

**A PROPOSED SCOPE AND PROCESS FOR REVIEWING
*THE ILLINOIS COMMITMENT***

Submitted for: Action

Summary: In February 1999, the Illinois Board of Higher Education adopted *The Illinois Commitment*, the statewide strategic plan for Illinois higher education. The six goals and related action steps within this plan are intended to guide the state's system of higher education through the first decade of the new century. As with any effective strategic plan, it is important that *The Illinois Commitment* be assessed periodically to ensure its continued relevance and responsiveness to the needs of the state and its system of higher education. In addition to new priorities that have emerged during the four years since it was established, there have been changes to the policy and fiscal climate within Illinois that need to be recognized as well (e.g., the increased public attention to issues related to the sixth goal on higher education's productivity, cost-effectiveness, and accountability). This item presents a proposed scope and process for conducting a mid-term review of *The Illinois Commitment*.

Action Requested: That the Board of Higher Education approve the proposed scope and process for reviewing *The Illinois Commitment* described in this item.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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Background

In February 1999, the Illinois Board of Higher Education adopted the following six statewide goals for higher education that constitute *The Illinois Commitment*:

1. Higher education will help Illinois business and industry sustain strong economic growth.
2. Higher education will join elementary and secondary education to improve teaching and learning at all levels.
3. No Illinois citizen will be denied an opportunity for a college education because of financial need.
4. Illinois will increase the number and diversity of citizens completing training and education programs.
5. Illinois colleges and universities will hold students to even higher expectations for learning and will be accountable for the quality of academic programs and the assessment of learning.
6. Illinois colleges and universities will continually improve productivity, cost-effectiveness, and accountability.

These goals are intended to guide Illinois higher education through the first decade of the new century. Since adopted in 1999, the Board and Illinois higher education community have worked in partnership to implement the actions necessary to achieve the six goals of *The Illinois Commitment*. A comprehensive assessment of the annual progress and results in each area are reported each December through the Statewide Results Report. Figure A provides examples of just a few of the actions taken relative to each of the six goals since the inception of *The Illinois Commitment* in 1999.

Figure A
Examples of Actions Taken to Achieve the Goals of *The Illinois Commitment*

Goal	Examples of Related Actions Taken
1. Economic Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completed an analysis of the context surrounding identified shortages in the state’s workforce in June 2002
2. P-16 Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Process underway to enhance the role of community colleges in teacher preparation
3. Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Committee on Affordability established; final report and recommendations adopted by Board in June 2003
4. Access & Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Committee on Access and Diversity established; final report and recommendations adopted by Board in August 2002 with related implementation activities ongoing.
5. High Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Process underway to ensure that all public universities and community colleges systematically assess student learning in all academic programs and use assessment results to improve these programs by 2004.
6. Productivity & Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Statewide performance indicators adopted by the Board in February 2003; implementation underway with first report to be published in December 2003

As with any effective strategic plan, it is important that *The Illinois Commitment* be assessed periodically to ensure its continued relevance and responsiveness to the needs of the state and its system of higher education. In addition to new priorities that have emerged during the four years since it was established, there have been changes to the policy and fiscal climate within Illinois that need to be recognized as well (e.g., the increased public attention to issues related to the sixth goal on higher education’s productivity, cost-effectiveness, and accountability). This brief item presents a proposed process and timeframe for conducting a mid-term review of *The Illinois Commitment*.

Proposed Scope, Process, and Timeline

The review of *The Illinois Commitment* will consider the six current goals as well as possible enhancements and additions (e.g., the Faculty Advisory Council’s proposal to add a seventh goal on enhancing the quality of life for all Illinois citizens). However, while this review may result in some changes, the core focus of the plan is expected to remain the same. In sum, this activity will serve as a mid-term assessment of *The Illinois Commitment*, with the goal of identifying any needed refinements to the existing plan.

In addition to the review of the goals, the related actions and results/accountability steps outlined in the *The Illinois Commitment* document also will be assessed. This review will identify the current status/progress of these activities as well as any modifications, deletions, or additions that need to be made.

The process for conducting this review will include an assessment of trends and changes impacting the state and its system of higher education since 1999 and likely prospects for the future. In addition, as in the initial development of *The Illinois Commitment*, input will be solicited from a broad range of stakeholders within and outside of higher education on the goals, actions, and results/accountability steps underlying the plan. It is recommended that the Board serve as a “Committee of the Whole” in guiding this process, which will convene as part of regularly scheduled Board meetings. The proposed timeframe for this review is outlined below:

- **October 2003:** Board discussion and action on item outlining proposed scope of review, process, and timeline at October Board meeting.
- **October 2003 – May 2004:** Analytical work completed and input gathered from stakeholders through interviews and web-based surveys. *Will have periodic status reports to the Board.*
- **June 2004:** Presentation and discussion of findings and draft recommendations for revisions to *The Illinois Commitment* at June meeting (*information item*).
- **June – July 2004:** Public input gathered on draft recommendations.
- **August 2004:** Board action on final recommendations.

The staff recommends adoption of the following resolution:

The Illinois Board of Higher Education approves the proposed scope, process, and timeline for the review of “The Illinois Commitment” outlined in this item. The Board will serve as a “Committee of the Whole” in guiding this process.

