

# Excellence by Design:

— 2024-2030 —

**ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY'S  
STRATEGIC PLAN**



**ILLINOIS STATE  
UNIVERSITY**  
*Illinois' first public university*

## A message from President Tarhule

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to present Illinois State University's strategic plan, *Excellence by Design: 2024-2030*. This plan is a shining example of our commitment to shared governance, with faculty, staff, students, and campus stakeholders playing an active role in contributing to the creation of this document. Guided by a strong foundational design and building on our past strategic plan, *Educate • Connect • Elevate: Illinois State—The Strategic Plan for Illinois' First Public University 2018-2023*, the plan emphasizes Illinois State's commitment to excellence through continued improvement to shape an exciting future.

A 22-member task force was commissioned in the fall of 2022 to review, revise, and update our strategic plan. Through campus consultations, stakeholder feedback, and thoughtful analysis, the task force updated Illinois State's mission and vision statements and core values for an evolving era. Goals and objectives are outlined within four Strategic Directions that inspire and prioritize success for the next five years.

*Excellence by Design: 2024-2030* will serve as a practical guide for all units within the University for planning and resource allocation decisions, while also providing actionable tracking for our stated goals. This plan will guide Illinois State as it forges a new educational path across the next five years. I, along with the rest of the University community, look forward to taking this journey with our Redbirds. After all, excellence does not just "happen" at Illinois State University; it is there by design.

Respectfully,



Dr. Aondover Tarhule  
President, Illinois State University







## Introduction

Welcome to *Excellence by Design: 2024-2030*, the strategic plan for Illinois State University. Strategic planning has been at the forefront of the University for several decades and has guided it through growth and success as a nationally recognized leader in higher education.

The University finds itself uniquely positioned to build and expand on the successes of our rich past to take the necessary steps to respond to the needs of future students while still providing our inimitable Redbird culture and learning experiences.

Since our founding as a modest normal school in 1857, Illinois State University has continually evolved to meet the growing needs of students from the state of Illinois and beyond. Expanding on its founding mission to educate the next generation of teachers, Illinois State University provides higher education in multiple disciplines to meet the complex demands of a continually changing world.

This plan is the next phase in our maturation as an institution of higher education and charts a course for expanding our efforts for continuous improvement through collaborative, designed excellence.

After spending a year in extensive consultation with campus stakeholders and community partners, the task force crafted a strategic plan that serves as a broad document, intended to create a guiding framework for all university divisions, colleges, and units to further our shared vision. The strategic directions and the core values they convey are inspired by our campus partners and are instrumental in the next phase of *Excellence by Design*.

While the strategic directions, goals, and objectives are flexibly crafted to allow campus partners latitude to accomplish them, divisions, colleges, and units will come together to develop specific actions for each goal of the plan, as well as coordinate the metrics for both accountability and success. In this way, *Excellence by Design* is a plan that truly embodies Illinois State University's rich history and commitment to shared governance, bringing all of campus together to accomplish, as President Richard Edwards so eloquently stated in 1867, the "grandest of enterprises."

*Excellence by Design* serves as a dynamic strategic plan, with flexible actions that will adjust, grow, and refine as goals are met and conditions change. *Excellence by Design* seeks to ambitiously strive for growth and success in new endeavors, while continuing to provide the quality education and fiscal responsibility that Illinois State University is known for.

This document is the result of extensive input from the campus community (see "Appendix A"), including surveys, forums, and group discussions. The engagement in this process from all university stakeholders—students, faculty, staff, alumni, community friends, and partners—is a shining example of Illinois State University's current success and heralds our future achievements.

## Our Mission

Illinois State University prepares diverse, engaged, and informed members of society through collaborative teaching, scholarship, and service.

## Our Vision

Illinois State University will be a national leader in student-focused education connecting teaching, research, innovation, and intercultural understanding.

## Our Values

### Excellence in Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship

Illinois State University students, faculty, and staff excel in the pursuit of learning as an active, lifelong process through a balanced model of teaching, research, creative productivity, and experiential learning.

### Individualized Attention

Illinois State University provides a supportive, student-centered environment that maximizes each student's potential. The University fosters academic and personal growth, recognizes unique educational aspirations, and values each faculty and staff member's contributions to student success.

### Equity, Diversity, Access, and Belonging

Illinois State University upholds and models a campus culture of belonging dedicated to equity, diversity, access, and social justice for all.

### Collaboration

The Illinois State University community works collaboratively through shared governance to ensure a culture of success, development, and continuous improvement. The University partners with business, industry, government, and educational entities to expand outreach and provide leadership expertise in local, statewide, national, and international initiatives.

### Community and Civic Engagement

Illinois State University prepares students to be informed, ethical, and engaged global leaders who will shape, uphold, and advance civic engagement as a lifelong responsibility for the betterment of society.

### Respect

Illinois State University fosters a culture that embodies mutual respect, openness to new ideas, different cultural perspectives, and a synergistic approach to problem-solving. Faculty, staff, and students promote understanding, acknowledge each other's rights to express differing opinions, and listen and respond to opposing views with civility.

### Integrity

Illinois State University promotes the highest levels of ethical standards and accountability in personal and professional actions in all endeavors.







## Our Strategic Directions

Illinois State University's strategic plan, *Excellence by Design: 2024-2030*, was drafted with four strategic directions:

- I. Cultivate a Culture of Success and Belonging**
- II. Foster a Culture of Responsible Stewardship**
- III. Elevate Our Institutional Excellence**
- IV. Expand Mutually Beneficial Partnerships**

Each strategic direction includes a set of specific strategic goals supported by objectives and actions designed to help support the overarching target expressed by the strategic direction. These strategic directions are of equal importance to Illinois State University and are ordered in no specific hierarchy.





## **STRATEGIC DIRECTION I:**

# **Cultivate a Culture of Success and Belonging**

Illinois State University actively cultivates and promotes a culture of success and belonging for all members of our campus community. By promoting a culture of well-being; championing student success; nurturing equity, diversity, access, and belonging; and bolstering faculty and staff, our Redbirds have an environment to flourish and thrive.



## GOAL A

### Champion Student Success

- OBJECTIVE 1:** Prioritize initiatives designed to shorten time to degree completion
- OBJECTIVE 2:** Expand student support resources for both personal and academic success to increase retention
- OBJECTIVE 3:** Elevate career development and readiness
- OBJECTIVE 4:** Encourage student engagement through cocurricular involvement



## GOAL B

### Nurture Equity, Diversity, Access, and Belonging

- OBJECTIVE 1:** Evaluate and expand incentives that cultivate equity, diversity, access, and belonging
- OBJECTIVE 2:** Enhance campus internationalization efforts and global engagement experiences
- OBJECTIVE 3:** Implement outcome-driven, best practice strategies that bridge gaps impacting underserved students, faculty, and staff
- OBJECTIVE 4:** Expand support services and programming to meet the unique needs of varied student communities



## GOAL C

### Promote a Community of Well-Being

- OBJECTIVE 1:** Highlight, promote, and expand student services
- OBJECTIVE 2:** Broaden support to meet Redbird mental health needs
- OBJECTIVE 3:** Create infrastructure that supports and promotes programs and initiatives that enhance the well-being of students, faculty, and staff

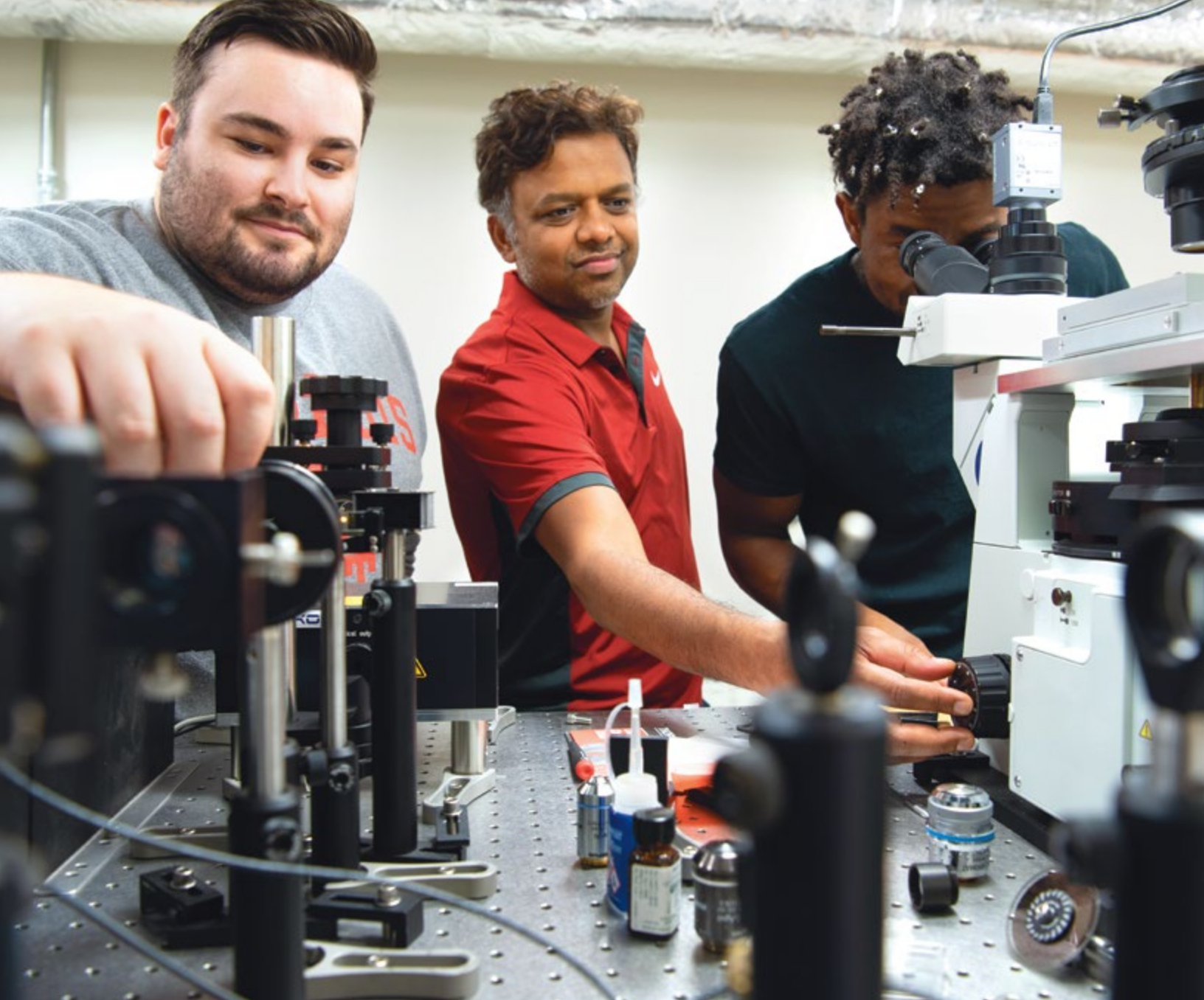


## GOAL D

### Bolster Faculty and Staff Success

- OBJECTIVE 1:** Enhance learning and development programming to promote employee growth and skill-building
- OBJECTIVE 2:** Attract and retain talented faculty and staff through various compensation strategies
- OBJECTIVE 3:** Expand on a maximally adaptive and flexible workforce





## **STRATEGIC DIRECTION II:**

# **Foster a Culture of Responsible Stewardship**

Illinois State University is dedicated to maintaining a quality environment for past, present, and future Redbirds to enjoy in perpetuity, while simultaneously encouraging the pursuit of learning. By improving efficiencies on campus, advancing our strategic enrollment management methods, investing in campus infrastructure, and expanding our commitment to a culture of sustainability, Illinois State responsibly stewards our resources, talent, and learners for generations to come.



## GOAL A

### Improve Efficiencies Across Campus

- OBJECTIVE 1:** Optimize resource allocation and utilization in support of university goals
- OBJECTIVE 2:** Continually update technology to meet the needs of campus
- OBJECTIVE 3:** Improve business processes to create efficiencies and increase effectiveness



## GOAL B

### Advance Strategic Enrollment Management Methods

- OBJECTIVE 1:** Increase enrollment to strategically expand access to an Illinois State education
- OBJECTIVE 2:** Evaluate and align resources to support access, enrollment, and persistence to graduation for all students
- OBJECTIVE 3:** Expand innovative recruitment and retention strategies at every level



## GOAL C

### Invest in Campus Infrastructure and Operational Resiliency

- OBJECTIVE 1:** Develop a dynamic master plan that guides future growth and development
- OBJECTIVE 2:** Address capital renewal issues with a priority on life/safety concerns
- OBJECTIVE 3:** Invest in campus safety efforts
- OBJECTIVE 4:** Implement continuity of operations



## GOAL D

### Expand Our Commitment to a Culture of Sustainability

- OBJECTIVE 1:** Support sustainability through academic programs and scholarly activities
- OBJECTIVE 2:** Optimize campus operations to maximize sustainability
- OBJECTIVE 3:** Educate and empower faculty, staff, and students to be stewards of sustainability





## **STRATEGIC DIRECTION III:**

# **Elevate Our Institutional Excellence**

Illinois State University seeks to elevate our institutional excellence by increasing the impact of our scholarly and creative activities, consistently meeting the needs and aspirations of today's learners, and focusing on enhancing the University's brand awareness, sharing our contributions, services, and successes with the world.



## GOAL A

### Increase the Impact of Our Scholarly and Creative Productivity

- OBJECTIVE 1:** Provide comprehensive support for increased scholarship and creative productivity
- OBJECTIVE 2:** Increase and reward faculty-, staff-, and student-generated scholarship
- OBJECTIVE 3:** Pursue important and wide-reaching outlets to showcase research and creative productivity within each discipline or areas of expertise



## GOAL B

### Meet the Needs and Aspirations of Today's Learners

- OBJECTIVE 1:** Create new programs and expand capacity in existing programs to meet the pedagogic, career aspirations, and workforce needs of students and employers
- OBJECTIVE 2:** Develop flexible, innovative teaching and learning experiences to support traditional and nontraditional students and working professionals
- OBJECTIVE 3:** Strategically increase and expand our graduate programs and offerings
- OBJECTIVE 4:** Pursue flexible modality options and opportunities to support student learning



## GOAL C

### Enhance Institutional Recognition

- OBJECTIVE 1:** Elevate Illinois State's branding and communication strategies
- OBJECTIVE 2:** Create compelling narratives about Illinois State's accomplishments and ensure wide dissemination among state, national, and global audiences
- OBJECTIVE 3:** Invest in first impressions of campus that inspire and delight students and visitors





## **STRATEGIC DIRECTION IV:**

# **Expand Mutually Beneficial Partnerships**

Illinois State University recognizes that success is the result of collaboration, be it in the classroom, across the community, or around the globe. Striving to be a bastion of cooperation through coordinated internal engagement, enhancing the culture of philanthropy, and targeted external engagement, all participants can benefit from accomplishments together.



## GOAL A

### Foster Coordinated Internal Engagement

- OBJECTIVE 1:** Leverage relationships and expertise to support collaboration across the University
- OBJECTIVE 2:** Encourage interdisciplinary learning and scholarship
- OBJECTIVE 3:** Improve campus communication and transparency

## GOAL B

### Enhance a Culture of Philanthropy

- OBJECTIVE 1:** Strengthen engagement with university alumni and friends in giving back to the University
- OBJECTIVE 2:** Create greater opportunities for private support of student recruitment, success, and persistence
- OBJECTIVE 3:** Increase faculty and staff involvement in university philanthropy
- OBJECTIVE 4:** Develop, plan, and initiate the next university campaign

## GOAL C

### Target External Engagement

- OBJECTIVE 1:** Enhance collaboration with legislators to advance the mission of the University
- OBJECTIVE 2:** Engage with partners to increase awareness and enhance research projects
- OBJECTIVE 3:** Strengthen and expand our corporate relationships
- OBJECTIVE 4:** Maintain and expand civic and local community connections and communications
- OBJECTIVE 5:** Foster relationships with community colleges and international institutions



# Appendix A

## Planning and Consultation Processes

In the fall of 2022, a Strategic Planning Task Force (Appendix B) was appointed by the Illinois State University president to develop a new strategic plan for Illinois State University. The task force was charged to build upon the previous university strategic plan, *Educate • Connect • Elevate: Illinois State*, and look for opportunities to further advance Illinois State as a premier institution within the state and nation. The task force was further charged to consult with campus partners and local community and business leaders to help inform the strategic plan's direction.

In the spring of 2023, the task force sought input from students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members through a survey, group discussions, and presentations from campus partners. Approximately 17,000 unique responses were collected and reviewed. This information provided the foundation for the development of the new strategic plan draft, *Excellence by Design: 2024-2030*.

In the fall of 2023, the task force again sought input from the same constituencies on the strategic plan draft, offering opportunities to provide feedback through a survey, group discussions, and open forums. The task force carefully reflected on the feedback received and made revisions to the strategic plan draft.

*Excellence by Design: 2024-2030* received approval from the president's cabinet, endorsements from the Illinois State University shared governance groups: Academic Senate, Student Government Association, Administrative/Professional Council, and Civil Service Council, and then was approved by the Illinois State University Board of Trustees on May 10, 2024. In May 2025, the Board of Trustees approved extending the time frame of the strategic plan to 2030.

## Groups consulted by the Strategic Planning Task Force

Academic Advising Council  
Academic Leadership Council  
Academic Senate Planning and Finance Committee  
Administrative/Professional Council  
Alumni Association Board  
Bloomington-Normal Economic Development Council  
McLean County Chamber of Commerce  
City of Bloomington Leadership  
Civil Service Council  
College of Applied Science and Technology Council  
College of Arts and Sciences Council  
College of Business Coordinating Team  
College of Education Council  
Graduate Council  
Illinois State University Foundation Board  
Intercollegiate Athletics Leadership Team  
Mennonite College of Nursing Leadership Council  
Milner Library Council  
Office of the President Leadership  
President's Cabinet  
Student Affairs Council  
Student Government Association  
Town of Normal Leadership  
Vice President of Finance and Planning Leadership Team  
Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Leadership Team/College Dean's Council  
Vice President of University Advancement Leadership Team  
Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts Council







## Appendix B

### Strategic Planning Task Force Members

**Brian Beam\***, Executive Director, University Marketing and Communications

**Kate Boutilier**, Academic Advisor, School of Communication, Administrative/Professional Council

**Dr. Indu Christopherson**, Instructional Assistant Professor, Chemistry

**Charley Edamala\***, Associate Vice President, Technology Solutions, and Chief Information Officer

**Angela Engel\***, Director, Planning, Research, and Policy Analysis

**Dr. Kristina Falbe**, Assistant Professor, School of Teaching and Learning

**Dr. Craig Gatto\***, Associate Vice President of Academic Administration, Office of the Provost (beginning February 2023)

**Dr. Shawn Hitchcock**, Professor, Chemistry

**Dr. Martha Horst**, Professor, School of Music, Academic Senate

**Dr. James Jones**, Director, Katie School of Insurance and Risk Management

**Dr. J. Scott Jordan**, Chair, Psychology

**Katy Killian\***, Chief of Staff, Office of the President

**Megan Kybartas**, Graduate Student (beginning August 2023)

**Derek Lough**, Graduate Student (through July 2023)

**Dr. Danielle Miller-Schuster\***, Associate Vice President, Division of Student Affairs

**Dr. Judy Neubrandner**, Dean, Mennonite College of Nursing

**Dr. Jamie Neville**, Assistant Director for Facilities, University Housing Services, Civil Service Council

**Nona Richardson\***, Executive Associate Athletics Director, Intercollegiate Athletics (through November 2023)

**Chris Roberts\***, Planning Coordinator, Planning, Research, and Policy Analysis

**Zach Roy**, Undergraduate Student, Student Government Association

**Anne Shelley**, Assistant Professor, Milner Library (through July 2023)

**Dr. Christina Soyoung Song**, Assistant Professor, Family and Consumer Sciences (through April 2023)

**Dr. Iuliia Tetteh**, Associate Professor, Agriculture (beginning May 2023)

**Rick Valentin**, Professor, Creative Technologies, School of Music

**Dr. Ani Yazedjian\***, Vice President and Provost, Academic Affairs (through February 2023)

### Task Force Support

**Holly Johnson**, Data Communications Coordinator, Planning, Research, and Policy Analysis

*\*Indicates Steering Team Member*





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