

**GATEWAY TO SUCCESS:  
RETHINKING ACCESS AND DIVERSITY  
FOR A NEW CENTURY**

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON  
ACCESS AND DIVERSITY**

**STATE OF ILLINOIS  
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

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# **GATEWAY TO SUCCESS: RETHINKING ACCESS AND DIVERSITY FOR A NEW CENTURY**

## **Report of the Committee on Access and Diversity Illinois Board of Higher Education**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In April 1999, the Board of Higher Education created the Committee on Access and Diversity to study issues related to rising demands for higher education, the ability to meet those demands, and progress in expanding diversity on college campuses. The Committee held five public hearings where 90 individuals presented nearly 13 hours of testimony. The Committee also conducted three focus groups on the topics of affordability, students with disabilities, and minority students.

The Committee found that changes in the demographic make up and college going behavior of the state's population is creating a new world with profound implications for the kinds of policies and actions that Illinois higher education should undertake in the coming decade.

#### **Demographic/Enrollment Characteristics of A New Century**

**More people** are going to college:

- Two-thirds of high school graduates in Illinois go directly to college, up from 42 percent in 1986. About 80 percent of high school graduates will take college courses sometime in their lives.
- Over 90 percent of high school students now expect to continue education beyond high school.
- Growing numbers of working adults go to college to upgrade skills, obtain specialized training, and/or seek college credentials.
- Over the next 20 years, higher education enrollments in Illinois will rise from 77,500 (11 percent) to 115,000 (16 percent) over the 1998 level of 731,000.

**Minority populations and enrollments** are growing:

- Hispanics now represent 12.3 percent of the state's population, up from 7.9 percent a decade ago. Hispanic enrollments are expected to increase by 94 percent in the next 25 years.
- White enrollments are expected to drop as a percentage of total enrollment from 70 percent to less than 60 percent in the next 25 years.
- The rates of college participation of all groups have increased significantly over the past decade. There is little difference among race/ethnic groups in the college aspirations of middle school students.

**Special needs enrollment** is increasing:

- The number of students with disabilities has grown. Nationally, 9.4 percent of college freshmen report having a disability compared with 7 percent in 1988 and 3 percent in 1978.
- Sparked by demographic changes and a rise in immigration, enrollment in English as a Second Language and bilingual education has increased rapidly. In the past decade, the number of adults in Illinois that speak a native language other than English has grown by 250,000. Illinois ranks sixth in immigration among states.

## **Imperatives of a New Century for Illinois Higher Education**

**Access:**

- Higher education must go beyond traditional access mechanisms, such as financial aid and the community college system, to effectively meet students' needs.
- Higher education must help improve precollegiate preparation, now the greatest barrier to college access.
- With a higher portion of the population going to college, rates of degree completion and time to degree are likely to worsen in future years unless college readiness improves.
- Higher education must focus on the transition between secondary education and college, if it is to provide the "right kind of access". The last year of high school needs to be more productive and the first year of college needs to focus on a reduction in attrition rates.
- Higher education policies must address more directly the educational needs of special populations, such as persons with disabilities and persons with limited English proficiency.

**Diversity:**

- Higher education institutions must themselves have broad student diversity if they are to prepare students for a world and workforce that is increasingly diverse.
- Higher education institutions should use all legal means at their disposal to foster diversity, including using race/ethnic criteria in admissions and financial aid decisions as permitted under the U.S. Supreme Court's *Bakke* decision.
- Higher education institutions should expand outreach and financial aid efforts, and establish student admissions practices that better advance student diversity.
- In the long run, the vigor and imagination with which the state responds to access demands will determine much of Illinois' success in ensuring student diversity.

## **Major Recommendations**

**The Board of Higher Education will:**

- Seek legislation requiring all high school students to take a college-preparatory curriculum.
- Issue an annual report detailing the readiness of high school graduates for college and work.

- Stimulate and evaluate “Last Year/First Year” pilot programs to make the senior year of high school more productive in preparing students for college and the freshman year of college more successful in reducing attrition rates.
- Create a Web-based Consumer Information System that promotes access as well as consumer protection and that offers information services for students with special needs such as disabled, adult, limited-English proficiency, and minority students. Also, make community colleges the focal point for information about educational opportunities at all levels.
- Use the Illinois Century Network and community colleges to close the digital divide. Identify the kinds of technology-based programming that facilitate student learning among disadvantaged students.
- Begin a process of more actively addressing the needs of two often overlooked groups, students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency. Convene conferences in the coming year that focus on the potential benefits and risks that educational technology presents to these populations. Also, establish a committee to examine the feasibility and cost of establishing new processes that would facilitate the ability of students with disabilities to have timely access to published materials and textbooks.
- Expand financial aid for needy, less than half time, and freshman students.
- Support the continued use of race/ethnic criteria in admissions and financial aid decisions, as permitted under the U.S. Supreme Court decision. Work with higher education institutions in advancing diversity and defending legal challenges to the use of race/ethnic criteria.
- Encourage public universities to consider multiple factors in admissions such as class rank, test scores, rigor of high school coursework, race and ethnicity, participation in special academic programs, and effects of a student’s learning environment. Work with Illinois colleges and universities to develop admissions mechanisms and processes that would incorporate such broad definitions of merit.
- Create Diversity Grants to strengthen programs that foster greater diversity on campuses and create new programs to extend access to ethnic and racial minorities, students with disabilities, and women in fields where they are underrepresented.
- Create a grant program to build partnerships with private sponsors to encourage and assist disadvantaged elementary and high school students to prepare for college.



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**August 2001**

**STATE OF ILLINOIS  
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**COMMITTEE ON ACCESS AND DIVERSITY**

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## PREFACE

In February 1999, after a year-long dialogue among higher education institutions and outside constituencies, the Board of Higher Education approved an ambitious new statewide agenda entitled *The Illinois Commitment*. To begin implementation, in Spring 1999 the Board convened a committee to examine Goal #4 of *The Illinois Commitment* which reads: “Illinois will increase the number and diversity of citizens completing training and education programs.”

The Committee on Access and Diversity conducted hearings, organized focus groups, and consulted with state and national experts. In January 2000, the Committee held five hearings throughout the state during which 90 individuals presented nearly 13 hours of oral testimony. Copies of written testimony are available from Board offices.

Following the hearings, the Committee formed three focus groups to consider the circumstances of financially needy students, students with disabilities, and minority students. The April 2000 Board item, *Committee on Access and Diversity: Update on Hearings and Focus Group Meetings*, describes these sessions.

The Committee thanks the hundreds of individuals who took the time and effort to advise us on our study. Regrettably, we cannot mention each person by name. We acknowledge, in particular, Martin Michaelson of Hogan and Hartson in Washington, D.C. and Arthur Coleman of Nixon Peabody LLP in Washington D.C. for their advice on the topic of diversity; Tom Flint and Ruth Frey of the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) for their counsel on the educational needs of adult and non-traditional students; and Paul Lingenfelter, Executive Director of the State Higher Education Executive Officers, for his many helpful comments and suggestions.

This study addresses student educational needs. At its April 2001 meeting, the Board of Higher Education decided to undertake another study in the coming year about diversity among faculty at Illinois institutions of higher education.



## INTRODUCTION

The state of Illinois has always placed a high priority upon access and diversity in higher education. Whether it has been the young farmer or businessman searching for a more practical education in the post Civil War period, returning veterans after World War II, or baby boomers in the 1960s and 1970s, the state has responded by establishing new institutions, programs, and other mechanisms to provide the education that was sought. Today, that challenge continues.

The current demand for access differs in both scale and character from previous eras. More people of all ages and from all groups aspire to go to college. Moreover, in the past decade, a dramatic growth has occurred in college participation, especially among high school graduates. For example, from 1986 to 1997 the number of Illinois high school graduates proceeding directly to college rose from 42 to 63 percent.

Perhaps surprisingly, this “quiet revolution” in college-going behavior and expectations has attracted little attention as it has been masked by demographic factors. For at the same time that a greater portion of the population decided to attend college, the number of young adults declined. As a result, enrollment in Illinois has remained stable during the past two decades notwithstanding increased college participation. Now, however, the children of the baby boomers are graduating from high school in increasing numbers and enrollments should rise substantially over the next ten to twenty years.

Illinois higher education must expand access opportunities to meet the demands of the “quiet revolution”. The state of Illinois has made an immeasurable investment in higher education, and its quality must be protected and assured. However, a college education should not be a rationed good. Our colleges and universities should open their doors to all who seek, and can benefit from, the experience.

The current demand for access is unique in its diversity. Today, students of all ages and race/ethnic groups are enrolling in college at higher rates. Meeting their needs will require more broad-based strategies that go beyond traditional approaches. The starting point for this effort must be pre-collegiate preparation, perhaps the greatest barrier to college access.

More students at academic risk are likely to enter our colleges and universities in the coming years. This will occur not only because of the larger pool of high school graduates going to college but also because of the increased enrollment of working adults, whose busy lives do not easily accommodate course schedules. The report suggests that students must receive “the right kind of access” if they are to achieve their educational goals. It proposes a number of recommendations that would help these students—particularly those with historically higher rates of attrition—make better informed choices about higher education and would better support them in their critical first year of education.

There is no topic the Committee feels more strongly about than ensuring diversity in higher education. It is through the interchange of people with different backgrounds, talents,

ideas, and perspectives that meaningful learning and personal development occurs. This is the reason that higher education institutions have long sought to admit diverse students.

Today, diversity in higher education means many things, but certainly it means preparing students to work and live with persons from different racial and ethnic groups. Research shows that students educated in diverse learning environments realize many educational benefits and become more effective employees and active citizens. The importance of race/ethnic diversity is recognized under existing law and the U.S. Supreme Court decision in the *Bakke* case. The principles of this case need to be supported and closely adhered to by Illinois higher education even as we seek additional avenues to promote diversity.

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*“There is no other topic about which the Committee feels more strongly than ensuring diversity in higher education.”*

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This report puts forward a variety of new approaches to expand diversity such as establishing “diversity grants” and creating partnerships with private organizations that are helping disadvantaged students go to college. Another key proposal is to broaden admissions requirements to recognize a wider variety of student strengths, an approach that will require close scrutiny of more applications. Finally, it must be recognized that access and diversity are inextricably linked in today’s world. In the long run, the vigor and imagination with which the state responds to access demands will determine much of Illinois’ success in achieving diversity at our colleges and universities.

## CHAPTER I

# THE “QUIET REVOLUTION”: COLLEGE PARTICIPATION IN ILLINOIS

*A “quiet revolution” is now occurring across the state of Illinois and our nation with more people of all ages and racial/ethnic groups going to college. As in other revolutions, the changes are widespread and the implications profound, reshaping individual lives and the fabric of our society. This change in college aspirations and participation has fundamental implications for the access and development needs of Illinois citizens.*

### Changes in Expectation and Behavior

Since the end of World War II and the creation of the G.I. Bill, the proportion of individuals going to college has risen. College participation has climbed at an especially fast rate in the past 15 years. It is not an exaggeration to say that a college degree now represents what a high school diploma meant for previous generations.

Evidence accumulates on the growing importance of higher education and its relationship to economic growth. Beyond our shores in Europe and Asia, nations are

#### **What a Difference a Decade Makes**

- In 1986, 42 percent of Illinois high school graduates went directly to college.
- In 1997, 63 percent of Illinois high school graduates went directly to college.

dedicating a greater share of their budgets to higher education. Norway, Britain, and the Netherlands now lead the United States in the percent of their population graduating from college. Within the United States, the roles and the

features of higher education have become more complex as new types of institutions are created to exploit the potential of educational technology and an expanding adult market.

In this environment, it is not surprising that more people seek a college education. There are many reasons for this trend (see text box on next page). One factor is that in today’s economy higher level skills add productivity and wealth for both the individual and the wider society. For instance, a recent Board of Higher Education and University of Illinois study showed that an Illinois graduate earns, on average, \$207,600 more over a lifetime from an associate degree. A bachelor’s degree brings \$590,600 and a professional degree \$1,839,100 more than the high school diploma. The study also delineated the non-economic benefits derived from college experience; for example, college graduates are healthier, commit less crime, and participate more fully in community life.

Another reason for college’s growing popularity lies in the changing nature of higher education itself. College today offers a wide range of technical and professional courses and programs, in addition to traditional academic offerings. The growth of community colleges,

in particular, has transformed higher education's ability to meet workforce and career needs and increased the relevance of higher education for working adults.

A body of recent research provides essential details about the "quiet revolution". Studies show that few students expect to end their education with high school graduation. For instance, the National Center of Educational Statistics (NCES) has found that "97 percent of high school graduates expect to continue their education beyond high school and 71 percent expect to earn a B.A./B.S. degree."

Students are acting upon these higher expectations. From 1986 to 1997, the number of high school graduates from the state of Illinois proceeding directly to college increased from 42 to 63 percent. This measure of college participation does not capture students who delay their post-secondary education. The NCES in *Access to Post-secondary Education for the 1992 High School Graduates* has reported that by the age of 20 three quarters of high school graduates enroll at a college or university. Another study by

Anthony Carnevale of the Educational Testing Service suggests that about 80 percent of the nation's population will eventually undertake post-secondary instruction at some time in their lives.

Persons of all ages and groups are part of the "quiet revolution". Working adults are returning in greater numbers to complete a bachelor's degree, begin graduate education, or take a course or two to improve career prospects. Minority participation in higher education also has grown. For example, across the nation the percentage of Blacks 18 to 24 years of age enrolled in college rose from 28 percent in 1982 to 35 percent in 1995, according to the United States Census. Hispanic participation nationally increased from 29 percent to 35 percent. Despite this growth, a gap continues to exist in minority and white college-going rates as White participation rose from 33 percent to 44 percent during this period.

### Why Are More People Going to College?

There are many reasons why more students are going to college. One explanation: an expanding array of academic, technical, and vocational programs offered on and off-campus and the availability of financial aid have made higher education more relevant and easier to attend. Another reason is demographic: parents today are better educated, richer, and have fewer children than their predecessors, all factors that influence college participation.

College graduates earn more. The college wage premium has risen steadily for more than two decades. Today, college graduates earn about 50 percent more over their lifetimes than high school graduates. In contrast, in the 1970s the college premium was worth about 20 percent. There are fewer good jobs for high school graduates, jobs that offer benefits, some security, and career prospects.

The fact that more students are going to college while the rate of return of a college education is rising rapidly may seem a paradox conflicting the laws of supply and demand. The explanation lies in the changing nature of the post-industrial economy. The decline in the number of factory jobs, the greater use of technology in all occupations, and the rise of the office economy, in particular, have fueled demand for the greater skills and knowledge offered by workers with college degrees.

Perhaps the youngest students most exemplify the changing attitudes toward college going. A recent *New York Times* survey and interviews of sixth graders from throughout the United States concluded that “higher education has become a preoccupation for children even before they reach puberty....[O]ne new chain of thought that runs nearly unbroken through

### **What Adults Are Saying to Students About College**

During the past two decades, there has been a significant change in what parents and teachers are saying to young people about going to college. A 1990 NCES study, for instance, showed that two thirds of all high school sophomores were advised by their teachers and guidance counselors to go to college. In contrast, a decade before in 1980 only one third of high school sophomores had been counseled to take this path. Perhaps most surprisingly, 60 percent of sophomores testing in the lowest quartile in 1990 were advised to attend.

In Illinois, a survey this past year by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) of parents of sixth graders showed that respondents had high hopes for their children. The survey indicated that 95 percent of parents expect their sixth grader to continue their education beyond high school, and 78 percent expect their child to obtain a bachelor's degree or higher. ISAC reported that socioeconomic factors “seemed to have little impact on these expectations.”

today's sixth-grade classrooms is the belief that a college degree....comes with a pass key to the good life.” The article found all types of sixth graders held such beliefs irrespective of class and race/ethnicity.

A recent scholarly work by University of Chicago professors Barbara Schneider and David Stevenson, *The Ambitious Generation: American's Teenagers, Motivated but Directionless*, documents that there has been a “dramatic” increase in the number of middle school and high school students who plan to attend college, a trend among adolescent boys and girls, as well as all racial and ethnic groups. Unfortunately, as discussed below, Schneider and Stevenson also found that many adolescents have not strengthened their educational programs as they have elevated their career goals.

In Illinois and the United States, more teachers and parents are advising young people to go to college (see text box above). Such advice is broad-based and

not directed at an elite class. Stated differently, college is no longer seen as a place preparing a small group of leaders, but as offering skills and knowledge that all persons need to compete in the marketplace. Without such skills, many parents feel their children will be left behind in a technologically driven economy.

Recent surveys indicate a wide spread belief that most young people require education beyond high school. For instance, the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education conducted surveys this past year which found that “eighty-seven percent of Americans [and 87 percent of Illinoisans] believe that a college education has become as important as a high school diploma used to be....Higher education is increasingly seen as essential for economic mobility, and the focus is not just on the credential but on the personal growth, skills and perspective that students take away from a college education. At the same time, people see a highly educated population necessary for both economic prosperity and social well-being.”

Despite much progress, significant disparities exist within our population in rates of college participation. As noted above, minority participation rates still trail significantly those of whites. Also, rates of participation continue to vary by level of parental income, although more lower-income students are going to college. For example, nationally, about one half of students from low-income families go directly to college from high school. In contrast, about 80 percent of students from high-income families make this transition.

### **Enrollment Implications**

The paradox of the “quiet revolution” is that enrollments have increased little during this time of rising college participation. During the past two decades, for example, total enrollment at Illinois institutions of higher education grew by only three percent. Growth failed to occur because of a decline in higher education’s core market, young adults from ages 18 to 24. From 1986 to 1992, for instance, Illinois high school graduates dropped by 15 percent. Now, as the children of the baby boomers, or Generation Y, go to college, enrollment should rise.

A broader distribution of the population going to college has changed the demographic composition of student enrollment. There are now more minority students, women, and older students, as well as high school graduates with more varied socio-economic backgrounds and academic abilities. One defining statistic: *nationally, less than 20 percent of all college students now fit the strict definition of a so-called “traditional college student,” that is, a residential student, 18 to 24 years of age, who attends full-time.* The new majority student often has educational objectives that differ from those of students from previous eras. Many, for instance, are more interested in acquiring knowledge and skills than in completing a degree program.

Will students continue to go to college in the record rates of the past decade? Indeed, could rates of participation climb even higher? A reversal of the current trend is unlikely as economic and demographic factors will continue to exert a strong upward influence on college attendance patterns. Some countervailing forces, however, may limit future enrollment growth. For instance, the greater numbers of students in the Generation Y cohort could reduce the college wage premium, as could improvements in secondary education and the value of a high school diploma. Also, significant tuition increases or cutbacks in financial aid could influence overall enrollment levels. As discussed below, minority students will represent a greater proportion of the state’s population in the future. If minority rates of college participation remain low, future enrollment increases will be less than projected.

Table 1 presents a projection of increases in enrollment at Illinois colleges and universities from 1998 to 2020. The projections reflect different assumptions about college-going rates. To produce these estimates, different rates of participation during the 1990s were used for nine age cohorts (that is, the low, medium, and high rate of each cohort) and these rates were applied against United States Census population projections to produce enrollment estimates for the next 20 years. As shown, the projected enrollment growth ranges from 49,919 to 86,085 by 2010 and from 77,589 to 115,324 by 2020. These projections amount to

a total enrollment increase for Illinois higher education ranging from 7 to 12 percent by 2010 and from 11 to 16 percent by 2020 over the 1998 enrollment of 731,000.

**Table 1**

**Illinois Higher Education: Projected Enrollment Growth  
At Varying Participation Rates, 1998 to 2020**

<u>Change</u>	Low		Middle		High	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1998 to 2010	49,919	7%	58,472	8%	86,085	12%
<u>2010 to 2020</u>	<u>27,670</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>28,273</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>29,239</u>	<u>4%</u>
1998 to 2020	77,589	11%	86,745	12%	115,324	16%

According to one recent study by Anthony Carnevale of the Educational Testing Service, *Crossing the Great Divide: Can We Achieve Equity When Generation Y Goes to College?* Illinois is one of nine states in the nation that can expect modest enrollment growth in the next 15 years. Illinois will not experience the flood of new students expected in some states such as California and Texas. However, the upward swing in enrollment will place pressure on higher education resources.

### Summary

A “quiet revolution” has occurred in the expectations and behavior of Illinoisans toward college going. As expectations and enrollments grow, a central challenge for Illinois higher education forms: to reshape the capacity and capabilities of our institutions and programs to meet a greater variety of needs. To achieve quality, the state of Illinois must respond to the “quiet revolution” in a way that places a premium on institutional efficiency and flexibility, as well as gains in student learning.



## CHAPTER II

### OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO ACCESS

*To provide higher education to a larger share of our population, we must understand how to overcome barriers to access. In the last thirty years, Illinois has constructed preeminent community college and financial aid systems that have broadened the base of college participation. Yet, not all barriers of cost and distance have been surmounted. Equally important, other barriers, perhaps less recognized but no less real, prevent many persons from achieving their educational and career goals. The most formidable of these barriers is pre-collegiate preparation.*

#### Academic Preparation Before College

There is no greater barrier to access to college and college success than poor academic preparation. In the words of David Ellwood and Thomas Kane, “the single most powerful determinant of college going remains high school achievement.” Given this reality, an increasing number of opinion leaders have argued for a more aggressive approach to improving pre-collegiate student preparation. For instance, the College Board’s study, *Financial Aid Is Not Enough*, stated the following:

*“[T]he most important step is taking the right courses. Financial aid is not enough. Research has repeatedly shown that students who take rigorous, progressively more challenging coursework are far more likely to plan for and enroll in college. In his analysis of the Department of Education’s longitudinal data on high school senior cohorts, Clifford Adelman says the answer to who finishes bachelor’s degrees and why is always the same: those ‘who were best prepared, regardless of race, regardless of financial aid’.”*

The lack of proper preparation in the elementary and high school years was a theme that repeatedly arose in the Committee’s hearings and focus group sessions. Parents and educators stressed that minority students, in particular, too often received poor academic preparation and entered college at risk. Minority parents were especially concerned about the quality of high school counseling. Many students, it was said, were not encouraged to go to college and were not given good advice about the educational opportunities at Illinois colleges and universities.

#### Minority Preparation and College Success

A recent study by Clifford Adelman, *Answers in the Tool Box*, examines the factors most responsible for college degree completion for all types of students. Among Adelman’s conclusions: *“the impact of a high school curriculum of high academic intensity and quality on degree completion is far more pronounced — and positively—for African-American and Latino students than any other pre-college indicator of academic resources. The impact for African-American and Latino students is also much greater than it is for white students”.*

Many entering students are not ready for college. Only about half the high school students in Illinois that take the ACT, a college bound population, complete the college preparatory “core”, that is, four years of English and three years each of mathematics, science, and social science. Also troubling is evidence of increasing student “disengagement” in high school. A thirty year study of the characteristics, beliefs, and attitudes of college freshmen by the Higher Education Research Institute notes upward trends in grades, academic expectations, postgraduate aspirations, college applications, and college preparatory course taking, but downward trends in time spent on homework, absenteeism, and interest in high school courses.

Why students’ rising interest in college has not generated a corresponding increase in their pre-collegiate preparation is a central concern in Schneider and Stevenson’s book, *The Ambitious Generation*. Based on extensive interviews and a longitudinal data base from the 1950s that includes 7,000 adolescents, the authors have concluded:

*“[most] high school students ...have high ambitions but no clear life plans for reaching them. We describe these adolescents as having misaligned ambitions. These ‘drifting dreamers’ have limited knowledge about their chosen occupations, about educational requirements, or about future demand for these occupations. Without such information, their life plans are not realistic and are often ill formed. Drifting dreamers are found among boys and girls and all racial and ethnic groups.”*

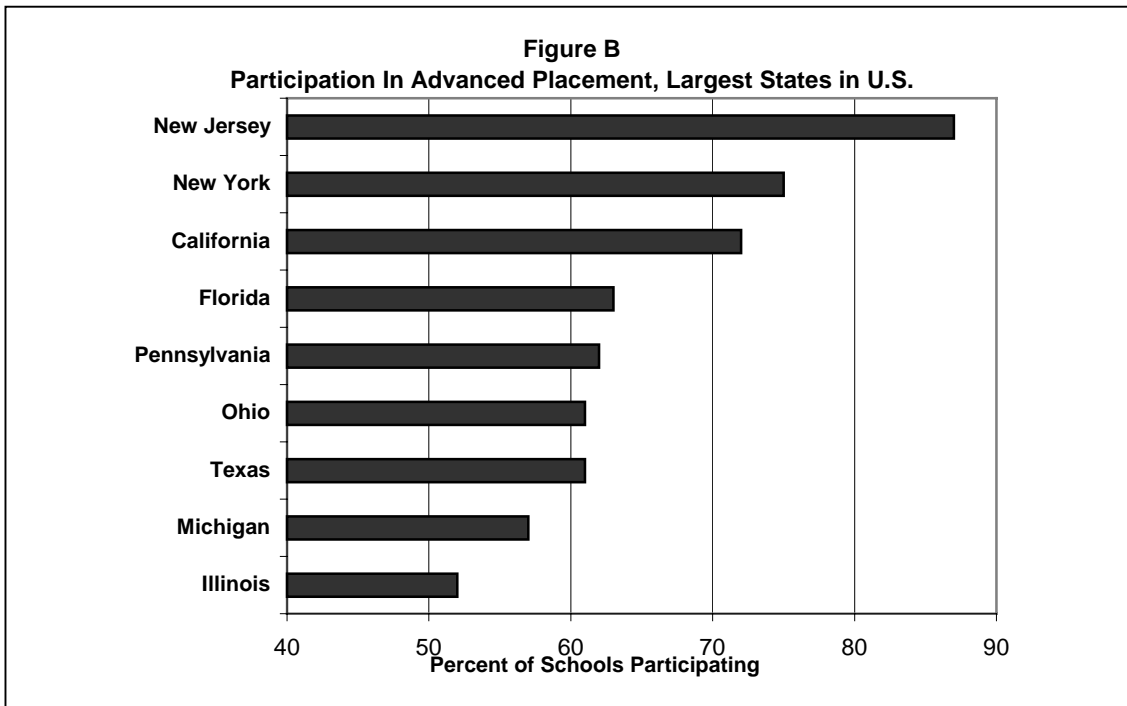
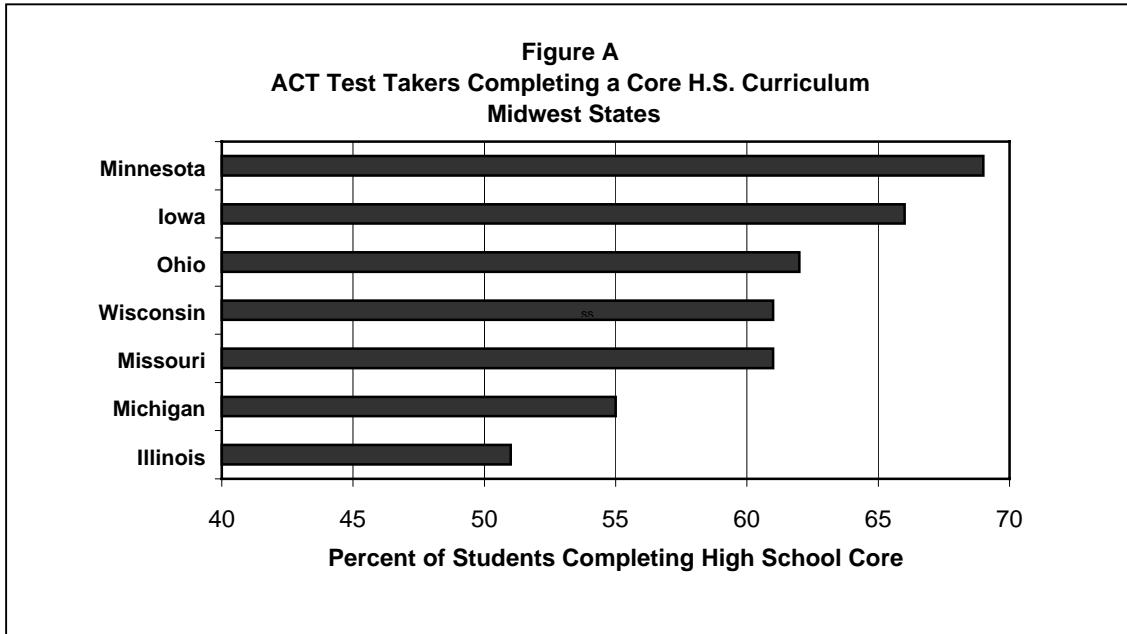
The result of this lack of planning and preparation during elementary and high school years is predictable: students require remedial education and are more likely to drop out or stop out during college. Remediation entails considerable personal and taxpayer cost. For instance, the Illinois Community College Board has estimated that the state’s community colleges expended \$75 million in 1999 on remediation. The number of students requiring remediation is also increasing. For instance, between 1991 and 1996 the number of community college students taking one remediation class increased from 11.5 to 14.1 percent.

How does the state of Illinois compare with other states in terms of student pre-collegiate preparation? Some students, it is clear, are among the best prepared in the nation. The performance of this group contributed to Illinois receiving an A grade in pre-collegiate preparation from the National Center of Public Policy in Higher Education in its report, *Measuring Up: 2000*. A close look at the report indicates, however, that the Center lacked important information about pre-collegiate preparation in Illinois. Moreover, other comparative indicators, such as the percent of ACT test takers

#### **Illinois’ P-16 Initiative**

In recent years, the State Board of Education, the Illinois Community College Board, and the Board of Higher Education have undertaken initiatives to strengthen and coordinate Illinois’ P-16 educational system. As described in their 1999 publication, *P-16 Partnership for Educational Excellence*, this initiative has placed priority upon three types of activities: pre-collegiate student preparation, teacher education, and technology-based instruction. These agencies have also established the Illinois Virtual High School to expand educational opportunities, especially Advanced Placement coursework, for high school students.

taking the college core and participation in the Advanced Placement (AP) program, provide reason for concern about the level of pre-collegiate preparation among some Illinois high school students.



The figures above offer additional information on pre-collegiate preparation. Figure A shows that fewer Illinois students take the core than in other Midwest states. The fact that Illinois has the lowest number of required core courses for high school graduation among

these states partially explains the poor performance. Figure B shows that a lower percentage of high schools participate in the AP program than in other major states. Positively, the number of Illinois students taking the AP exam has grown rapidly in recent years, and Illinois has the highest AP score in the nation among public high school seniors.

There are few issues more important to our society than improving the academic preparation of the state's elementary and high school students. As more students go to college, this issue takes on greater urgency. Unless high school graduates are "college ready", it is hard to be sanguine about their future prospects. In response to this situation, higher education admissions could become more restrictive. At this time, however, the Committee prefers to support proactive efforts to enhance student preparation.

*The Committee strongly believes that all high school students should complete a pre-collegiate curriculum.* Given the nature of work in today's society and the increasing importance of advanced skills and knowledge, all students must have a strong academic preparation in high school. Effective pre-collegiate preparation starts from the realization that young people today require extensive knowledge, as well as critical thinking, communication, and technical skills. Students must understand what is required of them and prepare accordingly. Otherwise, we place them at risk and sharply limit their life-long prospects and opportunities.

Students should also demonstrate mastery over pre-collegiate material before they graduate from high school. High school is now defined, first and foremost, by the fact that it takes four years. This must change. Students not ready for college or work after four years of high school should have an extra year to prepare. Conversely, qualified students who complete three years of high school, and wish to go to college, should have the opportunity to do so. The school should conform to the students, not the other way around.

Through the Illinois Learning Standards and the Prairie State Exam, the state of Illinois has created the building blocks needed for a strong, flexible P-16 educational system. The Prairie State Exam will provide a comprehensive assessment of the academic skills of all high school students during the junior year. The assessment will include the ACT which all juniors will take. Through this new exam and other assessment and communication mechanisms, yet to be developed, students, teachers, parents, and educators will have a better idea about how well reading, writing, and mathematical knowledge and skills have prepared students for success. With such knowledge, instruction can be shaped and re-invigorated to respond to student needs.

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*The abrupt transition between elementary/secondary education and higher education is an artifact from a time when few students sought a college degree.*

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To complement the State Board of Education's innovations other systemic changes are needed. First, high school curriculum and graduation requirements should be fully aligned with public university learning expectations and admissions standards so that all students are prepared to succeed in college or work. Second, efforts should be made to strengthen the education and preparation of elementary/secondary teachers as well as the quality of in-

service instruction. Third, students must have access to courses and curricula that enable them to effectively build their knowledge and skills. To provide such access, high schools must offer more academic core courses and introduce greater academic rigor into all courses, working with higher education in this effort. Such improvements should not only seek to increase the enrollment of students doing college level work, although such growth is needed, but should also provide “college-like courses” by which students can improve their critical thinking and remedy deficiencies identified in the Prairie State Exam. The Advanced Placement Program demonstrates that students and teachers respond to a challenging curriculum that is graded against other students outside the high school. Educators should learn from this experience and develop high school curricula that have similar formats. Students who complete such “college like” courses would, in effect, be told that they were ready to undertake college work in that field.

Through systemic effort, pre-collegiate academic preparation and achievement can be improved. However, how will state leaders and taxpayers know that progress is being made? To provide such information, we propose the establishment of an annual “Report on Readiness for College or Work”. The Joint Education Committee would develop this report which would provide information about the course-taking patterns and learning of high school students and graduates. The report would also contain information about the academic achievement of students in their first year of college, as reflected in levels of remediation, rates of attrition, and appropriate learning assessments.

The proposals outlined above focus, in particular, on preparing students to make the transition from high school to college. While such efforts should produce significant improvement, they will likely be insufficient to affect a hard core student population whose academic skills are very low. Changes in the educational performance of low achievers depend upon a redirection of their goals and motivation. The kind of personal transformation required is, in many respects, beyond the capability of institutions to achieve and can best be influenced by family members, community leaders, and friends. Nevertheless, our schools and colleges should search for opportunities to affect change in the lives of disadvantaged students. In recent years, many colleges and universities have created mentoring programs for students living in disadvantaged communities. We believe such programs have great promise and efforts should be made to expand and improve them. Another idea, proposed below, is to develop partnerships between higher education institutions and non-profit organizations, such as the I Have a Dream Foundation, that have proved particularly effective in preparing disadvantaged students for college.

### **New Technologies and Barriers of Time and Distance**

New technologies offer tremendous promise for enhancing access to higher education and reaching persons who previously could not attend classes on campus. Compared with older technology, like broadcast television, new technologies feature the kind of teacher/student interaction that occurs in traditional classrooms. They also permit programs to be “customized” to meet specific educational objectives.

While the promise of these technologies is real and their growth inevitable, substantial questions remain about their use and role within higher education. A considerable body of research shows “no substantive difference” in student learning when comparing classes delivered via instructional technology with those taught by traditional methods. However, such technologies bring new issues and problems—the higher drop-out rates in Internet courses, for example—that call for development of “model practices” to enhance student learning. It is time to get beyond rhetorical issues and take a closer look at the benefits and risks of these technologies.

Education is an industry characterized by tradition and continuity. It is particularly noteworthy, then, to see new types of educational institutions being formed to maximize the potential of new technologies. Providers now include the publisher Harcourt and Brace which offers degree programs over the Internet; Jones University, a virtual university accredited by North Central Association; and the Illinois-based Cardean University, which offers professional education in a practice-based learning format on the Internet. Partnerships are also being established, such as the Michigan Virtual Automotive College, which bring together educational institutions, Internet providers, and business corporations in a powerful merger of content, delivery, and non-traditional learner constituencies.

How should Illinois higher education proceed to develop instructional technologies in an increasingly dynamic and fluid environment? *One sensible solution is to strengthen components vital to the development and delivery of high quality off-campus programs.* Three such critical components are:

- *Curricula.* Recent needs analyses in Lake County and the Quad Cities show a strong demand for baccalaureate degree completion and master’s degree programs. New baccalaureate completion programs offered by private institutions in association with community colleges are further evidence of this growing demand. In recent years, institutions have developed many Internet courses, but the number of degree programs lags. The Committee believes that technology-based programs should be developed in a wider array of fields and should serve the needs of students seeking certificates and higher education degrees.

### **Illinois Higher Education and the Internet**

The Internet has stimulated the enrollment of adults and place-bound students. Through use of this medium, education coursework can enter the home and workplace and be available at the time of a student’s choosing. In Illinois, the recently created Illinois Century Network will supply the electronic backbone and bandwidth necessary for the delivery of most education programs delivered via the Internet. Through the Illinois Virtual Campus (IVC), Illinois Community Colleges On-Line, and the Illinois Virtual High School students can access Web-based courses and programs offered by Illinois institutions. Students can find library material on line via the Illinois Digital Academic Library. In the past year, the On-Line Learning Council was created to share information and coordinate the activities of various Internet-based educational initiatives. In addition, the state of Illinois has established an interactive video network with over 400 interconnected class rooms that provides off-campus instruction for Illinois citizens.

- *Academic and Student Support Services.* A quality education provides access to instructional materials such as library books, periodicals, and digital data bases, as well as support services. Unfortunately, students studying at home or at work often find it difficult to obtain these resources.
- *Faculty Development.* In recent years, faculty interest in educational technology has grown. Nevertheless, faculty ability to develop curricula for electronic programs and to teach such courses lags behind student interest and institutional expectations. Not all faculty need be facile with instructional technology. However, quality issues will arise unless more faculty have opportunities to develop requisite skills.

### **The Role of New Technologies: Time for a Closer Look**

*"[T]he analysis of new technologies of education needs to take a finer-grained view of which technologies have educational potential for which students, for which subject matters, and which purposes....Many important questions follow from this finer-grained analysis. What sorts of motivations work for different sorts of students (younger or older, full time or part time)? Online coursework may call for a greater degree of focus and self-direction than courses where the attention and approval of an immediately present teacher are available. Are there certain subject matters or aims that cannot be taught in a non-face-to-face context....It is easy to imagine alternative futures in which new technologies are incorporated in such a way as to exacerbate the lecture-oriented, fact-driven, impersonal modes of pedagogy that exist on many campuses already; or incorporated in such a way as to alleviate those constraints and create new, more innovative, educational possibilities."*

Nicholas C. Burbules and Thomas A. Callister, *The Promise and the Challenge of New Technologies.*

## Expanding Institutional Commitments to Serve

In the dynamic and emerging new world of higher education, colleges and universities must have a clear understanding of the purposes and goals to be achieved through the use of new technology. There are multiple mechanisms that can and should be used to meet off-campus needs. In many cases, instructional technologies are not the only tool or even the best tool to use. Also, in many instances, a specific regional response is most appropriate. This report explores the possibility of expanding the responsibilities of public colleges and universities to take advantage of recent statewide investments in electronic infrastructure and programming (see text box, above). This broader role for public institutions, when combined with the increased activity of private institutions, should help meet the rising demand of Illinois citizens for off-campus educational opportunities.

Public universities historically have had a low commitment to off-campus programming. Most university off-campus programs are concentrated in a few disciplines such as business, health, and education. Moreover, some universities require off-campus programs to be self supporting and allocate them little or no state subsidy. Public universities

should expand off-campus programs offered through new technologies. They should work closely with community colleges in this process, using their facilities and resources to host such programs whenever appropriate.

In recent years, community colleges have been placed in a difficult situation. As local institutions they have a special responsibility to meet emerging needs. Yet, responding to some needs, such as baccalaureate degree completion and master's level programming, is beyond their scope. The Committee believes that the educational responsibilities of Illinois community colleges should be expanded. While under no conditions should community colleges offer baccalaureate degrees, these institutions should become the local point of contact for offering information and advice about all types of education, whatever the educational level. For community colleges to take on this responsibility will require additional training and development of college academic counselors.

Finally, the Board of Higher Education should formulate statewide policies and coordinate efforts to strengthen the new community college and public university responsibilities outlined above. The Board should collect information that supports the development of technology-based instruction at the post-baccalaureate and master's level such as by identifying degree programs in high demand. The Board should also facilitate community college efforts to provide residents more information about higher education opportunities and should work with the community colleges and the Illinois Century Network, as discussed below, to expand access to computers and technology-based programs.

### Equity Considerations

As new technologies spread, persons without a computer are at a disadvantage. Differences in computer ownership and Internet access, the so-called Digital Divide, are most affected by income, racial/ethnic, and geographic factors. A high-income urban family, for example, is 20 times more likely than a low-income rural family to have access to the Internet. A child in a low-income white family is three times more likely to have Internet access than a child in a comparable Black family and four times more likely as a Hispanic child.

New instructional technologies are in a critical stage of development. Efforts to expand the reach of this technology must be as inclusive as possible, or Illinois higher education runs the risk of establishing a new set of barriers for those who are already underrepresented. In recent years, the U.S. Army and private corporations have taken bold steps to extend computer access by providing this technology to their personnel. The state of Illinois should take similar broad-based initiatives for its citizens. The community colleges should play a central role in this process taking advantage of their statewide presence and local community knowledge. The Illinois Century Network should also develop technology-based programs that serve disadvantaged populations.

Making sure that the Internet and electronic programming serve all segments of the state's population presents its own set of challenges. Some disadvantaged students, it is clear, are better served by personal instruction. Nevertheless, it seems premature to make the argument, as some have done, that remedial students or disadvantaged students can not

benefit from powerful new technologies. A more prudent approach is to carefully evaluate the impact of technology-based instruction. Some applications have already proven successful in meeting the needs of disadvantaged students. Colleges and universities should learn from such initiatives and develop electronic instruction that works with disadvantaged students. The Board of Higher Education should monitor such innovation and share information about learning outcomes with members of the higher education community.

### **Cost Barriers**

Illinois has a strong commitment to student financial aid, as exemplified by the Monetary Award Program, which will fund \$376 million in need-based grants in fiscal year 2002. Across the United States, Illinois' dedication to financial aid is recognized. Indeed, it is the principal reason that the state received an *A* in student affordability from the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education in *Measuring Up: 2000*. Nevertheless, many students in Illinois continue to face real problems in affording a college education.

The cost that students pay for their education powerfully affects access. Cost must be understood in its broadest sense, encompassing not only tuition, fees, room, and board charges but also financial aid. Is college more or less affordable than it used to be? Is the cost barrier higher or lower for prospective students? As shown below, the evidence is mixed.

On the one hand, tuition and fee charges at all types of institutions have risen faster than the consumer price index or disposable income (see text box). On the other hand, financial aid has grown to offset cost increases. In recent years, the federal government enacted the Hope Scholarship and Lifetime Learning Tax Credits to provide significant tax relief to middle-income families. During the past decade, the state increased the number of MAP awards by 24 percent and the average award by 45 percent. Also, in 1997 the state established the Illinois Incentive for Access (IIA) program to provide \$500 grants to freshmen who have no family resources to help them pay for college. Other initiatives include expansion of MAP to fund students at proprietary institutions, and pilot projects to extend MAP to summer school students and students enrolled less than half time.

<p><b>College Affordability: 1990 to 2000</b></p> <p>During the past decade, tuition and fees rose by 76 percent at public universities, 70 percent at community colleges and 89 percent at independent institutions. To offset these cost increases, funding for need-based MAP grants grew by 93 percent. During this same period, the consumer price index increased by 32 percent and Illinois per capita disposable income by 50 percent.</p>
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A recent study by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission offers an in-depth look at college affordability. The ISAC study calculated changes in need among ISAC recipients in the lowest three income quintiles, or bottom 60 percent, of the state's population. The study considered changes in tuition, fees, room, and board costs; federal Pell and MAP grants; and expected contributions from parents. The study did not include institutional grant aid, a sizeable resource, especially among private institutions and the University of Illinois.

ISAC study results show that over the past 13 years college has become more affordable for community college students and less affordable for students attending public universities and private institutions. For instance, the remaining need of students in the first quintile declined from \$1,487 in 1987 to \$499 in 2000 at community colleges but increased during these same years from \$1,948 to \$2,789 at public universities and from \$8,132 to \$15,003 at private institutions (in constant 2000 dollars).

Another indicator of student affordability is loan debt. Over the past five years, the average loan debt of Illinois seniors participating in the federal Stafford student loan program (guaranteed by ISAC) rose by 34 percent from \$11,200 in 1995 to \$15,000 in 1999. Some students have loan indebtedness that greatly exceeds this average. Increases in loan debt over the past five years amounted to 4 percent at community colleges, 19 percent at public universities, and 42 percent at private institutions. Borrowing has not negatively affected student participation, although some level of debt might have this impact.

While affordability has worsened in recent years, higher rates of return for some students have offset rising costs. A recent study by the USA Group Foundation found four-year public graduates required fewer months to recover their educational costs during the 1990s than at any time since the early 1970s. On the other hand, students who left school without a degree took longer to recover their expenses than in the previous decade. The report concludes that “the financial penalties for attending four-year colleges without completing and earning degrees rose significantly for undergraduates during the 1990s.”

General patterns, of course, mask important differences within student populations. As discussed in the Committee’s hearings and focus group meetings, many low- and moderate- income adults have difficulty paying for college. Moreover, some of these students are ineligible for MAP awards since they are not enrolled at least half time. A small grant award can make a big difference in the lives of such students enabling them to complete their education.

In recent years, the state has undertaken select programs for poor and non-traditional students. One such initiative is the Illinois Incentive for Access Program (IIA), for students whose families cannot contribute to their college expenses. A 1999 ISAC study indicates that the IIA award population is older and more independent of parental support, and contains more women with children. The study found, in particular, that IIA aided student retention in the first year. Based on past experience, the ISAC report proposed extending IIA to freshmen who had minimal financial resources. It did not support extending aid to sophomores since the “*[f]reshman year poses the biggest hurdle for at-risk students and should remain the focal point of State aid efforts*” (emphasis added).

Because the freshman year is a critical time for many students, the Committee strongly supports extending IIA to needy freshmen with minimal financial resources. The next chapter proposes non-financial aid measures for reducing student attrition in the first year. Taken together, these financial aid and student support initiatives should enable colleges and universities to better meet the needs of entering students, thereby improving student completion and time to degree.

ISAC also has initiated a project for students enrolled less than half time who meet all other MAP eligibility requirements. A total of 21 institutions participated in this \$800,000 demonstration project in 2000. Because of the students' part-time status, awards could not exceed one-fourth of an individual's total MAP eligibility. Based on initial participation in the project, ISAC estimates that it would cost \$3.5 million to extend MAP awards to all less than half-time students. The Committee supports extending MAP in this way.

Recently, merit-based scholarships have gained the attention of state legislatures. For example, in 1999, California created the Cal Grant Entitlement Program. This program uses merit and financial need criteria in awarding student scholarships. In 2000, House Bill 3831 proposing the creation of a Higher Education Scholarship Act (HESA) was introduced in the 91<sup>st</sup> Illinois General Assembly. HESA is a merit-based scholarship for students who maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. It has no financial need component.

The Committee generally supports existing Board policy that financial aid should be awarded on a needs basis. However, recent initiatives in other states suggest that merit awards may have some value as an incentive to improve student preparation and degree completion. The state of Illinois may wish to explore pilot projects that seek to improve college participation and reduce student attrition through financial aid incentives. Care should be taken, however, to ensure that such awards do not have unintended academic consequences, such as grade inflation, or drain resources from need-based aid.

### **Disability Access Barriers**

Students with disabilities are confronted with barriers that severely limit their access to higher education. Because these barriers often prove insurmountable, they are more likely than any other group not to go to college or, once there, to drop out. Statistics about students with disabilities are alarming, as shown below in a chart from the National Center for Education Statistics.

#### Less likely to:

Graduate from high school  
Have educational aspirations beyond HS  
Take advanced placement courses in HS  
Be academically prepared for college  
Enroll in college after HS  
Enroll full-time  
Persist in degree completion  
Work while in college  
Receive financial aid of any type  
Be employed after college graduation

#### More likely to:

Take remedial courses in college  
Participate in college volunteer activities  
Have lower average SAT scores  
Have a lower HS grade point average  
Delay enrollment into college  
Enroll part-time  
Be a single parent

The number of students with disabilities going to college is increasing. Nationally, one in eleven freshmen report at least one disability. A 1999 report by the American Council on Education indicates that the percentage of full-time college freshmen reporting disabilities increased from three percent in 1978 to seven percent in 1988 and over nine percent in 1998.

The largest increase was seen in learning disabilities. Table 2 shows trends in types of disabilities over a ten-year period.

As the number of students with disabilities climbs, so does the demand for services. Institutions struggle to maintain a level of service to meet varying student needs. Recent amendments to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 also raise cost concerns. The 1998 amendments call for the development of an interagency agreement on cost sharing between the Office of Rehabilitative Services (ORS) and public postsecondary institutions. In January 2001, a statewide model cooperative agreement was completed. Public postsecondary institutions and local ORS offices will use the model agreement to enter into specific interagency cost-sharing agreements for implementation by Fall 2001.

**Table 2**

**Percentage of Full-Time College Freshmen Reporting Disabilities:  
Selected Years**

<u>Disability</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1998</u>
Speech	0.3%	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%	0.5%
Orthopedic	1.0%	1.2%	0.9%	0.9%	0.8%
Learning disability	1.2%	2.2%	3.0%	3.1%	3.5%
Health-related	1.2%	1.3%	1.5%	1.6%	1.7%
Partially sighted or blind	1.9%	2.2%	2.0%	2.0%	1.1%
Hearing*	0.8%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%
Other	1.4%	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%	1.9%
Total	7.0%	8.8%	9.2%	9.2%	9.4%

\* Hearing data were not collected in 1998. The 1998 figure reflects 1996 data.

Note: Figures in columns do not necessarily equal the totals at the bottom, because individuals were allowed to identify more than one disability.

Source: HEATH Resource Center, American Council on Education. Based on unpublished data from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program, UCLA, selected years.

Institutional efficiency is always a concern. In the case of students with disabilities, however, cost increases must be balanced against broader considerations. Unless society pays the cost of educating students with disabilities, it will eventually incur additional costs for those who are unemployed, under-educated, and poor. Persons with disabilities who graduate from college hold jobs and become taxpayers. Because the value added by college is perhaps greater for this group than any other, the Committee suggests that institutions more actively recruit students with disabilities. Recruitment of faculty with disabilities is also a concern. Students with disabilities, as other underrepresented groups, need positive role models. Since they proceed to graduate school at the same rate as other students, efforts should be made to encourage students with disabilities to consider careers in higher education.

## Transitions

One of the most difficult barriers facing a student with disabilities is the transition from high school to college. Students with disabilities, as shown above, are less academically

prepared than their counterparts and likely to require remediation. Also, many students with disabilities are not ready for independent living and self advocacy once on campus. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires students with disabilities to take individual responsibility for services and accommodations. This role can be foreign to many students who heavily rely on parents or others during elementary and secondary school. Lack of experience with independent living skills and the need for remediation, often compounded by the belief that the disability is the cause for remediation, can create psychological barriers against further education.

### **Adapting to College Life**

*“Students with (severe) disabilities are rarely, if ever, prepared at the time of high school graduation to deal with the rigorous academic life of college while concurrently acquiring the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to successfully live independently, including hiring, training, scheduling, and managing personal assistant personnel.”*

Dr. Brad Hedrick, Director of Rehabilitation Services, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Planning is essential for a successful transition. Planning should start early, help overcome disability-related learning deficiencies, and strengthen self-advocacy skills. Prior to arriving on campus, institutional staff should work collaboratively with the student to develop an individual plan that will ease transition.

Students with disabilities that are graduating and leaving college also can need assistance. Once in the workforce and living in a community, students may not have access to the range of services and resources previously available on campus. Support staff can help students make the transition to the post-graduate setting by counseling them about the range and types of community services and helping them formulate plans for making effective use of these resources.

### **Reducing Student Attrition**

Attrition is an issue of concern for all students, but students with disabilities are at greater risk. The National Center for Education Statistics reported that over a five-year period (1990-1994), about 53 percent of students with disabilities had persisted in their postsecondary program, while 64 percent of students without disabilities did so.

Higher education institutions have made major improvements over the past few decades in making their facilities and programs more accessible to students with disabilities. Many campuses, however, continue to have access problems. As institutions continue to address these needs, they should ensure that students and faculty with disabilities are involved in efforts to assess the adequacy of campus facilities, as well as participate in the planning and designing of accommodations.

Facility improvements and growth in institutional services have occurred, in part, because of changes in federal law. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) require postsecondary institutions to provide program modifications and auxiliary aids to students with disabilities. However, the legal

rights of persons with disabilities has undergone some change after a February 2001 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court that state employees do not have the right to bring suit in federal court to recover monetary damages under the ADA.

All students must have timely access to textbooks and other instructional materials if they are to meet faculty expectations in their coursework. However, students with disabilities at times encounter difficulty in acquiring course materials in usable forms. For example, students with visual impairments often need materials in audio format or large print and hearing impaired students need transcripts of audio material. Federal law requires institutions to provide course materials in alternative formats in a timely fashion. However, reproduction of materials can be time consuming and costly, and difficulties in procuring these materials can negatively affect student learning and progress.

California has taken steps to address the need of access to instructional materials by passing a law that requires publishers of textbooks doing business in California to make their published materials available, upon request, in electronic format. The ability to access material in this way allows for quick reproduction and places materials in the hands of students in a timely fashion. The California law, however, has encountered difficulties in implementation and access to materials continues to be a problem in that state. The Committee believes that the State of Illinois should learn from the California experience and take a broad look at the kinds of processes, services, and legal underpinnings that would facilitate the ability of students with disabilities to have access to instructional materials.

A disability friendly campus not only provides equal educational access, access to services, and access to facilities free of physical barriers, but such a campus also addresses the social needs of the student. Students with disabilities may feel alienated from the day to day activities of campus life, activities that most students take for granted. Therefore, it is important that institutions ensure access to social and recreational activities for students with disabilities, as well as provide disability awareness programs for faculty, staff, and students.

Advances in technology have provided new learning tools and other assistive means for students with disabilities. The growth in this technology, as well as ongoing technology adaptations, have brought significant improvements and hold great promise for students with disabilities. The computer, in particular, has proved a powerful assistive tool. Hardware adaptations and specialized software such as voice activation, modified keyboards, and screen magnification, have made it possible for students with disabilities to participate more fully in the higher education experience. Technology, however, can also have unforeseen and exclusionary effects. For instance, technology-based instruction, if not properly designed, may present barriers to students with disabilities. Institutions should take care to employ design protocols that address the concerns of the disabled community and maximize access to electronic instruction.

To assist institutions in serving students with disabilities, the Committee calls for a statewide conference on issues of transition and persistence and their relationship with assistive technologies. This conference would bring together faculty and support staff, state agency personnel, students with disabilities, and other interested parties. It would seek not

only to identify promising assistive technologies but also to explore the implications of such technology for pedagogy and the relationship between faculty and support staff.

## Information

The Committee recognizes the growing need for an effective higher education disability policy that addresses issues related to transition, persistence and graduation. Indeed, this report should be seen as an initial step in developing such a policy. Policy development must provide flexibility and take into account the dynamism and variation in the disability field.

Over the past decade or more, demand for services has grown substantially, especially among some populations such as students with learning disabilities. At the same time, ongoing research and technology developments have expanded the capability of institutions to meet student needs, while placing demands on them to do so. Such changes are further complicated by the variation that exists among institutional programs and services. The number of students with disabilities as well as the mix of disabilities varies greatly among campuses as does the level and types of services provided to students. The Committee, therefore, believes that a standard policy that treats all institutions the same will not be as effective as one that allows institutional flexibility in addressing student needs.

Access to information is crucial to the development of effective disability policy. The rate of change in this field and the costs of some services would appear to present profitable opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing. However, such statewide initiatives will only be effective if they flow from a detailed and up-to-date knowledge of local conditions. In this regard, the Committee is particularly concerned by the lack of information about student enrollment and services. Federal law specifies that students do not have to divulge information about their disability and, as a result, statewide enrollment counts of this population are underestimated. Equally important, more must be known about the learning outcomes of new technologies and the special resource requirements of such technologies.

To address this information shortfall, the Committee recommends that the Board develop a wider body of knowledge about students with disabilities. The collecting and reporting of such information should take a variety of forms. One approach would be to modify statewide data bases to provide specialized information about students with disabilities. For instance, the Baccalaureate Follow-Up Survey provides information on the employment and experience of graduates from public colleges and universities. If this survey were expanded to include students with disabilities, public institutions would have a better sense of how well they are preparing these students for the workforce. This knowledge would also position institutions to make improvements in programs where students with disabilities had enjoyed less success after graduation.

The Board should also work with public colleges and universities to develop statewide information about the types of students with disabilities (such as learning disabilities, mobility impairments, and visual/hearing impairments) who are receiving services at Illinois institutions of higher education. This process should explore the best means of collecting and

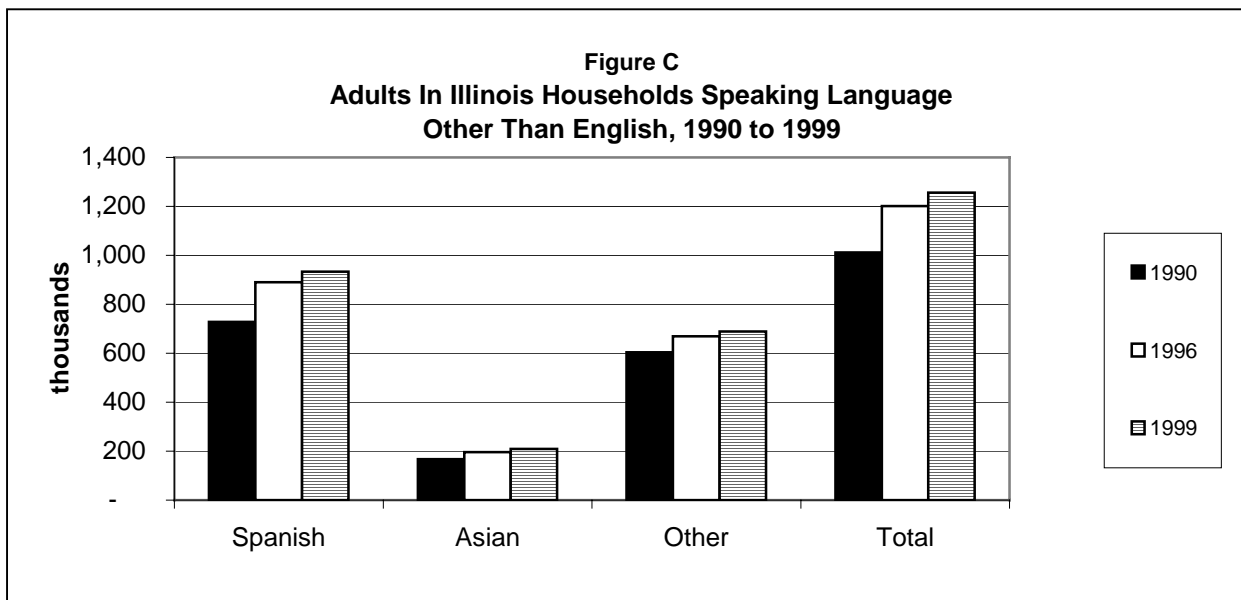
reporting this information using existing mechanisms, such as the Annual Report on Underrepresented Groups, when appropriate.

### The Language Barrier

One hidden obstacle to college is the ability to speak and write English. Current levels of immigration in the United States are the highest in seven decades, and Illinois ranks among the six largest immigration states. As Figure C demonstrates, with this influx in immigration has come a corresponding increase in the number of non-native English speaking adults. Not surprisingly, demographic changes also have had an impact upon the demand for English as a Second Language (ESL) and bilingual instruction.

ESL and bilingual instruction display great variation in their curricular range and student mix. Instruction covers basic speaking and listening skills as well as graduate course work. In the same adult education course, students can include those with limited proficiency in their own native language, as well as those who hold advanced degrees from foreign institutions. Many ESL and bilingual courses focus on workforce and citizenship skills. They are sponsored by community-based organizations, churches, libraries, local businesses, and unions, as well as institutions of higher education. A 1998 NCES study found that 42 percent of ESL classes are part of a college program.

The breadth of ESL and bilingual instruction is a source of strength and weakness. On the one hand, its informal nature and local setting promote access and affordability. The 1998 NCES study found that about two thirds of ESL students paid less than \$100 of their own money for tuition or related educational expenses. On the other hand, ESL and bilingual instruction depend to an unusual degree on part-time instructors, many of whom have limited time for preparation and whose professional development costs are rarely reimbursed. Not surprisingly, these instructors experience a high rate of turnover.



With the transfer of responsibility for adult education from the State Board of Education to the Illinois Community College Board, policies, programs, and practices in the field of English as a Second Language and bilingual instruction may be reexamined and modified in the coming years. This review might include issues such as the size of the teaching population, certification requirements, professional development, and coordination between higher education institutions and community organizations. Whatever the issues examined, it is clear that demographic changes will require Illinois higher education to look for more innovative and effective policies to serve students with limited-English proficiency.

In Illinois, adult education regional service centers and the Professional Development Partnership Center provide effective ESL related training. However, many ESL instructors cannot participate in these activities. Technology-based instruction and resources, either on CD-ROM, videotape, or the Web, are ideally suited to serve the needs of these instructors. With such assistance, instructors can have access to information about pedagogical practices, as well as instructional material. While it is clear that instructors and students would benefit greatly from such a resource, more study is required to identify learning/teaching needs, types of available resources, and the most appropriate delivery mechanisms. To consider such issues, a conference of ESL and bilingual educators is proposed for the coming year.

## Summary

Among today's colleges and universities, there is no typical student. "Joe College" no longer represents, if he ever did, the students who attend our institutions. This mythical figure must now step aside and take his place with students whose characteristics more closely mirror those of the general population. These students, as this chapter has attempted to make clear, have a great variety of access needs.

To date, the state has relied on its community college system and need-based financial aid to provide access. The quality of these access mechanisms is undeniable and are major factors contributing to Illinois receiving an A grade in participation on the national report *Measuring Up: 2000*. However, these mechanisms, no matter how good, do not address all access needs. Distance to education and the cost of education continue to trouble many residents, while other barriers, such as student pre-collegiate preparation, time availability, disability, and English language ability present formidable challenges.



## CHAPTER III

### THE RIGHT KIND OF ACCESS

*With more students going to college, especially students from groups with historically lower college participation, degree completion and time to degree assume greater prominence. In this environment, Illinois higher education must reconceptualize its ideas about access, examining not only whether students have access but whether students have access to the programs and services that best meet their needs. To address this issue effectively, we must put aside remnants of the old tradition whereby students are dared to succeed and high levels of student failure and attrition are accepted. Instead, we must pursue a philosophy of educational development which seeks to help all students fully realize their educational potential and whereby institutions commit themselves to that purpose.*

#### Pressures on Degree Completion and Time to Degree

American higher education can be proud of the fact that an increasing portion of its population attends college. The record, however, is more problematic in regard to degree completion. Student attrition is the Achilles heel of Illinois' higher education system. While Illinois received the highest grades of any state overall in the national report, *Measuring Up: 2000*, the state received only a C+ on its student persistence grade. Of course, some students, particularly at community colleges, only want to take a course or two, and do not intend to complete a degree program. Still, too many students leave college without achieving their educational goals.

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*The "quiet revolution" brings to the doorstep of higher education greater numbers of types of students who have historically lower rates of degree completion.*

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For about ten years, the Board of Higher Education has tracked the academic progress of first-time, first-year students at Illinois public universities through its Shared Enrollment and Graduation Information System. This database includes both full-time and part-time students and excludes those who attend private institutions and out of state institutions. Therefore, it slightly underestimates student completion rates and overestimates the time that full-time students take to complete their degrees. The Board's last report on this topic in June 1999, *Persistence, Graduation, and Time-to-Degree*, produced two major findings:

- About one quarter of public university freshmen graduate in four years. After five years, slightly less than half graduate, and by the end of six years, about 56 percent do so. About sixty-one percent of public university freshmen eventually graduate.

- Six-year graduation rates for minority students are substantially below those of all students, but their graduation rates improve with each additional year. The rate for Black students climbed from 29 percent after six years to 38 percent after seven to ten years, and the Hispanic graduation rate increased from 39 percent to 48 percent over this period of time.

The “quiet revolution” brings to the doorstep of college greater numbers of minority students, older students, and first-generation college students with lower rates of degree completion than the general college population. Demographic and enrollment trends suggest that in the future more of our incoming students will be at-risk. Some will have academic deficiencies that require remediation. Others face hurdles of social adjustment or the pressure of fitting courses into busy work and family schedules.

The Board’s shared enrollment database does not permit identification of older students or first-generation students. However, a number of studies have documented the hazardous journey these students face on the road to degree completion. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reports that non-traditional students are much more likely than their traditional counterparts to leave school and take longer to complete their degrees. A 1996 NCES study found that non-traditional students are more than twice as likely to leave school in their

first year than are traditional students (38 percent to 16 percent). After the first year, however, there is little difference in attrition between the two groups.

The increase in the enrollment of underrepresented populations has occurred concurrently with a general shift in course-taking behavior. While new enrollment patterns are varied and complex, they clearly have negative implications for student degree completion and time to degree. Two salient trends have emerged: more students are taking courses from more than one institution, and more students are taking longer to complete their degrees as they alternate or combine periods of work and education over considerable periods of time.

**Today’s Transition to Adulthood:  
Policy Implications**

*“In the 1990s, the transition to adulthood takes much longer. Most young people do not take on full-time jobs after high school. Instead, they enroll in college, where many of them will remain for more than four years. They are likely to leave school later, marry later, and have children later. This elongated transition is filled with a series of decisions that will have consequences for their futures....Without a coherent plan, adolescents can find such choices overwhelming and less than meaningful.”*

*“The social world of adolescents in the 1990s is more complex....Schooling is more complex because students can choose to study a wider range of subjects, to earn postsecondary degrees in more fields and at more institutions, and to select among numerous financial aid programs to support their efforts.”*

*In helping adolescents develop coherent ambitions, two policy areas need to be addressed: policies that help students develop better understanding of the connections between high school and college; and policies that promote the transfer of credits from two-year to four-year institutions.”*

Barbara Schneider and David Stevenson, *The Ambitious Generation: America’s Teenagers, Motivated but Directionless*

Clifford Adelman in his study *Answers in the Tool Box* has noted that the number of undergraduates attending more than one institution has increased dramatically from 40 percent in the 1970s to over 60 percent at the end of the 1990s. The number of undergraduates attending more than two institutions has risen at an even faster rate. Adelman concludes that student enrollment patterns are now better described as “portfolio building” rather than transfer.

The implications of this changing student behavior are not fully understood, although one consequence has been that students are now more independent of their educational institutions. This independence may facilitate student progress, such as the case of a university student who fulfills a general education requirement during the summer at a community college. However, students taking courses from multiple institutions may run considerable risk if courses do not form a coherent educational program or if a student’s home institution eventually denies credit awarded by another institution.

Changing enrollment patterns reflect broad trends in employment and education among young adults. In the United States, there is no clear school to work transition. Many students begin work in high school, and combine or alternate work with school over a considerable period of time, in some cases a decade or more. The metaphor of a pipeline, used by many educators to describe the process whereby students enter education in early childhood and follow a steady progression until they leave with a terminal degree, holds only for some middle- and upper-income students and high-achieving students. In contrast, educational researchers have found that an increasing number of students follow a pattern of “swirling” with various points of entry and exit in education and employment over an extended period of time. Still others are said to be “churning”, a vivid and accurate description for those whose educational or employment experience is less than successful.

## **Facilitating College Transition and Student Success**

In the pluralistic world of Illinois higher education, no single definition of student success holds. Rather, colleges and universities must assist students to formulate educational goals that meet their needs, and then monitor and facilitate student efforts to achieve these goals. The Committee proposes two initiatives to promote student progress. One seeks to ensure that prospective students have better information to plan their education. A complementary approach supports students in their critical first year of college.

### **Consumer Information System**

In 1997, the Board of Higher Education passed a recommendation that Illinois higher education implement a Consumer Information System. This recommendation was developed out of a study, *Distance Learning: Framework for a Comprehensive Consumer Information System*, which examined the implications of technology-based instruction upon the Board’s regulatory authority. The study described the difficulties that the Board faces in protecting Illinois consumers from fraudulent and substandard degrees because statutory jurisdiction only applies to institutions that have a physical presence in the state and does not cover

technology-based, distance-learning programs. To partially remedy this situation, the study proposed the creation of a Web-based Consumer Information System to help residents gain knowledge and become more informed “consumers” of higher education.

### **The Student as Consumer**

*“Helping learners to identify educational quality and importance will need to be addressed as choice-based and consumer oriented models dominate public policies. Online courses and other resources that can inform and support learning how to make good choices (including educational choices) is one way to address this problem before students even begin to consider college or university as an alternative. For rather obvious bootstrapping reasons, failing in this educational task will mean that there is less chance to reach such prospective students later on.”*

Nicholas Burbules and Thomas Callister, *The Promise and the Challenge of New Technologies*.

A Consumer Information System, if properly configured, could also become a powerful access tool, especially for students with special needs. For instance, varied services are provided to the disabled population. While all institutions offer services, some institutions have more fully developed programs for target populations, such as Southern Illinois University at Carbondale for students with learning disabilities and the University of Illinois–Urbana/Champaign for students with multiple disabilities and mobility impairments. A Consumer Information System could provide information about such campus programs and help students with disabilities identify the institution that best meets their particular needs.

A Consumer Information System could also inform other types of students about the range of services available on college campuses and the kinds of services that “best practice” institutions make available. For example, students considering technology-based instruction could access information about available courses and programs at various institutions, but also could access more general information about the nature of this medium and the students that are best served by such courses. Older students might also benefit by learning about the kinds of services that “best practice institutions” make available to meet their needs as they also search for information about specific institutional services.

A Consumer Information System also could serve the increasing number of students who attend multiple institutions during their educational career. As has been shown, today’s students have become more independent of educational institutions. This independence offers students more choices as they become active participants in shaping their own education. However, this independence also brings risks and the need for good information. A statewide source that offers information from multiple institutions would serve students, whatever their current enrollment status, as they cycle in and out of work and educational settings.

Building upon the 1997 Board report, the Consumer Information System would take the form of a single Web site housed at the Board of Higher Education that provides information on programs, institutions, and services to facilitate consumer protection and educational planning. The Board’s Consumer Information System would provide a comprehensive resource with links to other relevant Web sites. For example, consumers could link to the Illinois Student Assistance Commission for information on financial aid or to the Illinois Occupational Information Coordinating Committee for information about

professions and careers. On a periodic basis, advisory groups representing different populations could advise the Board about the kind of information that could be placed on the Web site.

## The First Year of College

The first year of college is tough. About one third of students leave college in the first year and many decide in the first few months whether they will continue with their education. One cannot over emphasize the importance of this transition period, particularly for some minority students. For instance, Anthony Carnevale of the Educational Testing Service has noted:

*“For all students, the transition to college constitutes a major disjunction in their life course. The process is a highly interrelated series of academic, interpersonal, family and organizational pulls and pushes that shape student learning, persistence, retention, and degree completion....Inevitably, however, the process is far more of an obstacle course for some students than for others....First generation Hispanic students have a much more complicated and challenging adaptation. For these students, attending college is not part of their families’ traditions or expectations, And for those who are the first in their immediate family to attend college, it can result in breaking, not continuing, family support”.* (emphasis in the original)

The Committee’s hearings provided evidence about the numerous special institutional programs that seek to improve student retention and degree completion in the first year. The range of new programming is impressive. It includes orientation short courses, supplementary instruction in “gatekeeper courses” that have the highest rates of failure, and early warning systems that alert students in academic difficulty. Other initiatives, such as scheduling a common group of students for a block of general education courses, reflect lessons learned from recent research: students that are interconnected and actively engaged are not likely to drop out.

Despite these improvements, the Committee believes that higher education can provide more support for students in the first year, particularly for historically underrepresented students, such as minority, adult, and disabled students. To create such a climate requires improved communication and coordination among all campus personnel, particularly between faculty and support staff. It also requires making a strong institutional commitment to ensuring that every student can succeed.

The Board of Higher Education can stimulate and nurture efforts to assist first year students, especially underrepresented students, by initiating studies and funding projects that seek to develop alternative approaches. The Board should be wide-ranging and imaginative in its support. New academic and student service initiatives should be encouraged, as should campus efforts that seek to create a favorable climate for underrepresented students, such as minority students and students with disabilities. Campus reviews of programs that serve students from underrepresented groups also should assess, when appropriate, their impact on student attrition in the first year. In this “First-Year Initiative” the Board should consult

organizations and persons with special knowledge and expertise. For instance, in the past year, the Council on Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) has formulated “Principles of Effectiveness”, or institutional best practices, that serve adult learners. The Committee believes that Illinois higher education should support CAEL’s efforts to disseminate these principles throughout the state. The Committee also believes that Illinois higher education should develop a similar set of best practice principles to serve students in their first year of college.

## **Summary**

For more than a decade, Illinois higher education has emphasized two important policy themes: strengthening undergraduate education and increasing cooperation with elementary/secondary education to improve college readiness. In this report, the Committee seeks to build upon and integrate these policy initiatives, placing them in a context to strengthen access and diversity in Illinois higher education.

The previous chapter addressed how pre-collegiate academic preparation limits access and proposed ways to create a more flexible and effective transition from high school to college. This chapter discusses how student transitions to college could be further strengthened by the development and implementation of a Consumer Information System--particularly if that system is sensitive to the needs of special students--and by better supporting historically underrepresented students in the first year of college. The Committee recommends that the Illinois Board of Higher Education support model projects and coordinate the development of a set of “principles of effectiveness” to better serve such students in their first year.

## CHAPTER IV

### ENSURING DIVERSITY

*The recommendations in this report that seek to reduce barriers to access and facilitate student transition and success will also enhance diversity in Illinois higher education. Achieving greater diversity will provide educational benefits to all students and broadly serve the interests of our state and nation. More must be done, however, for higher education to obtain the diversity it seeks. While an unsettled legal environment presents challenges to addressing this issue, the Committee believes that significant improvements in diversity can be made at Illinois colleges and universities.*

#### **The Role of Diversity in Higher Education**

Diversity is a concept rooted in the tradition and practices of higher education. It is one of the key ideas, along with community and freedom of thought, that colleges and universities employ to foster learning and prepare students for their post-collegiate lives. Diversity is presented here in its broadest sense: the bringing together of persons of different backgrounds and perspectives to create a community in which all ideas are respected and explored and all students benefit. Diversity refers not only to differences in student talents and interests but also to differences in region, class, culture, gender, age, race/ethnicity and disability.

As an articulated goal of higher education, diversity dates back to at least the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. For instance, the scholar Cardinal John Henry Newman in his book *The Idea of a University* advocated that colleges should contain a “multitude” of students that “come together and freely mix with each other....[and] are sure to learn one from another, even if there be no one to teach them.” In the United States, the goal of diversity has had particular resonance because of our democratic ideals and social traditions. Americans have viewed themselves as living in a “melting pot” or “salad bowl” whose demographic variety has stimulated the productivity and creativity of persons from all groups.

Because of the diversity that exists within our state and nation, we must have institutions capable of creating bonds among our citizenry so that diversity becomes a positive rather than a divisive force. Our educational system, historically, has served this function. With the possible exception of the armed forces, whose capabilities have diminished with the end of the draft, no other cultural or social institution can achieve this goal on a broad scale.

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“Diverse learning environments impart the broad knowledge and social skills needed for success after graduation.”

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Diversity is integral to the instructional process. Dating back to the time of Socrates, professors have sought to clarify thought and find meaning through rhetorical arguments that contrast ideas and challenge assumptions. Seminal thinkers on human development such as

Jean Piaget, have shown that interaction with people who have different backgrounds and points of view deepens learning and stimulates individual growth. Today, academic programs seek to incorporate such thinking into instructional formats and techniques which stimulate student learning through use of difference. Cooperative learning, for instance, enhances academic achievement through team building and other pedagogical mechanisms that foster interaction among students from different groups and backgrounds.

Diverse learning environments also impart the broad knowledge and social skills needed for success after graduation. Students who attend schools with those different from themselves make better citizens. They acquire wide-ranging knowledge about the beliefs, practices, and needs of their community, state, and nation. Such students also make better employees. They are prepared not only for the diversity of the workplace, but also for more varied conditions of practice they will encounter in their professions.

**Table 3**

**What Should a Student Gain From College?**

<u>Question</u>	<u>Absolutely Essential</u>	<u>Important But Not Essential</u>	<u>Not too Important</u>
Sense of Maturity and How to Manage on Their Own	71%	26%	2%
<b>Ability to Get Along with People Different From Themselves</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>2%</b>
Improved Ability to Solve Problems/Think Analytically	63%	34%	1%
Learning High Tech Skills	61%	34%	1%
Specific Expertise and Knowledge in Chosen Careers	60%	35%	4%
Top-notch Writing and Speaking Skills	57%	38%	4%
Responsibilities of Citizenship	44%	47%	9%
Exposure to Great Writers and Thinkers	32%	53%	14%

Source: National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, *Great Expectations: How Illinois Residents View Higher Education*

The above arguments may seem so rooted in the traditions and practices of higher education that they would have little appeal to a general audience. Such is not the case. Recent surveys of Illinois residents conducted by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education indicate that the broad outcomes of a diverse education are seen as a fundamental reason to obtain a college degree. For instance, as shown in Table 3 above, 68 percent of all respondents thought that it “absolutely essential” that a student gain from college “an ability to get along with people different from themselves.”

### **Race/Ethnic Diversity Produces Educational Benefits for All Students**

In the current environment, where the term diversity is more likely to be applied to race/ethnicity and gender than to region and class, the question naturally arises whether the educational advantages of diversity still hold. The results of recent research suggest that this is indeed the case. This research demonstrates that campuses and classrooms that have substantial race/ethnic diversity offer all students a better education and that all students gain in various ways both during and after college from such a learning environment. Some, it should be noted, dispute these findings. For instance, Robert Lerner and Althea Nagai,

have challenged the conclusions reached in Patricia Gurin’s study, cited below, and others, such as Thomas Wood and Malcom Sherman, deny any correlation between racial diversity and educational benefits. While undoubtedly more will be learned about this subject, on balance, available evidence affirms the value that higher education has placed upon race/ethnic diversity.

Undoubtedly, one of the reasons that a racially/ethnically diverse setting provides educational benefits is that this is one of the broader outcomes that students from all groups now seek. This point is reinforced by William Bowen and Derek Bok in *The Shape of the River*, an examination of racial/ethnic attitudes among graduates of select colleges and universities. Bowen and Bok show significant changes over the past decade in the emphasis that these students have placed on “getting along” with persons from other races. They suggest that these attitudinal shifts have broad application since they are rooted in “important changes in the realities that confront everyone in the United States.” They state:

*“[T]he increased importance attached to being able to work with, and get along with, people of different racial and cultural groups makes very good sense in light of known demographic trends: the country in which the ’89 matriculants will live and work will have a more diverse racial makeup than the one that earlier cohorts encountered. As the population of the country becomes evermore racially diverse, and as white Americans see their dominant majority status erode, the need to work effectively with individuals of other races will become an increasingly inescapable reality to members of every racial group.”* (emphasis in original)

## Student Achievement

Studies on the influence of race/ethnic diversity have examined the correlation between students’ education and subsequent changes in their attitudes and academic achievement. One such work, *The Compelling Need for Diversity in Higher Education*, by Patricia Gurin found that learning increases with the level of diversity. Gurin discovered that “students who had experienced the most diversity in classroom settings and in informal interactions with peers showed the greatest engagement in active thinking processes, growth

in intellectual engagement and motivation, and growth in intellectual and academic skills.”

### **Broadening Experience and Understanding**

*To be sure, not all members of a minority group may succeed in expanding the racial understanding of other students, any more than all those who grew up on a farm or came from a remote region of the United States can be expected to convey a special rural perspective. What does seem clear, however, is that a student body containing many different backgrounds, talents, and experiences will be a richer environment in which to develop.”*

William G. Bowen & Derek Bok, *The Shape of the River*.

In another study, Jeff Milem of the University of Maryland found that diverse race/ethnic environments produce long-term gains in student learning and achievement. Milem discovered that “higher levels of interaction with diversity in college predict higher levels of retention and increases in the degree aspirations of students.” Another interesting

finding is that higher education's key functions (teaching, research, and service) are enriched by a faculty that includes women and persons of color. These faculty tend to use student-centered pedagogy that positively affects student learning. They also engage in research that expands knowledge about race/ethnicity and gender.

According to a study by the American Council on Education and the American Association of University Professors, a majority of faculty and students believe that the wide range of ideas and perspectives found in a multi-racial/ethnic setting enhances complex thinking among all students. This study also showed that faculty and students believe that cognitive and personal development is positively affected by learning in a diverse classroom.

## Economic Benefits

In today's global economy, the ability to work and communicate with people of all cultures, races, and ethnicities has growing importance. Indeed, according to a 1994 RAND Corporation report, "cross-cultural competence" is today's most critical human resource need. In an article in the January 1999 issue of *Harvard Business Review*, "Diversity and Competitive Advantage at Merck," Raymond Gilmartin has shown that education in a race/ethnic setting is more likely to produce graduates who can interact with diverse customers, clients, co-workers, and business partners. The need for such graduates is underscored by the fact that minorities now comprise about one-third of all new workforce entrants in the United States and account for more than \$600 billion in purchasing power.

In recent years, a wide variety of business leaders have come forward to support race/ethnic diversity in higher education. For example, this past year, twenty Fortune 500 companies filed a brief in support of the University of Michigan's admissions policies in a federal court case (see below). These corporations asserted that "managers and employees who graduate from institutions with diverse student bodies are better prepared to understand, learn from and collaborate with others from a variety of racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds".

The corporations also found that such graduates "demonstrate creative problem solving by integrating differing perspectives; exhibit the skills required for good teamwork; and demonstrate more effective responsiveness to the needs of all types of consumers".

More businesses seek a diverse workforce at all levels. Such diversity responds to emerging corporate needs and a post-industrial ethic that places a premium on adaptability, flexibility, and creativity. Anthony Carnevale of the Educational Testing Service cites research that shows organizations with a diverse employee base tend to be more innovative and flexible. Minority viewpoints within an organization force re-examination of basic assumptions, encourage open and frank dialogue, and result in less organizational "group think".

### Corporate Support for Diversity

*"We believe that workforce diversity is a competitive advantage. Our success as a global community is as dependent on utilizing the wealth of backgrounds, skills, and opinions that a diverse workforce offers, as it is on raw materials, technology and processes."*

Robert J. Eaton,  
Chairman and CEO of Chrysler Corporation

Table 4

**Summary of the Educational Benefits of Diverse College and University Campuses**

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**Individual Benefits**

- ❖ Improved racial and cultural awareness
- ❖ Enhanced openness to diversity and challenge
- ❖ Greater commitment to increasing racial understanding
- ❖ Enhanced critical thinking ability
- ❖ Greater satisfaction with the college experience
- ❖ Perceptions of a more supportive campus racial climate
- ❖ Increased wages for men who graduate from higher “quality” institutions

**Institutional Benefits**

**Benefits to Private Enterprise**

- ❖ Cultivation of workforce with greater levels of cross-cultural competence
- ❖ Attraction of best available talent pool
- ❖ Enhanced marketing efforts
- ❖ Higher levels of creativity and innovation
- ❖ Better problem solving abilities
- ❖ Greater organizational flexibility

**Benefits to Higher Education of Faculty**

**Diversity**

- ❖ More student-centered approaches to teaching and learning
- ❖ More diverse curricular offerings
- ❖ More research focused on issues of race/ethnicity and gender
- ❖ More women and faculty of color involved in community and volunteer service

**Societal Benefits**

- ❖ More research on the effects of affirmative action in the workplace
- ❖ Higher levels of service to community/civic organizations
- ❖ Medical service by physicians of color to underserved communities
- ❖ Greater equity in society
- ❖ A more educated citizenry

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Source: Milem, J., “The Educational Benefits of Diversity: Evidence from Multiple Sectors.” In *Compelling Interest: Examining the Evidence on Racial Dynamics in Higher Education*. Prepublication Draft.

In summary, all Illinois residents will realize significant economic benefits through enhancements in educational diversity and achievement. The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education in its report *Measuring Up: 2000* calculated that in 1998 “if all the ethnic groups in Illinois had the same educational attainment and earnings as whites, total personal income in the state would have been \$9.1 billion higher, and the state would have realize an estimated \$3.2 billion in additional tax revenue.”

## Civic Benefits

It is a basic tenet of our democracy that persons gain political understanding and competence from interaction with persons from diverse groups. John Stuart Mill, one of the most profound political thinkers, wrote that diversity of experience prepares persons for effective political life by taking them “out of the narrow circle of personal and family selfishness...accustoming them to the comprehension of joint interests, the management of joint concerns...habituating them to...guide their conduct by aims which unite instead of isolating them from one another.” Patricia Gurin’s research shows that students educated in a diverse race/ethnic environment undergo the kind of transformation spoken about by Mill and, as a result, are better-informed voters, jurors, and community association members, as well as more active participants in public affairs.

## Diversity in Illinois Higher Education

How is Illinois higher education doing in achieving the diversity it seeks? The answer to this question is not a simple one. On the one hand, Illinois higher education is becoming more diverse, especially when viewed from a broad statewide perspective. On the other hand, Illinois higher education is much less diverse than the state’s population and the distribution of enrollments is such that many students go to college only with persons like themselves.

There is no shortage of evidence that Illinois higher education is becoming more diverse. There are more female students, students with disabilities, older students, and minority students at our colleges and universities than there were a generation or two before. The transformation of our institutions is perhaps most apparent in the escalating increase in female participation in graduate and professional programs. In the early 1980s, females constituted about one quarter of all degree recipients in these programs. Today, females account for more than 40 percent of degree recipients.

Almost as noticeable as the growth in female enrollment in professional programs is the marked increase in minority enrollment at some colleges and universities in urban areas. At the University of Illinois at Chicago and Northeastern Illinois University, for example, whites now account for less than half of total undergraduate enrollment. The diversity of student enrollments at these institutions is remarkable and reflects the influx of immigrants from Mexico and Latin American, Asia, and Eastern Europe, as well as higher rates of participation among Asian-American populations.

Despite this progress, Illinois continues to be much less diverse than it can and should be. A significant imbalance in gender representation exists in computer science, physical science, and engineering programs, where female enrollment is less than 40 percent at the

undergraduate level and less than 30 percent at the doctoral level. The male character of these disciplines inhibits participation of some women and has resulted in an increase in foreign student enrollment to meet critical workforce needs.

The lack of diversity is especially problematic in regard to the representation of Black and Hispanic students. While it is difficult to say what amount of minority representation can provide the diversity that is needed, it is clear that Black and Hispanic enrollment is too low, especially in some levels and fields. Recent population increases and projected increases of Black and Hispanic groups within the state highlight the need to achieve greater diversity.

The population of the United States is rapidly changing. In the near future, one out of three Americans will be a member of a racial/ethnic minority. Illinois will experience similar population trends, with minorities comprising at least 33 percent of the population by 2010. Hispanics will be the fastest growing minority group in Illinois. The Black population, following the national trend, will remain stable.

What do these population projections mean for Illinois higher education? Table 5 shows that if current racial and ethnic participation rates remain constant over the next 25 years, minority student enrollment will increase about 23 percent by 2010 and about 55 percent by 2025. Hispanic students will account for much of the growth, increasing to 13 percent of the total projected enrollment by 2010 and to 17 percent by 2025. As a component of all enrollments, Black enrollment will remain relatively constant at 13.5 percent through 2025.

**Table 5**

**Projected Higher Education Enrollment by Race and Ethnicity<sup>1</sup>**

Year	Total Projected	White Non-Hispanic		Black Non-Hispanic		Hispanic <sup>3</sup>		Asian or Pacific Islander		American Indian or Alaskan Native	
	#	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1999 <sup>2</sup>	696,103	485,231	69.7	94,528	13.6	71,706	10.3	42,379	6.1	2,259	0.3
2010	745,138	487,279	65.4	100,506	13.5	98,553	13.2	56,454	7.6	2,346	0.3
2015	766,569	486,806	63.5	103,446	13.5	111,128	14.5	62,783	8.2	2,406	0.3
2025	810,004	484,197	59.8	109,013	13.5	138,510	17.1	75,710	9.3	2,575	0.3

<sup>1</sup> Estimates based on current 1999 population participation rates by race/ethnicity and U.S. Census Bureau population projections for Illinois based on the 1990 census.

<sup>2</sup> Figures for 1999 are actual counts from the 2000 Fall Enrollment Survey. The 1999 total does not include the count of non-resident aliens and students of unknown race/ethnicity.

<sup>3</sup> Current U.S. census figures indicate that the Census Bureau population projections for Illinois based on the 1990 census underestimated the size of Illinois' Hispanic population by almost 33 percent for the year 2000. Estimates of the Hispanic enrollment for out years will be higher than projected as a result. Population projections based on the 2000 census were not available at time of publication of this report.

When one goes beyond the picture of demographic representation presented in the above paragraphs, the lack of diversity in Illinois higher education becomes most apparent. Black and Hispanic representation varies significantly by degree level, falling at each step on the education ladder. Thus, Black enrollment is about 15 percent at the associate level, but drops to 12 percent at the bachelor's level, then 10 percent at the master's level, and 6 percent at the doctoral level. For Hispanic students, participation is 9 percent at the associate level, 7 percent at the bachelor's level and 3 percent at the master's and doctoral levels.

Minority enrollment is highly concentrated. For instance, about 46 percent of all Black undergraduates and 42 percent of all Hispanic undergraduates are found at Illinois' community colleges. Chicago State University enrolls about one third of all Black students in the public universities. The percent of Black and Hispanic students enrolled in some fields such as mathematics and engineering also is very low. In engineering, for example, Black and Hispanic students received less than three percent of all doctoral degrees awarded this past year. No Hispanic or Black student received a doctoral degree in the field of mathematics.

### **Diversity and Higher Education Policy in Illinois**

Because diversity is such an important goal of higher education, Illinois higher education institutions offer numerous activities and programs to promote it. The Board's *Report to Governor and General Assembly on Underrepresented Groups* each year provides a comprehensive list of programs at Illinois public colleges and universities whose purpose is to improve the representation of women, minorities, and disabled students and staff.

Board policy has sought to encourage and support institutional efforts to improve diversity and has placed special emphasis upon race/ethnic representation. Financial aid programs seek to increase minority graduate enrollment where diversity is especially low. Improving pre-collegiate education is another focus addressed through the Higher Education Cooperation Grant (HECA) and the Minority Teacher Incentive Grants program. HECA also funds minority projects at the undergraduate and graduate levels and supports transfer centers for minority students at community colleges.

What has been the influence and impact of such institutional and statewide efforts to promote diversity? Two past Board reports in July 1995 and April 2000 have concluded that Illinois compares favorably with other major states, although in no state does minority representation in higher education approach minority representation in the general population. While difficult to assess with precision, the state's strong emphasis upon diversity has had positive results. Elimination of programs that promote diversity, a possible outcome of legal challenges discussed below, could result in a decline in minority enrollment of uncertain proportions. In this environment, the challenge to the state of Illinois is to find ways to protect existing programs while seeking to advance diversity beyond current levels.

### **Legal Considerations**

Any policy discussion about race/ethnic diversity in higher education must consider essential legal questions surrounding this issue. To date, there has been only one U.S.

Supreme Court Case on the use of race/ethnicity in college admissions, *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* in 1978. In the *Bakke* case, the Supreme Court ruled on two issues – whether college and university admissions programs could set aside a specific number of places for minority students and whether higher education institutions could consider race and ethnicity to any extent in making admissions decisions. Justice Powell’s opinion emerged as the leading opinion of a deeply divided court.

The Court ruled unconstitutional in *Bakke* the University of California at Davis Medical School practice of setting aside a specific number of places for minority students. However, Powell found that higher education institutions could consider race as a factor in admissions because of the educational benefits that flow from a diverse student body. Justice Powell’s opinion granted discretion to higher education institutions in matters of admissions for reasons of the First Amendment and related issues of academic freedom. He concluded:

*[T]he attainment of a diverse student body ... clearly is a constitutionally permissible goal for an institution of higher education. Academic freedom ... long has been viewed as a special concern of the First Amendment. The freedom of a university to make its own judgments as to education includes the selection of its student body...The atmosphere of ‘speculation, experiment and creation’—so essential to the quality of higher education—is widely believed to be promoted by a diverse student body.*

While Powell was willing to grant colleges and universities a certain independence and authority in using race/ethnic criteria in admissions decisions, he rejected use of race/ethnic quotas on grounds of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Powell cited the Harvard College admissions program as a model for the way race and ethnicity should be used in admissions decisions. Harvard included race or ethnicity as a “plus” in admissions, that is, as one of many factors considered, but the institution did not create separate pools of applicants that isolate candidates from comparison with one another.

The 1990s saw several legal challenges to the *Bakke* principal and related doctrines. Notable were *Podberesky v. Kirwin* (1994); *Hopwood v. Texas* (1996); *Smith v. Washington* (2000); *Johnson, Bogrow, and Beckenhauer v. The University of Georgia* (2000); and *Gratz v. Bollinger* (2000). In *Hopwood*, the court ruled against programs that used race and ethnicity in admissions decisions. In other cases, such as *Smith v. Washington* (involving law school admissions at the University of Washington) and *Gratz v. Bollinger* (involving undergraduate admissions at the University of Michigan), courts have upheld the *Bakke* principle.

Because of contrasting federal district and appeals court decisions, there remains great uncertainty over the use of race/ethnic criteria by higher education institutions. Fundamental legal issues, as well as the scope of their applicability, are open to Supreme Court review. Concerning the latter point, some have argued that federal court decisions should apply to private institutions because of legal requirements arising from the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It also is arguable whether the same legal criteria that are applied toward admissions decisions should be applied toward financial aid programs. Though such issues remain unresolved, it is not known if or when the Supreme Court will again consider this matter.

In the current state of flux, the Committee advocates following a prudent course of action guided by three key principles: 1) *Bakke* is still the law of the land; 2) the rationale used in *Bakke*, which upholds the use of race/ethnic criteria to promote diversity in higher education, validates a long-standing practice and goal of higher education which should be supported; and 3) care should be taken in making admissions and financial aid decisions to follow the principles articulated in *Bakke*

How colleges and universities can best proceed to follow the *Bakke* principles in an unsettled legal climate is the subject of a new College Board manual written by former

### **Articulating the Value of Diversity**

*"[U]niversities have failed to establish the fundamental link between diversity and their educational missions. If programs premised on the need for diversity are to survive in this legal and political climate, the educational value of these programs for all students must be fully and forcefully articulated. "*

Jonathan Alger, *The Educational Value of Diversity*

Department of Education lawyer, Arthur Coleman. Coleman makes the point that colleges and universities must be able to demonstrate the kind of educational benefits that are sought from a diverse learning environment, as well as the actual effects that are obtained. He advises that it is no longer sufficient for an institution to

broadly state its desire to be inclusive. The strict legal reasoning applied by federal courts has found some institutions in violation of the law because they could not produce evidence about how diversity fosters student learning on their campus.

While the Committee does not intend to provide legal advice to institutions through this report, in the current climate it does seem prudent for Illinois colleges and universities to ensure that they have evaluation processes that can both articulate and demonstrate their commitment to diversity. Diversity is used here in its broadest sense, to encompass areas where different types of students are underrepresented, such as female enrollment in science and engineering. Fortunately, most Illinois institutions have excellent academic planning and review procedures. Institutions that have not already done so can achieve considerable progress by incorporating efforts to enhance diversity into core processes and procedures.

## **Initiatives to Enhance Diversity**

What more can and should Illinois higher education do to enhance diversity? Because of legal and political challenges to existing processes, a few states have formulated new policies and processes to enhance diversity. This section considers these new policies and other approaches.

### **Admissions: Application of a Statewide Undergraduate Criterion**

A percentage plan is a statewide admissions policy based on a single measure of merit – a student's high school rank. This policy grants automatic admission to a public university to all high school students who graduate within certain percentage of the top of their class. To date, three states have implemented such a policy – Texas, California, and Florida.

Table 6

**Selected Federal Court Decisions on Race-Conscious Programs in Education**

Case	Year	Venue	Decision
<b>Admissions</b>			
Regents of the University of California v. Bakke	1978	US Supreme Court	Chief Justice Powell asserts that higher education institutions could consider race as a “plus” factor in admissions for the purpose of fostering educational benefits that flow from a diverse student body. The consideration of race or ethnicity as one among many educationally relevant factors was allowable, but separate admissions procedures for minorities was prohibited.
Hopwood v. State of Texas	1996	5 <sup>th</sup> Circuit Federal Court of Appeals	The court ruled that the University of Texas School of Law could not use race as a factor in its admissions program for the purpose of diversity. The court rejected Justice Powell’s opinion in <i>Bakke</i> that diversity is a compelling interest. The Supreme Court refused to review this case.
Wessman v. Gittens	1998	1 <sup>st</sup> Circuit Federal Court of Appeals	The court struck down as unnecessary a selective Boston public high school’s policy of assigning places in proportion to the racial and ethnic composition of the pool of qualified applicants. Although the court acknowledged that diversity serves a valuable educational purpose, it viewed the policy more as a method of racial balancing than for attaining diversity.
Gratz v. Bollinger	1997	Pending: 6 <sup>th</sup> Circuit Federal Court of Appeals	The court held that the University of Michigan did not unlawfully use different admissions standards for white and minority students. Awaiting Appellate Court decision.
Grutter v. Bollinger	1997	US District Court Eastern District of Michigan	The court ruled against the University of Michigan Law School and held that the law school used different admissions standards for white and minority students.
Johnson v. University of Georgia Bogrow & Beckenhauer v. University of Georgia	2000	US District Court Southern District of Georgia Savannah Division	The court held that the promotion of student body diversity in higher education is not a compelling interest sufficient to overcome Title VI’s prohibition against racial discrimination. UGA failed to meaningfully show how racial diversity actually fosters educational benefits. This case was appealed by University of Georgia to the 11 <sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals
Smith v. University of Washington	2000	9 <sup>th</sup> Circuit Federal Court of Appeals	The court did not rule on the specifics of the University of Washington Law School admission program, but held that <i>Bakke</i> is the law of the land until the Supreme Court rules otherwise. The Supreme Court refused to review this case.
<b>Student Aid</b>			
Podberesky v. Kirwin	1994	4 <sup>th</sup> Circuit Federal Court of Appeals	The court ruled against a University of Maryland scholarship program for Black undergraduates. The court found that the University failed to show continuing effects of past discrimination or that it needed the program to overcome minority under-representation and low graduation and retention rates.
<b>Faculty and Staff</b>			
Wygant v. Jackson Board of Education	1986	US Supreme Court	The Court applied strict scrutiny to a school board’s affirmative action plan and overturned a race conscious layoff of a white teacher.
Taxman v. Board of Education of Township of Piscataway	1997	3 <sup>rd</sup> Circuit Federal Court of Appeals	The court ruled that the board could not lawfully layoff a white teacher and retain a black teacher with equal seniority in order to promote faculty diversity.

Texas implemented a percentage plan in the aftermath of the *Hopwood* decision. The state of Texas automatically grants admission to students graduating in the top ten percent of their class to *any* state institution, including flagships. The University of California will grant admission campus to students in the top four percent and Florida to the top 20 percent. The University of California will also grant admission to students graduating in the top 12 percent who complete their first two years of study at a community college. Unlike Texas, California and Florida do not guarantee admission to a student's institution of choice. Although early indications show that minority enrollment has risen at some public universities in these three states, it is too early to determine the long-term impact of this new admissions policy. Before considering it a success or failure, further analysis is needed on factors such as student enrollment, remediation, retention, and degree completion. A few years will be required before such empirical evidence is available.

*"The fundamental premise behind the plans – that automatic admission of high school students in the top of their classes will result in racially diverse colleges – is contingent upon the continued segregation of our public school system."*

Mary Frances Berry,  
Chair, US Commission on Civil Rights

For a variety of reasons, percentage plans have the greatest impact on diversity in states with highly segregated public school systems. A 1994 report by Public Agenda indicated that Illinois ranked second behind the District of Columbia in the level of segregation of Black students in public schools. Illinois State Board of Education data for public high schools indicates that 50 percent of Black students and 21 percent of Hispanic students attend schools that are 90 to 100 percent minority. If numbers are the only consideration, a percentage plan in Illinois might qualify for admission about the same number of minority students currently enrolled. However, adopting this approach could have deleterious consequences for student retention and degree completion, as discussed below.

Highly segregated public schools tend to be less affluent and students in these schools are often exposed to a less rigorous curriculum of study. An inherent danger under the percentage plan is that less academically prepared minority students from low-achieving high schools may qualify for admission to competitive state universities, even though they lack the academic skills needed for success. Conversely, some minority students with strong academic skills who attend higher achieving high schools would no longer qualify for admissions because they do not rank high enough under the percentage plan.

A percentage plan would also place at risk for admission minority students attending Chicago magnet schools. For example, most students from Chicago's Whitney Young Magnet High School (62 percent Black and Hispanic) and Lane Technical High School (52 percent Black and Hispanic) currently qualify for admissions to competitive colleges and universities because of the quality of these students and their excellent high school preparation. However, because a percentage plan would guarantee admission to only the highest-ranked high school graduates, the impact of this plan would be to reduce the educational opportunities available to many capable magnet school students who do not place at the top of their class.

Another issue of concern is who should make decisions about student admissions. The Committee believes such decisions have been and should continue to be an institutional prerogative guided, but not dictated, by state policy. A percentage plan policy drastically alters the admissions process by making decisions formulaic, ignoring important differences in student abilities and institutional missions and needs. This policy also centralizes the decision making process, requiring all institutions to follow the same statewide criteria. Such

an approach is contrary to the philosophy behind the *Bakke* decision which acknowledges the benefits that institutions realize by choosing the mix of students that best meets their mission and goals.

In conclusion, percentage plans violate their own logic from at least two perspectives. First, these plans purport to maintain high levels of diversity without the explicit use of race or ethnicity as a factor. Evidence shows, however, that the selection of the “percentage” is based on the number of minority students that it will generate. Second, a strategy intended to broaden

participation for minority students may in fact limit access for many well prepared minority students, a group this strategy is intended to help.

### Admissions: Broadening Merit Criteria

A good student has no difficulty in gaining admission to a public university in Illinois. At some institutions, however, admission is quite competitive. Higher education admissions are based on merit and ability to complete a program of study. What constitutes merit is determined by the admissions process. In recent decades, many institutions of higher education have relied heavily upon narrow definitions of merit. Admissions decisions have relied upon standardized college admissions test results, high school grade-point average, high school class rank, and other easily quantifiable measures. The movement away from a broad-based definition of merit has increased efficiency reducing the amount of time and resources needed for admissions decisions. It also has had deleterious educational consequences.

In the past year, debate has arisen about whether standardized admissions tests serve as an appropriate indicator of merit. The President of the University of California, Richard Atkinson, has even proposed to discontinue use of the SAT in admissions decisions (retaining the use of SAT II, an achievement test). The Committee believes the issue is not whether tests, like the SAT or ACT, should be used in admissions. Research has proven their validity in predicting early college success – and we support the use of such tests, especially the Prairie State Exam. Rather, the issue is how standardized tests are used in the admissions process, that is, how much they are relied on and how much weight the scores are given.

#### Who Decides?

*“[A] university must have freedom to decide which students it will admit and which criteria it will use in its admissions decisions. This academic freedom is crucial in order for a school to fulfill its mission. At bottom, admissions officers must decide which set of applicants, considered individually and collectively, will take fullest advantage of what the college has to offer, contribute most to the educational process in college, and be most successful in using what they have learned for the benefit of the larger society.”*

*Expert report of William G. Bowen,  
Gratz, et al. v. Bollinger et al.*

Research indicates that standardized test scores are heavily influenced by a student's life circumstances. For example, students from more affluent families tend to score higher on standardized college admissions tests than do students from less affluent and poor families. These advantages are compounded by socio-economic segregation among neighborhoods and schools. Many high school students do not achieve their full academic potential because of the lack of resources and a restricted curriculum in their local schools. Nevertheless, if given an opportunity, many of these students can and do succeed in college.

Over-reliance upon test scores can also limit an institution's ability to achieve greater race/ethnic diversity. Narrow conceptions of merit will exclude some minority students who might otherwise be successful in higher education. This can also set the stage for implementation of special admissions programs that might run afoul of the principles set forth in *Bakke*.

Broader conceptions of merit can expand the applicant pool and promote inclusion, rather than exclusion, of all types of students. Merit can include many factors in addition to standardized college admissions tests and high school class

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“The movement away from a broad-based definition of merit has increased efficiency....It also has had deleterious educational consequences.”

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rank. Foremost among such factors is whether a student has been enrolled in a pre-collegiate curriculum and the grades that the student has received in these courses. Research has shown that participation and achievement in such courses correlates closely with success in college. Other broad factors that could be considered are participation in after school and summer academic programs and involvement in special academic programs such as Advanced Placement. Student motivation plays a critical role in college achievement. While there is no magic formula for assessing a person's true motivation, a careful examination of a student's academic performance should also consider the challenges and obstacles presented by family, neighborhood, and school circumstances.

The Committee strongly supports a more holistic approach to admissions decisions. Institutions should review their current admissions criteria and consider broadening the definition of merit they now use. The Board of Higher Education shall work with Illinois colleges and universities in helping to identify mechanisms that can be used to support more individualized review of student applications. The Board will also identify any additional costs that may be required to support institutional changes in admissions practices.

## Financial Aid

Illinois has a number of statewide financial aid programs that support student diversity. At the undergraduate level, the state's strong commitment to need-based financial aid facilitates student choice and provides opportunities for many different kinds of students to attend Illinois colleges and universities. Except for the Minority Teachers of Illinois Scholarship, race/ethnicity is not a factor in the distribution of aid. Yet, historically more than one third of all MAP grants awarded to students at public institutions and about one quarter of all MAP grants awarded to students at private institutions are given to minority students. At the graduate level, there is no need-based program. However, through the Illinois

Consortium for Educational Opportunity Program (ICEOP) and the Minority Graduate Student Incentive Program (IMGIP), the state provides graduate stipends to about 175 minority graduate students each year.

The Committee advocates more extensive, broad-based efforts to support diversity in Illinois higher education through targeted use of financial aid programs. Again, diversity is used in its broadest sense, consistent with the principles articulated in the *Bakke* case. Since diversity among many groups is lowest at the graduate level and since there is no graduate financial aid program comparable to MAP, the Committee proposes targeting most diversity aid to graduate/professional education.

To enhance diversity at the graduate level, the Committee would combine and expand IMGIP and ICEOP and make them one component of a new Diversity Grant Program, now to include women, especially in engineering, mathematics, and science programs, and disabled students. In contrast to MAP, the new Diversity Grants Program would be based on applications that would document student characteristics and abilities, as well as demonstrate how the award would help improve diversity within a particular program at the student's home institution. The Committee also advocates establishing a component of the Diversity Grants Program at the undergraduate level in fields such as information technology in which diversity is low on campus and in the work force.

#### Public-Private Partnerships to Improve Pre-collegiate Preparation

Inadequate student preparation, as described above, is the greatest single barrier to college participation. Many minority students attend schools in poor districts that do not offer the quality education often found in more affluent areas of the state. Many of these students are often at-risk because they lack proper academic preparation for college and motivation for further education. Pre-collegiate outreach seeks to help such students before their academic deficiencies become life crippling.

Illinois colleges and universities sponsor many initiatives that target poor areas and underrepresented students. Many business, community, religious, and not-for-profit organizations also have developed successful pre-collegiate interventions. Indeed, some programs such as the one operated by the "I Have A Dream Foundation" (see text box) have had a dramatic impact on the success of at-risk students and many students from these programs go to college.

#### **"I Have A Dream"**

The *I Have A Dream Foundation* (IHAD) helps children from low-income areas through a long-term program of mentoring, tutoring, and enrichment, with an assured opportunity for higher education. Students who remain in the program and go to college have their college costs paid for. Today there are 160 IHAD projects in 57 cities in 26 states serving more than 10,000 Dreamers. Illinois is home to five IHAD project locations – Chicago, East St. Louis, Elgin, Evanston, and North Chicago. The success of IHAD projects are phenomenal. For example, the Chicago I project showed a 69 percent graduation rate for participants in a district where the drop-out rate was 60 percent for nonparticipants.

Private, non-profit programs work because of their intense personal commitment to the students that they serve. Such programs have something to offer that public institutions and agencies can not easily duplicate but which state entities can support and help expand. For instance, could state financial aid programs be structured to reduce the financial commitment required from an IHAD sponsor? Could public universities develop their counseling programs or internships in a way that would strengthen the capability of non-profit programs? The Committee believes that there are opportunities through public-private partnerships to better serve disadvantaged students. The Board of Higher Education should bring together public and private entities to identify ways to carry out such cooperation.

## Recruitment

Over the years, Illinois institutions have expanded recruitment activities to advance campus diversity. Can more be done to extend the reach and effectiveness of these efforts? As shown above, the proportion of minority students going to college has improved in recent years, as has the college aspirations of younger minority students. Nevertheless, minority parents and educators have testified that the climate in many high schools deflates students' educational ambitions. Colleges and universities must look for opportunities to positively influence the attitude towards college participation in these schools.

The Prairie State Exam, a newly developed assessment of the State Board of Education, offers one opportunity to reach out to minority students. About two thirds of high school students now take the ACT, but fewer minority students than majority students participate. While there is no information on non-ACT participants in Illinois, the experience of other states indicates that there are many college-ready students in this untested pool. Fortunately, the Prairie State Exam, which requires all high school juniors to take the ACT, will provide new information about minority students who are well prepared for college. Colleges and universities should take advantage of the opportunity provided by the Prairie State Exam to broaden and intensify their minority recruitment.

## Summary

Student diversity is a fundamental goal or principle of higher education that provides all students with educational benefits during college and serves them well when they later assume responsibilities as citizens and employees. Student diversity not only helps colleges and universities advance their educational mission, but it also ensures that diversity continues to act as a positive, and not a divisive, force within our state and nation.

The importance of student diversity is recognized under existing law and the U.S. Supreme Court decision in the *Bakke* case. The principles of this case should be supported and closely adhered to by Illinois higher education even as we continue to seek other avenues to promote diversity. To achieve this aim, the Committee advocates using more broad-based definitions of merit in admissions decisions, increasing recruitment efforts by capitalizing upon the opportunities presented by the new Prairie State Exam, forming partnerships with private organizations that are successfully helping pre-collegiate students from disadvantaged communities attend college, and establishing a Diversity Grant Program that would increase representation in fields where diversity is lowest.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION: TWO COMPETING VISIONS

As the Committee looks forward into the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century two competing visions emerge. The first vision is bright and hopeful. It foresees a time when the increased demand of our population for a college education has been recognized and its special challenges met. In this new world, more high school students are better prepared for college than ever before. Because of this preparation, as well as the information and assistance that students receive as they begin college, more students are completing their academic programs and achieving their career goals. As a result, Illinois is more prosperous and productive.

In this not too distant time, providing access to a greater portion of our state population will enhance the diversity of our institutions. Our colleges and universities will offer a stimulating and challenging environment where no groups are given special rights but where the backgrounds and experiences of all students are recognized. In this setting, diversity within the student body will be valued and supported and, as a result, all graduates will be fully prepared to assume civic and job responsibilities.

The second vision is dark and more pessimistic. In this world, higher education has not adapted to meet new economic and social conditions. Even though the economy will demand workers with technical skills, the number of students graduating from college will vary little from previous eras. Colleges and universities and elementary/secondary schools will continue to follow separate tracks with students getting lost in transit.

Unlike past years when many students who did not go to college could enjoy successful careers, the dynamics and rewards of the economy in the second world will draw more students to college, whatever their level of preparation. Here, too many will languish and leave, unprepared to lead productive lives. Some students, of course, especially those advantaged by family income and education, will continue to do well. However, the collegiate settings in which they find themselves will be harsher, more insulated from the wider world, and, ultimately, less satisfying and successful. In such an environment, diversity will not flourish.

It is not difficult to choose which of these two worlds we might wish to live in. It is also not difficult to choose which of these worlds would benefit the state of Illinois and its citizens. The recommendations in this report seek to start Illinois higher education on the path to enter that first world. To arrive at our destination will require additional resources, and a new way of doing business. The following recommendations establish priorities and policy directions, propose changes in existing educational practices and structures, and put forward new programs to meet emerging needs. In the last analysis, however, they are but a first step in a lengthy journey that will involve consultation among many parties and adaptation to changing circumstances.



## CHAPTER VI

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations seek to reduce barriers to access, provide the right kind of access, and prepare students to live in an increasingly diverse world. To communicate the nature and intent of these recommendations, the Committee organizes them around five policy goals.

#### **Policy Goal #1: Expand the Scope of Policies and Mechanisms that Address Access Needs**

##### *Improving Pre-collegiate Preparation and School to College Transition*

- The Board of Higher Education will introduce legislation that requires all high school students to take a college core curriculum.

The Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Community College Board, and the State Board of Education should work together to:

- Align high school curricula and graduation standards with higher education admissions requirements and learning expectations.
- Develop assessment and communication tools to inform students how well they are progressing in preparing for college.
- Create “college-like” courses for high school students that remedy academic deficiencies and model college level skills.
- Create an annual “Report on Readiness for College or Work” to inform the public about the academic skills of high school graduates and college freshmen. The report should provide indicators of college readiness of high school graduates, such as results from the Prairie State Examination and enrollment in pre-collegiate core courses, and indicators of academic achievement of students in their first year of college.

##### *Expanding Commitments to Off-Campus Instruction*

- In the development of technology-based instruction, public universities should place a high priority upon baccalaureate degree completion programs and programs that address the needs of diverse populations.
- The responsibilities of Illinois community colleges should be expanded to broaden access to computers and technology-based instruction and to provide information to local residents about educational opportunities at all degree levels.
- The Board of Higher Education shall undertake analysis and collect information about the types of technology-based programs for which there exists the greatest statewide and regional need and to identify the types of technology-based programs that most effectively address the needs of disadvantaged students.
- The Illinois Century Network shall work with state agencies and Illinois colleges and universities to broaden access to computers and technology-based instruction.

##### *Providing the Right Kind of Access*

- The Board of Higher Education shall establish a Web-based Consumer Information System that promotes access as well as consumer protection. The system will provide

information about institutional programs and services. It will help students with special needs, such as students with disabilities, adult students, students living in underserved areas, minority students, and off-campus students. The Board will establish a council to provide on-going advice about the kind of information that should be included on the system.

- The Board of Higher Education and Illinois colleges and universities shall develop model programs that seek to reduce first-year attrition among types of students who have had lower rates of degree completion. Working with Illinois colleges and universities, the Board shall develop “principles of effectiveness” that describe practices that have proven effective in reducing first-year attrition among such student populations. The Board will use grant funds to develop these model projects and will disseminate these principles across the state via the Annual Report on Underrepresented Groups and the Consumer Information System. Campus reviews of support programs that serve underrepresented groups shall assess, when appropriate, the effectiveness of these units in reducing student attrition during the first year of college. Campuses shall report on their best practices and effective programs in promoting first-year retention in the Annual Report on Underrepresented Groups.

#### *Extending the Reach of Student Financial Aid*

- The eligibility requirements of the Illinois Incentive for Access program should be expanded to fund students in the first year of college who have minimal financial resources.
- Eligibility requirements of the Monetary Award Program should be expanded to students registered less than half time.

### **Policy Goal #2: More Fully Address the Access Needs of All Students**

#### *Students with Disabilities*

- The Board of Higher Education will appoint a committee to examine the feasibility and cost of establishing new processes that would facilitate the ability of students with disabilities to have timely access to published materials and textbooks. The committee will report to the Board on its findings by August, 2002.
- Illinois colleges and universities should ensure that the technology-based courses that they offer are accessible to all students, including students with disabilities.
- The Board of Higher Education, working with Illinois colleges and universities, will convene a conference on how access and persistence of students with disabilities can be improved by new and emerging assistive technologies.
- The Board of Higher Education will incorporate information about students with disabilities into its Baccalaureate Follow-Up Survey.
- In conducting campus audits of physical barriers to accessibility, Illinois colleges and universities shall seek the involvement and advice of students and staff with disabilities.
- Illinois colleges and universities shall recruit staff and students with disabilities. Public colleges and universities shall periodically include in their annual reports on underrepresented groups information on these recruitment efforts, highlighting model programs and effective practices.

### *Students with Limited-English Proficiency*

- The Illinois Board of Higher Education shall bring together educators from higher education institutions, secondary schools, and community-based organizations to consider how new technologies can best be used to strengthen the professional development of English as a Second Language and bilingual instructors.

### **Policy Goal #3: Evaluate and Demonstrate How Diversity Promotes Learning in Higher Education Programs**

- Each public college and university should assess the efforts and success of its courses and programs to promote diversity and should incorporate such assessments into ongoing program review and academic planning processes. Such assessments should measure the benefits and learning outcomes that result from participation in diverse learning environments, as well as indicate how improvements in instructional and support programs might further enhance such benefits.
- Each public college and university should periodically report to the Board of Higher Education on the benefits and learning outcomes of efforts to provide diversity in their higher education programs. The Board of Higher Education, through its annual report on underrepresented groups, shall report to the Governor and General Assembly about these efforts, highlighting model programs and effective practices.

### **Policy Goal #4: Strengthen Statewide Efforts to Support Institutional Diversity**

- The Board of Higher Education encourages public colleges and universities to use academic and personal factors in admissions decisions in addition to high school class rank and standardized test scores.
- The Board of Higher Education will work with Illinois colleges and universities to identify and develop mechanisms and procedures that can be used to support broader review of admissions criteria and closer scrutiny of individual applications. This Board and institutions will also identify costs that may be required to support changes in institutional admissions practices.
- The Board of Higher Education will introduce legislation requesting the establishment of a Diversity Grants program. The program will have a graduate component to promote diversity among minority students, students with disabilities, and female students in engineering, science, and computer science programs. A smaller undergraduate component will support underrepresented students enrolled in fields in which diversity is low on campus and in the work force. Both components will be based on applications that will document student characteristics and abilities, as well as demonstrate how the award would help improve diversity within a particular program at the student's home institution.

### **Policy Goal #5: Expand Outreach Efforts to Pre-collegiate Students to Promote Diversity**

- The Board of Higher Education and Illinois colleges and universities will meet with private organizations that have successfully increased the academic achievement and college-going rates of disadvantaged students for the purpose of identifying how Illinois higher education might best partner with and support their programs and activities. A grant program should be established to facilitate such public/private partnerships.

- Illinois colleges and universities should make extensive efforts to recruit minority students by consulting a wide variety of sources that provide information about minority student achievement, such as test scores from the Prairie State Examination of the State Board of Education.

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