



Illinois Board of Higher Education Faculty Advisory Council Position Statement

The State of Illinois is fortunate to have a considerable number of postsecondary educational institutions that offer high quality education to our students. Our institutions are diverse in their mission, size and public or private sources of funding. But they all share common goals such as offering our students the highest quality education possible; helping students develop the necessary skills that allow them to become successful in their careers and to become leaders within their disciplines at the local community, state, national or global levels. Our colleges and universities are also committed to facilitating students obtaining these objectives in a timely and economical manner.

The Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) is committed to our institutions achieving these goals. Our very active participation in recent efforts by the State legislators and IBHE in establishing appropriate metrics for performance based funding in higher education is an example of our continued commitment to accountability and transparency of our institutions as providers of high quality education to our students and as stewards of public and private funds entrusted to us.

In recent past, a number of bills have been introduced in the Illinois State Senate and House relative to higher education. Our council is grateful for the care and commitment to higher education of those who have initiated these proposed bills. However, we offer the following for consideration by our State leaders and others in pursuit of enhancing higher education in Illinois.

1. Education is a continuum that spans from kindergarten to advanced postsecondary degrees and must be treated as such. Efforts to positively influence student performance and efficiency of our State's higher education system must first identify the relevant issues and offer appropriate and targeted solutions to address those issues. We believe that blanket directives, particularly those that focus on higher education only without examining and addressing issues of quality and efficiency at previous levels are not appropriate and may indeed lead to unintended consequences and potential harm to the very students that such efforts may seek to help.
2. Quality is of utmost significance and must be included in any discussions relative to education. Efforts to increase numbers and rates without serious consideration for quality education and student success are very likely to lead to undesirable outcomes and adversely affect the critical need for the necessary human capital.
3. Decisions such as admission criteria, graduation requirements and the quality of our courses and curricula are academic issues that are best addressed by the faculty. Our faculty are most actively engaged in teaching and evaluating our students on a daily basis and are most suited for offering critical insight into any discussions on these aspects of higher education. They are also most informed about the expectations and requirements in their professional fields and can appropriately offer means for students' high performance and success. We trust that any serious efforts to affect higher education will include faculty input from the very beginning.

4. Our programs and institutions do not exist in isolation. Many of our programs and indeed institutions are subject to and bound by accreditation criteria established by leading authorities within certain disciplines and by nationally or internationally recognized and respected accrediting agencies. Efforts to affect higher education must give serious consideration to such requirements and avoid mandates that may result in loss of accreditation of our programs and institutions.
5. The IBHE Faculty Advisory Council is the most comprehensive organization in Illinois with faculty representatives from all types of postsecondary institutions including public or private four year institutions as well as community colleges. We are ready, willing and appropriately suited to actively engage in any serious discussions on higher education issues. The Council asks all State leaders and others interested in higher education issues to utilize faculty's knowledge, experience and insight by conferring with our group and to include representatives from our council in their discussions.

This statement was unanimously adopted by the IBHE Faculty Advisory Council on this day, Friday March 16, 2012.

For more information, please contact FAC Chair, Professor Abbas Aminmansour (AAmin@Illinois.edu).