



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Illinois Student Assistance Commission Endorses IBHE Higher Education Strategic Plan

CHICAGO – [Illinois Student Assistance Commission](#) (ISAC) Commissioners officially endorsed the IBHE 2021 Higher Education Strategic Plan at the ISAC Commission meeting yesterday. [A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability and Growth](#) recognizes the critical role Illinois higher education plays in a thriving Illinois economy, broad prosperity, and equitable paths to opportunity for all its residents. The plan was developed by the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) in partnership and collaboration with ISAC and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), and with participation from a host of partners.

“This thoughtful, well-researched, executable plan is the culmination of a collaborative and inclusive process that brought together not only education experts, but also hundreds of stakeholders across various sectors of the Illinois economy to help chart a course for higher education that will give every Illinoisan opportunities that enable them to follow a path to their best future,” said Kevin Huber, ISAC Chair. “I’m proud of the significant participation of members of our Commission, and ISAC staff, in the planning process.”

Commission members and ISAC staff were deeply involved in the development of the plan, from facilitating focus groups and serving as thought partners, to participating on the IBHE Strategic Plan Advisory Committee and Design Working Groups, and in focus groups.

The 25 strategies outlined in the plan drive towards meeting three key goals:

- **Equity:** Closing equity gaps for students who have been left behind. The plan outlines strategies to close equity gaps that disproportionately impact Black, Latinx, and other students of color, low-income students, working adults, and students from rural communities.
- **Sustainability:** Building a stronger financial future. Strategies address financial sustainability for both individuals and higher education institutions.
- **Growth:** Increasing talent and innovation to drive economic growth. Strategies address a closer alignment between educational institutions and centers for entrepreneurship and innovation to build a future-ready workforce.

“As an agency that has long been focused on improving educational equity and access, ISAC’s programs and services play an important role in helping to meet the goals of the Strategic Plan,” said Eric

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Zarnikow, ISAC Executive Director. “From the critical funding provided to low-income college students through the Monetary Award Program (MAP), to providing free assistance with college planning and financial aid to any resident of Illinois statewide, we will continue to work to not only increase opportunities for those that have faced barriers to access, but also to help ensure that all Illinoisans are aware of and can take advantage of those opportunities.”

Find out more about the IBHE Strategic Plan at <https://ibhestrategicplan.ibhe.org/>.

About ISAC

The mission of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) is to provide Illinois students with information and assistance to help make education beyond high school accessible and affordable. ISAC provides comprehensive, objective, and timely information about education and financial aid for students and their families—giving them access to the tools they need to make the educational choices that are right for them. Then, through the state scholarship and grant programs ISAC administers, ISAC can help students make those choices a reality. Find us at isac.org or on [Facebook](#) (@ILStudentAssistance), [Twitter](#), on Instagram @ISACfinaid, and on [YouTube](#).

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