposal we ask for more capacity for the IBHE team. Another is **that between now and June we are putting in an accountability element in learning. The PLA proposal fits there.** The funding commission took up a lot of the team's time the past two years.

*Jill said there's so much talent and passion in FAC. Out of all the different priorities in Thriving Illinois, how can we as FAC better assist you?*

Pranav: It's a hard Q, because the Board wants you to have autonomy to identify what's most important to faculty in the context of higher education. He can make sure Shawn and he are in regular contact. But **if Pranav were to assign a task force, it would be around student persistence and the faculty role in it.** His day job involves scholarships, and he wants to provide them to places where students persist better.

*On the legislation that was introduced about CC offering BA's. We know what we on FAC think about it. Where does IBHE stand on it? If this isn't something IBHE is in favor of, what would you like from us?*

Pranav: We need to better coordinate with ICCB on this. We see it as more of an ICCB position to take hold of, but we want our 4-year colleges to have a clear voice. So the IBHE hasn't taken a clear position on it.

*4-year degrees are beyond the mission of the community college. Community colleges lack the faculty and the space.*

Pranav said his theory is that this wasn't taken into consideration.

*Mike asked what, if anything, are we doing to appeal to students in states where their college experience is being impacted due to limits on faculty freedom in the classroom, removal of DEI support, or attacks on health care rights of women? This is a time for us to reach out to students in some of those states to come to Illinois for academic freedom. His wife's personal experience teaching in Texas is that—she's not always comfortable in the classroom with some of the stuff she teaches.*

Pranav: Enrollment and management teams on campuses [themselves] should be making those arguments. The Governor has mentioned these too—including reproductive freedom—as a counter-balance to what we're seeing in Texas and Florida, where there has been some pushback against big fights with imaginary boogey-men. That all said, not all of that goes into decision-making of 17-year-olds. Students choose a lot of institutions for a lot of reasons.

*Do you feel the IBHE has much of a role in marketing higher ed in Illinois? We talk about the outmigration of students. Can IBHE play a role in promoting the in-migration of students?*

Pranav: The question is whether we have grant-funding in the budget to develop an out-of-state marketing campaign. Some of this is modeled on what Intersect Illinois is doing with bringing businesses into the state.

## Reports Part II

## Chair Report

Shawn reported that he attended Stephanie Bernoteit's retirement party in Springfield, and also met with Chris Montrey from the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) about holding our May 17 meeting at IASB headquarters. Mike will organize meetings with our legislators on May 16. Invitations are being readied to go to next year's invitees to the FAC. He met last week with FAC's Ex Co and various others (IBHE staff and board members) to prepare for today's presentations. At last week's IBHE Board meeting, the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs' Chris Merrett presented on a panel about rural education.

## Vice Chair Report

Linda asked everyone to respond to the poll for catering and Thursday dinners. In April we meet at Waubensee CC. Let her know if you are interested in hosting next year: there are openings for January, March, and April.

## Secretary Report

Amy had no additional corrections to the minutes to report. She thanks Pratima for running our FAC website and posting our minutes and other documents there.

## Legislative Report

Mike sent out an updated bill list yesterday, and highlighted a couple of things to help us find any bills of interest to each of us. He added a link to go to the bills themselves (see his emails). One bill on mental health days has had significant amendments; it is worth a look. On HB 5020, which would amend the Dual Credit Quality Act, Roger Eddy said there are amendments to amendments in the works. Eddy's focus has always been on quality. Mike said one of his own concerns is that HB 5020 continues to give more weight to the high schools in what they want to do, which makes it harder for a CC to control the quality, if the HS can just district-shop for CC courses. Contact sponsors of the bills if you are concerned about the language; file witness slips; talk with your legislators.

Mike will work with those coming on May 16 to identify our personal legislators so we can try to meet with them. And let him know of any bills we become aware of that are not on the list.

## FAC Funding Commission Representative

Last week Dan Hrozencik sent out the [final report for the Illinois Commission on Equitable Public University Funding](#). He'll do his best to answer any questions. Everyone is in a state of uncertainty about how this is going to move forward.

Marie wanted to acknowledge Dan's representation on this. Dan said Brooke, Gay, Mike, Jennifer Delaney and Lichang were doing so as well.

## Business Meeting

### Old Business: Approval of Minutes

Jack moved, Sarah seconded approval of minutes. The minutes were approved, with one abstention.

### New Business

#### ISBE and Legislation for Teacher Ed Programs at Community Colleges

Mike's general thought is that before they start adding Bachelor's degrees to community colleges, there should be more encouragement and assistance to form partnerships with 4-years, including offering some of the courses on the campuses of our community colleges. That should be step one. Only if that doesn't work should we maybe go another route.

Linda said you could look at the nursing program collaborations as a model.

Lane asked, "Why don't we just say that this isn't a good idea?" CCs lack appropriate faculty; there are recruiting difficulties at CCs in general; there is inadequate space. Linda added that it supports our argument if we provide our reasons why. Sue said she met a prospective freshman who was graduating with his Professional Education Licensure and AA at same time as getting a HS license. (Marie noted that this licensure enables him to substitute teach.) Sue said his CC courses included junior and senior-level coursework as part of his Associate's degree. How could that be?

Andy moved: Resolved that the IBHE FAC opposes the awarding of baccalaureate degrees by 2-year institutions. Mary Ellen seconded. The motion passed with one abstention.

### Nominating Committee

Cyndi moved, John seconded the following members of a nominating committee for upcoming FAC elections: Brooke Johnson, Andy Howard, Laura Murdaugh. The motion passed with one abstention.

## Caucus Reports

### Public Universities

Dan H. reported that the caucus talked about the funding formula and [HB 5453](#) on direct admissions to public universities. The caucus thought we should follow it more. There were questions



about whether the current workforce at the universities could handle a huge increase of accepted students and the additional processing of applications. What sort of dollars might a school then have to spend pursuing those additional students?

Marie wondered where faculty were in this process. The criteria for admission are set by us historically. Lane disagreed; they had a discussion about this. Jill added that at a regional public she worked at, admissions requirements by college happened at the level of the deans, working with their executive committee.

Lane noted that only one institution (UIUC) would be disproportionately hit by HB 5453.

Dan noted that the related Senate Bill ([SB 3722](#)) is further along. Mike added it's been held in committee for a while. Nothing in the bill speaks to admission to specific academic programs within a university; they have separate criteria.

## Community Colleges

Cyndi reported that Roger Eddy joined them to talk about dual credit. In 2008 he introduced and wrote the legislation for the first Dual Credit Quality Act (not the very-much amended document). We have 48 CCs that don't all do dual credit the same. We got some great feedback on some of our concerns. We'll be working on something we could write up in response to a request from former IBHE staff member Stephanie Bernoteit: what is the role of the IBHE in relation to dual credit, because CC's answer to ICCB, even though IBHE has a role as well. Roger Eddy is a NIU graduate; he was a HS teacher, principal, superintendent, state legislator, and served on the Illinois Association of School Boards as Executive Director; he now works on dual credit as a special project for the CCs

## Privates

Angela reported that the caucus met with Dave Tretter, talking mostly about the proposal to offer baccalaureate degrees at 2-year institutions. So he spoke out of his experience communicating on this subject.

## Working Group Reports

### Student-Faculty Mental Health

Sue reported that that she and Nataka added a few more things to the PowerPoint on faculty mental health and hope to release it next month.

### Equity

The working group is still looking for resources at all levels for equity work among faculty. They would also like to encourage that when hosting an FAC meeting, consider inviting someone doing DEI work to speak to FAC as part of the roster of morning speakers.

## Early College Credit

Amy reported that they conversed with Roger Eddy. When asked about academic freedom concerns for dual credit courses taught by high school teachers or in high school settings, Roger said that it was entirely up to a local school board what curriculum they would provide, and a conservative school board had the right to limit what could be talked about in a HS setting. But a community college could also refuse to allow a course to be taught by a HS teacher or in a HS class if the course required content to which the local school board objected. Students whose parents object to course content can simply not take the course. [In the work group meeting, Cyndi had asked who will regulate these provisions for academic freedom in a DC course, when high schools don't let in faculty evaluators from the community college. Roger replied that K-12 teachers need trained, credentialed evaluators; this seemed to reflect a misunderstanding about quality control for a dual credit course.] Roger also said he thought the word "equity" means the course content and rigor are the same regardless of what institution or instructor is offering the course. [Roger also thought there is a way to *limit* the number of hours of dual credit coursework that is reasonable to all, for example, to one year of courses. Joao had added that students do sometimes lose financial aid when they take too many credits in high school that don't fit into their overall degree plan.] Amy added that they had not really had time for a planning meeting – just continued more of these conversations, zeroing in on questions that aren't being addressed in current practice or in the plans for expanding DC.

Marie asked: has anyone had a dual credit course cancelled? Amy replied that Black Hawk had. Cyndi added that she has heard from parents concerned about content that didn't seem age-appropriate. For example, for a Cinema Appreciation, the college communicates that some content isn't age-appropriate. Cyndi teaches an African American history course, and announces there will be some sensitive material; you'll have to do an alternative assignment to avoid it. Cyndi added that the college is asked now to communicate with students before they enroll that there might be sensitive content.

## Prior Learning Assessment

Marie reported that they worked on fine-tuning their proposal for a task force, with Jill's help. Marie will share the edited version asking us to endorse it at our next meeting.

## Technology and Higher Education

Laura reported updates on their faculty views of AI paper (The Good, Bad, and the Ugly—and the Innocuous). Between now and next month's meeting they will review and revise it. They also ask themselves: is this just the intent, to provide a faculty view of AI? What does the community want of this paper?

## Higher Ed Funding

Dan H. reported that they talked about the fact that the funding formula doesn't seem to be getting much discussion on our campuses. Mike said CCs are paying close attention because it may drop down to them next. Dan added that one of the recommendations of the commission is that it set up an

implementation team going forward—a team to monitor how the formula was working. Dan will let us know when that is formed. There is complete uncertainty about what the legislative process will be going forward with this.

Jack moved, Gay seconded motion for adjournment. We ended our meeting a 2:52 pm.

Minutes prepared by Amy Carr, FAC Secretary