



A PARTNER IN DIVERSITY

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ILLINOIS STATE
UNIVERSITY

Illinois' first public university

A **diverse** and **inclusive** community



Illinois State University affirms and encourages community and an informed respect for differences among students, faculty and staff by fostering an inclusive environment characterized by ethical behavior and social justice that prepares students to be fully engaged participants in a global society. The University supports a diverse faculty and staff who mentor a diverse student population. The University endeavors to create a varied and inclusive community where all students, staff and faculty are active participants in a global society characterized by teamwork, respect for differences, civic engagement and educational goals that celebrate diversity.

These above words define Illinois State's commitment to "Diversity," one of five core values in our University's strategic plan, *Educating Illinois*.

For Illinois State, diversity means creating and maintaining a welcoming environment for all who teach, learn, live and work on our campus. It directs us to provide high quality programs, services, facilities and technologies that invite and nurture a diverse community.

If you visit the Diversity link on Illinois State's homepage, IllinoisState.edu, you will find pathways to the myriad resources we offer to students, faculty and staff members.

But Illinois State also connects with the greater community, forming diversity partnerships with dozens of local organizations and welcoming many others for on-campus programs and activities.

These pages share just a sample of the many ways Illinois State adds to the rich character of our community, and they illustrate why we are a community partner in diversity.

Sincerely,

Al Bowman
President
Illinois State

Special Olympics Illinois

For 35 years, Illinois State University has been an important partner to the state chapter of Special Olympics, an organization that provides training and competition in Olympic-style sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. The University is home to the headquarters of Special Olympics Illinois and hosts the annual state Summer Games and state Basketball Tournament.

Nearly 21,000 athletes participate in events put on by Special Olympics Illinois. The organization also serves more than 6,000 children ages 2–7 with its Young Athletes program.

The state's Summer Games bring more than 3,700 athletes and nearly an equal number of volunteers to the Illinois State campus each June.

Illinois plays a prominent role in the history of the global Special Olympics movement. The first Special Olympics competition was held in Chicago in 1968. The organization now has programs in every U.S. state and more than 180 countries. In 1977, the Special Olympics Illinois headquarters moved to Illinois State.

“The collaboration with Illinois State University has played a significant role in the growth of Special Olympics Illinois,” said Doug Snyder, Special Olympics Illinois president and CEO. “Prior to building our headquarters, the University actually provided office space during the 1970s and early 1980s. The University facilities and staff have truly become a part of the organization's family. From faculty and



staff to students, Illinois State makes a difference in the lives of those we serve and we deeply value the relationship.”

Since the partnership began, an Illinois State University employee has always been a member of the nonprofit organization's board of directors. “Illinois State is proud to support the work of Special Olympics Illinois,” said Chuck Scott, executive director of Facilities Management at Illinois State and the board's immediate past chair. “The athletic training programs and games allow children and adults with intellectual disabilities to be confident athletes and real competitors. I began as a volunteer at the Summer Games in 1986 and truly enjoy advocating for this worldwide movement.”

Habitat for Humanity

The Illinois State University and Illinois Wesleyan University chapter of Habitat for Humanity is part of an international social movement to eradicate substandard housing. In partnership with Habitat for Humanity of McLean County, the ISU-IWU chapter has built at least one home every year since 1995.

Student volunteers work on every aspect of a building project, including landscaping, framing, siding, roofing, drywall, insulation and trim. The only exceptions are tasks that require skilled labor, such as electrical and plumbing systems. Habitat families also contribute



hundreds of hours of labor to help build the houses they will eventually own and occupy. Families selected as clients are low-income, working people from across the Bloomington-Normal community who live in substandard housing. Habitat houses are sold to partner families at no profit and financed with affordable, no-interest loans.

“There is a dire lack of affordable housing in this community,” said Tom Gerschick, associate professor of sociology and Habitat chapter co-advisor. “By working with families, Habitat can help renters become homeowners. When a family owns a home, they develop a stronger commitment to the neighborhood where they live, which in turn makes a stronger community. They also begin to improve their own economic situation through tax breaks for home ownership.”

Working with the student volunteers to build houses is a transformative experience for Habitat for Humanity families, such as Carol Mack and her children. “We loved building our home with the students,” said Mack. “No matter how busy they were with classes and studying, they made time to come build with us. That was a good lesson for my children. The house was so important to us. It meant that we would never have to move our family again. No more rentals. This was ours.”

The ISU-IWU Habitat for Humanity chapter was chosen as the 2010 Habitat for Humanity Campus Chapter of the Year from among more than 500 campus chapters across the nation.

Support for children with disabilities enriches learning and development

Children with disabilities benefit from the continuous work at Illinois State University to deliver and improve strategies that help them learn and develop to their full potential. The Special Education Assistive Technology (SEAT) Center and the Autism Spectrum Institute connect educators and families to training opportunities, evidence-based interventions and a network of professionals.

A teacher who understands how to use assistive technology (AT) in the classroom can help visually impaired students learn at the same rate as classmates, empower children with physical disabilities to speak or move in ways that spare them from social and physical isolation and enable children with learning disabilities to succeed in a general education curriculum.

“The SEAT Center has a long history of working with members of the local education community. Since its inception, the SEAT Center has helped schools develop the capacity for using classroom technology effectively to meet the needs of students with disabilities,” said Jeff Bakken, Special Education department chair.

With intensive early intervention, children with autism spectrum disorders are far more likely to develop the foundation for lifelong skills that result in a higher quality of life and less intense special services when they are older. The Autism Spectrum Institute offers supportive education programs and trains educators and families of children and youth with autism spectrum disorders. The institute provides a network of consultants that can assist in identifying,



selecting and implementing effective programs. Information for families and professionals is shared through workshops, trainings and a lending library.

“There are so many families like us in rural communities that don’t have access to services, and our school systems are not educated,” said Leslie Werries, mother to 12-year-old Cal, who has an autism spectrum disorder. “They have provided support and workshops and held conferences with teachers. They have gone above and beyond. I have actually been able to bring people into this community to help with my son, service providers from other places that I may not have known anything about.”

3 important ways Illinois State attracts diverse populations to the University and community

1. You Can Do ISU

This open house program brings high school students from traditionally under-represented groups and first-generation students to the campus to learn more about making college an affordable reality. The program introduces students to the campus, provides admissions counseling and gives families the necessary tools to navigate the admission and financial aid processes. In the first year (2007), approximately 100 people were in attendance. In its fourth year on Oct. 31, 2010, the number grew to approximately 550.

2. Application workshops

These application workshops are an opportunity for students to meet personally with an admissions representative at their high school or community college to discuss options for admission to Illinois State University. Typically, this program assists students from traditionally underrepresented groups or first-generation college students who have overcome hardship in achieving their academic goals. This year, ISU invited about 70 high schools and community colleges throughout Illinois to participate. During the fall semester, the University conducted 35 high school application workshops, mainly in the Chicago Public School district.

3. First Look

First-Look freshman students admitted for the fall semester are invited to campus for an overnight stay during a weekend in April. This program allows a student who is making a final decision about attending college to become acclimated to campus, to meet other incoming freshmen, to gather information and answers to questions and to become acquainted with Illinois State University faculty and staff. In April 2011, 140 students attended the program of which 82 ultimately chose to attend Illinois State University.

Illinois high school students learn what college is about

High school students who may be at risk of dropping out are getting encouragement to graduate and are learning how to prepare for college thanks to a partnership between Illinois State University and the Normal-based Great Plains LIFE Foundation. Last April, nearly 80 students from Bloomington-Normal, Springfield, Decatur, Peoria, Champaign and Rockford who are participants in the “Stay 4” Project visited Illinois State to find out about the college admissions process and the academic and social culture of campus.

“The campus visit allows the high school students to see what it’s like to be a college student,” said Ja’Niah Downing, an Illinois State admissions counselor. “They get a chance to tour the campus and get information about different academic majors. We also give them information about how to apply for admission to college. Getting more students to enroll at a university—even if it isn’t Illinois State—is a major goal of the campus visit.”

The Great Plains LIFE Foundation’s “Stay 4” Project works with school districts to support high school students who demonstrate the ability to succeed, but are considered to be at risk for dropping out before graduation. Through the program, students meet regularly with school guidance counselors and with mentors from the local community. Students who meet the academic and extracurricular requirements of the program and who

enroll in a college, university or trade school after graduation receive \$1,000 scholarships to support their ongoing education.

The campus visits for “Stay 4” participants came about thanks to meetings between Paul Segobiano, Great Plains LIFE Foundation director of development, and Illinois State President Al Bowman.



“President Bowman’s commitment and that of the University staff to this program is making a tremendous difference in our students’ lives,” Segobiano said. “Most of them would not have an opportunity for this type of on-campus experience were it not for Illinois State. They conclude their day inspired with the realization that a college education can become a reality for them.”

Walking the catwalk for a cause

Lights bounce off colorful costumes and celebrity doppelgangers parading a catwalk flanked by a sold-out crowd. The spotlight is on the Pride Charity Drag Show performers, but the show illuminates something else—a nonprofit cause.

“This event is important for two reasons. First, it is a fundraiser for a local GLBTQ organization, so it is a way to give back to the community,” said Mark Vegter, organizer of the event’s professional performers. “It also raises awareness and exposes people to something fun and exciting that they may have never seen before.”

Pride, the student group that organizes the show, aims to provide a safe social atmosphere for individuals at Illinois State University and in the community who identify themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, questioning and allied (GLBTQA). Members donated proceeds from the 2011 show to the Central Illinois Safe Schools Alliance (CISSA), a local group that seeks to end the bullying of students because of sexual orientation or gender identity.



“It is a lot of fun to entertain people. But it is also a good cause that a gay person or drag performer can take part in,” said Sharon Sha-realike, the event’s emcee. “It is also unique to this area to have a drag show of such a large scale with such a large following. We always have a mixed crowd of people from all different backgrounds.”

Afrocentric art show finds home on campus

Opportunities to experience culture, in every sense of the word, abound at Illinois State University.

Sisters & Friends is a local group of professional black women who champion African American art and artists of the African Diaspora. Illinois State administration has made it possible for the Sisters & Friends Afrocentric Fine Arts Show to exhibit at the Alumni Center. Now approaching its 17th year, the show has grown with the help of promotion to the campus community and alumni.

“The current and past administrations recognized how important something like this was to the community, and they were willing to be

a part of it,” said Glenda Masingale Manson, founding member of Sisters & Friends.

The relationship is reciprocal, as the group regularly awards scholarships to Illinois State art students.

“Our whole goal is to help prepare artists of the future and preserve the legacy of African American artists. To know that we have a part in the future of the art world and the students of Illinois State, we think that is very important,” said Masingale Manson.



International Fair a celebration of diversity

A sampling of food and entertainment from all corners of the world is delivered to Bloomington-Normal's doorstep each year. International Fair is a two-day event where guests can visit booths that represent countries, regions of the world and community organizations. Students prepare food from their home countries, provide live entertainment and wear traditional costumes.

The Illinois State University registered student organization United International Association coordinates the event, but it is truly a community collaboration. In addition to the 20 student organizations and 200 student volunteers, 15 community organizations and 100 off-campus volunteers participated, and nearly 1,000 people attended in 2011.



“The International Fair is the greatest cross-cultural event around,” said Sarah Jome, associate director of the Office of International Studies and Programs. “People of all ages and backgrounds learn so much from each other and make personal and professional connections through what they find at the fair. It’s just a wonderful learning experience for so many people.”

United International Association won the Outstanding Multicultural/Diversity Program of the Year award for the 2011 event. International Fair has been an Illinois State tradition for more than 40 years and is as popular in the community as it is on campus. The 42nd annual International Fair will be held on March 3, 2012.

Multicultural Leadership Program

Where will our community find its future leaders? Who will educate and mentor them? How will they learn to use their talents and passions to better serve our vibrant and diverse communities?

One answer to all of these questions is the Multicultural Leadership Program (MCLP). Founded in 2009, the MCLP is an intense professional development curriculum that provides a framework to those preparing to step into leadership roles within our communities.

The MCLP is administratively housed in Illinois State University's historic Fell Hall. As an administrative partner to the MCLP, the University provides office and meeting space as well as supplies to assist in program operations.

Goals of the MCLP include preparing skilled, informed individuals for leadership positions in public, private, educational,



political and nonprofit sectors; fostering leadership diversity through community welfare and civic participation; and promoting inter-community unity.

The MCLP focuses on cultivating emerging leaders to strengthen and support our vital and complex community. Emerging leaders are not defined by age, but by both intent and action. MCLP classes are composed of 25 individuals who meet for biweekly sessions spread over eight months, August through April, every year. Class participants are chosen on the basis of their demonstrated commitment to community issues, desire to learn and intent to contribute to the community at large.

“As our third class of 25 leaders begins their journey through our program, we are so very grateful for Illinois State University's tremendous support of the MCLP,” said Program Director Beni Kawakita. “Our partnership with ISU has been invaluable in helping us to achieve our goals—to equip leaders with the skills they need and help them define their passions, and ultimately to make our community an even better place to live. Because of ISU's investment in us, we are able to invest in others.”

More than 48 participants have already graduated from the MCLP. To learn more about the program, visit the MCLP website at public.bn-mclp.org.



Illinois State University Police diversity initiatives

The Illinois State University Police considers diversity to be a core value. The department strives to be a microcosm of the community it serves and has had great success during the last 25 years recruiting minorities, women and university graduates to its ranks. Counting minorities and females, 50 percent of the department's sworn officers come from underrepresented populations.

Outreach is a hallmark of numerous programs offered by University Police to enhance both a sense of understanding and community. Officers and staff participate in ongoing training in cultural diversity, intercultural, gender and nonverbal communications. Most sworn officers have also attended advanced hate and biased crime investigations training through the University of California San Bernardino, sponsored by the Southern Poverty Law Center. One of the department's numerous crime prevention programs focuses on identifying and reporting hate crimes on campus.

The University Police also partners with various initiatives both on and off campus to better serve the Bloomington-Normal community. The department was actively involved in the creation of the Minority and Police Partnership (MAPP) in 2001.

“MAPP is comprised of representatives of minority groups in McLean County and members of local law enforcement agencies,” said University Police Chief Aaron Woodruff, former MAPP co-chair. “The organization promotes improved relations between members of the minority and law enforcement communities.”

MAPP is the first organization of its kind and has been a model for other communities that are working to promote better communication between police and community members.

“MAPP serves as a conduit between law enforcement and the underrepresented minority populations in our community,” said MAPP co-chair Weihang Chang. “MAPP works for the betterment of the community as a whole by providing a platform for open and honest dialogue among the constituent groups to voice their needs and concerns.”

Illinois State athletes take the stage as mentors



What do sports, Shakespeare and community service have in common? Illinois State University Athletics is teaming up with the Illinois Shakespeare Festival and the community organization 100 Black Men to mentor teenagers.

The pilot program builds on an established partnership between Athletics and the School of Theatre. As part of a theatre class, 50 athletes are required to see plays and volunteer with guest services at the Illinois Shakespeare Festival. Both groups saw an opportunity to leverage the example and discipline of the student-athletes. 100 Black Men has ready-made mentoring materials and already serves high school students who statistically encounter more challenges navigating the college system, and who could benefit from successful college role models.

“We are very excited to be able to work with 100 Black Men and the Illinois Shakespeare Festival and have the opportunity to mentor young people and teach them the importance of athletics, the arts and

service. It is really an honor to be a part of this and fulfilling to be able to offer these kids such a holistic experience,” said Jane Fulton, associate director of Intercollegiate Athletics.

Participants in the program meet with their college mentors three times, seeing a different Shakespeare performance each time. During preshow dinners, mentors and mentees use materials from the Building Healthy Relationships curriculum as the basis for discussion. They also explore themes in Shakespeare that illustrate the mentoring concepts.

“Everybody wins,” said Dick Folsie, program coordinator and managing director in the School of Theatre. “100 Black Men has proven effective at mentoring, and college athletes are the right people to deliver the message. Additionally, the Illinois Shakespeare Festival has an opportunity to promote community and diversity and expose new generations and populations to Shakespeare. These are great resources coming together to try to make a big impact.”

Explore Illinois State online

The Illinois State University website is the place to go for diversity programs, support and news.

By accessing IllinoisState.edu and clicking on the Diversity tab on the left-hand side of the page, community members have access to information on international programs and services, women’s resources, accessibility resources, a minority business directory, Not in Our Town, and the Western Avenue Community Center, to name just a few of the internet links.

Visitors can find speakers for the popular Global Review series, a free program that features discussion and debate on international events and issues. Community members who would like to “travel around the world without leaving Bloomington-Normal” can access information on the annual International Fair, a 41-year program celebrating cultures and countries around the world via ethnic food and live entertainment. The Women’s and Gender Studies Program offers professional practice internships with community organizations as

well as a yearly symposium dedicated to women’s issues and multiple speakers during the academic year.

People coming to events on campus can find information about available disability services and accessible parking. Those who wish to volunteer in the community may choose the SEAT Center to help people with disabilities use technology by working as a peer coach or trainer. Another volunteer opportunity is the annual Expanding Your Horizons Conference, a program for girls in grades 5 through 10 that features mentors and role models for careers in the science and mathematics fields.

Those are just a few of the available internet links that provide information about diversity at Illinois State University and beyond. Visit IllinoisState.edu to explore all of the links.