An Overview of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Research, Teaching and Outreach Efforts In the Area of Education

Spring, 2013
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The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign conducted a campus-wide Visioning Excellence @ Illinois exercise throughout 2012. This report is a summary of the key strengths in the areas of health and wellness. Faculty, students and staff were invited to participate in two sessions, held on February 25 and 28, 2013, to discuss potential actions to move the Visioning Future Excellence theme of Education forward.

**Participants**

The individuals who participated during these sessions are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Department</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ilesanmi</td>
<td>Provost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antoinette</td>
<td>History</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vicki</td>
<td>Aerospace Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>Extension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adrienne</td>
<td>Educ. Policy, Orgzn &amp; Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>Kinesiology &amp; Community Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Janice</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youssef</td>
<td>Civil &amp; Environmental Engr.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>Accountancy</td>
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<td>Mary</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>Stig</td>
<td>Provost's Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brenda</td>
<td>Social Work</td>
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<td>Evangeline</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Menah</td>
<td>Chancellor's Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosa</td>
<td>Curriculum &amp; Instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michelle</td>
<td>Advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>Vice Chancellor for Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shelly</td>
<td>Food Science &amp; Human Nutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>Library Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td>Educ. Policy, Orgzn &amp; Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>Educ. Policy, Orgzn &amp; Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>Engineering Administration</td>
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<td>Ruth</td>
<td>LAS</td>
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<td>Barb</td>
<td>Provost's Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phyllis</td>
<td>Chancellor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>Kinesiology &amp; Community Health</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Current Research on Education

During the first session, participants shared some of the key activities already taking place on our campus related to this theme. The activities described below were shared either during the session or as a follow-up.

Any attempt to organize the information from our efforts into a small number of key areas risks omitting emerging advances and innovative approaches. Nonetheless, in any discussion of education research at Illinois, a number of foci emerge:

- Higher Education policy
- K-12 education policy
- STEM
- Early childhood education
- Teacher education
- Access to education
- Special education
- On line education
- Curriculum and instruction
- Evaluation and measurement
- Student learning outcomes
- Labor development
- Community college transitions

Research in these areas is supported by a substantial state-of-the-art infrastructure. The following are examples of laboratories, institutes, and units created, equipped and staffed to support research in these areas, in addition to our Colleges and Departments.

- College of Education
- School of Social Work
- Department of Curriculum and Instruction
- Department of Education Policy, Organization and Leadership
- Department of Educational Psychology
- Department of Special Education
- Department of English
- Department of Math
- Department of History
- Department of Chemistry
- Department of Biology
- Department of Physics
- Division of Human Resource Development
- Division of Higher Education
- Division of Educational Leadership and Policy
- Division of Global Studies in Education
- Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment
- Center for Education in Small Urban Communities
- Forum on the Future of Public Education
- Ubiquitous Learning Institute
- STEM Education Research Collaborative
- National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment
- Office of Community College Research and Leadership
- Children and Family Research Center

This overview also includes a brief description of academic offerings, research areas, and campus services.

**Higher Education policy**

- *The Division of Higher Education in the Department of Education Policy, Organization and Leadership:* brings together a diverse group of faculty, students, and postdoctoral researchers with scholarly interests in the field of higher education. Through collaborative projects, funded research, individual endeavors, the Higher Education Collaborative seminar series, and affiliated activities, they examine pressing concerns in areas such as higher education policy and finance, transition to college and community college education, academic administration, college students and collegiate learning outcomes, diversity and equity in education.

- *Forum on the Future of Public Education:* draws on a network of premier scholars to create, interpret, and disseminate credible information on key questions facing P-20 education.

**K-12 education policy**

- *Department of Education Policy, Organization and Leadership:* enables graduate students and faculty to support and collaborate with each other in coordinated new synergies to address the most critical issues in Preschool-12 and postsecondary education.

- *Children and Family Research Center:* conducts research on vulnerable children and families exposed to poverty, abuse, neglect, and victims of trauma to identify the best practices in policy and practice to assist families to access education, and other ways to encourage maximum and optimal outcomes.

**STEM**

*The I-STEM Education Initiative* I-STEM collaborates with Illinois campus units and external organizations locally and around the world to facilitate P-16 STEM education outreach, improve STEM teacher training and professional development, foster undergraduate and graduate STEM education reform, and shape policy and advocate for STEM education. I-STEM works with internal and external partners to evaluate STEM education programs, provide news coverage of STEM initiatives and events, to facilitate the development of education and outreach programs, and to help develop policies in Illinois and nationally that promote STEM education.
• **STEP-UP Project**: investigates the underrepresented undergraduate students in participation in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics fields at large, public, research universities. STEP-UP focuses on the experiences of undergraduate women, students of color, and low income students in STEM majors, and factors that impact their enrollment, persistence, and degree completion in the sciences.

• **Center for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education (MSTE) Program**: The Mathematics, Science, and Technology Education (MSTE) program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign promotes collaboration between widely dispersed academic researchers, K-12 school teachers, administrators and students at all levels, as well as supportive interactions with a board of experienced advisors. MSTE’s over-arching mission is to enhance student achievement and teaching performance in the fields of mathematics, science, and technology. This mission includes developing innovative uses of information technologies to support research as well as educational practice.

• **Engineering Outreach Society**: provides weekly lessons at Leal Elementary School in Urbana. Engineering students design a different project for the students each week and supervise them as they attempt to complete the projects.

• **Illinois Junior Academy of Science State Science Fair**: supports the Illinois Junior Academy of Science State Science Fair. Every year middle and high school students present their papers and projects to judges for evaluation. These are the top science students in the state of Illinois.

• **Graduate Society of Women Engineers (GradSWE)**: supports community and advocates for graduate women in engineering and for undergraduate women interested in pursuing graduate studies in engineering. Encourages women to pursue graduate school, support them throughout their graduate education, and help prepare them for their future careers after they complete their degree.

• **Space Grant Consortium**: Program objectives are derived from NASA’s original goals in teaching, research, outreach, and public service. Consists of Junior Faculty developments and workforce development for the aerospace community such as VROP programs, high school summer camps, research seed grants, and conference travel grants.

• **STEM Education Research Collaborative (SERC)**: pursues policy-relevant research on the teaching and learning of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

### Early childhood education

• **University Primary School (UPS Laboratory School at the Children’s Research/ Reading Center)**: A prek-3rd grade inclusive lab school where children are engaged in creative, challenging, and worthy curricular inquires using the project approach.

• **Early Childhood and Parenting (ECAP) Collaborative**: houses to a number of projects that focus on educating and raising young children. ECAP hosts research, technical assistance, and service projects.
Teacher education

- **Center for Education in Small Urban Communities**: focuses on enhancing teaching and learning, houses a number of professional development and outreach activities, and serves as the liaison for school-university partnerships.

- **Teaching Advancement Board (TAB)**: encourages excellence and innovation in teaching. Evaluates and fosters specific programs to improve the quality of teaching; provides support for instructional enhancement; promotes developmental activity in support of teaching. Conducting research on teaching & learning in both k-12 and higher education. Examining the scholarship of teaching and learning.

- **Illinois New Teacher Collaborative (INTC)**: provides statewide leadership for promoting new teacher induction and mentoring programs and supplying resources for those who support new teachers.

*Institute for Chemistry Literacy through Computational Science (ICLCS).* ICLCS is a National Science Foundation Math and Science Partnership (MSP) Institute designed to increase the chemistry knowledge and pedagogical skills of rural Illinois high school teachers through the use of authentic and near-authentic computational science tools. For the past five years, NCSA, the Department of Chemistry, and the College of Medicine have been conducting intensive, multi-year summer institutes for 124 teachers (ICLCS Fellows) from 119 rural school districts across Illinois. These institutes are built upon existing, successful curricula and methods, enhanced with state-of-the-art computational tools and science research data and applications. During the academic year the teachers are connected through an online Professional Learning Environment (PLE) that supports their continued growth as teachers and leaders and assists them in the use of the new chemistry materials and computational technologies in the classroom.

- **AHS-Highly engaged with Center for Teaching Excellence Project**: seeks to increase the number of meaningful courses, leadership opportunities, and community based learning experiences that are available to students in both the department of Kinesiology and Community Health and the College of Applied Health Sciences.

- **The Instructional Space Advisory Committee**: Established a forum in which new instructional facility space needs, facility design, facility scheduling, departmentally managed space, campus managed space, information technology innovations, support staffing for facilities, technology replacement budgeting, and academic program changes and needs simultaneously can be considered.

- **ACES-Teaching College Course**: A Faculty development course has been designed by excellent teachers who are ACES faculty. The purpose is to help faculty members and selected graduate students in the college execute effective and efficient instruction.

- **Chancellor’s Academy**: One week summer institute to support professional learning of K-12 teachers to work in partnership with educators by modeling instruction, demonstrating lessons, side-by-side teaching, and co-planning instruction.
Access to education

- **Principals Scholars Program**: works in conjunction with parents and teachers to prepare underrepresented and/or disadvantaged students for college preparatory pathways by focusing on the development of critical thinking, computational literacy, and higher order thinking skills as a systemic educational reform strategy.

Educational opportunities

- **Student Opportunities for After-School Resources (SOAR)**: An after-school tutoring program intended to supplement the efforts of educators at a local public elementary school and improve the reading and literacy skills of Latino children in grades 2-5. Soar provides homework and reading help, along with enrichment activities, to children who are most in need of some extra help to boost their academic interest and ability.

- **Youth Literature Festival**: A celebration of the value of literature in the lives of youth by bringing together local and national authors, illustrators, poets, and storytellers to share their stories, their craft, and their enthusiasm with children, teens and adults.

- **After School Arts Program (ASAP)**: A unique partnership between the University of Illinois and local public middle schools that provides high quality visual and performing arts instruction at no cost to public middle school students in our community.

- **Illinois 4-H Program**: Helps youth (ages 8-18) learn skills for living in a range of sustained youth development and education programs. Curriculum and programs are researched-based, focused on three primary mission mandate areas: science engineering technology, healthy living, and citizenship.

On-line education

- **Online Graduate Education**: offers working professionals and post-graduate engineers the opportunity to pursue an advanced education from a world class institution completely online. Courses and Certificate programs are taught by the same distinguished faculty, and degrees earned through the online program are exactly the same as the degrees awarded to graduates on-campus.

- **Library Support for Distance Education Programs**: provides leadership for lifelong learning and online and distance education. Designs, plans, and presents credit, noncredit and professional development programs relating to the University’s land grant mission of teaching, research, and public service to people of all ages and in all locations.

- **The Ubiquitous Learning Institute (ULI)**: center for research and inquiry into the changing conditions and possibilities of learning, as well as a site for pedagogical redesign and innovation.

Curriculum and instruction
• **World Histories from Below Project**: A three year project theme for the Center for Historical Interpretation. Consists of interdisciplinary faculty student reading group, composed of historians and as well interested University of Illinois faculty from related fields, which will focus this year on issues of shelter, sanitation, and services “from below.”

• **Enactus**: International non-profit organization that brings together student, academic and business leaders who are committed to using the power of entrepreneurial action to improve the quality of life and standard of living for people in need. The student leaders of Enactus create and implement community empowerment projects around the globe. It has prepared and shares curriculum on entrepreneurship to merchants in West Africa and Russia.

• **Youth Services Librarianship**: A rich concentration involving the study of children’s and young adult literature; storytelling and folklore in the oral tradition; young reader/writer interactions in multiple literacies; and librarianship in public and school settings. Research in the history of children, young adult, and/or school librarianships scattered through scholarly and mass market publications in library and information science, history, education, and English.

**Evaluation and measurement**

• **Measurement and Evaluation**: uses student focus groups to supplement course evaluation information provided by ICES. Focus groups emphasize specific areas chosen by the faculty member and general course and instructional issues.

• **Instructor Evaluation**: provides to faculty members written summaries of student feedback that are obtained from the focus group as well as gives faculty the opportunity to discuss this feedback with the focus group facilitator.

• **The Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment**: generates evidence for policy making that is not only methodologically but also culturally and contextually defensible.

• **The Center for Prevention Research and Development** concentrates its efforts in the areas of school reform and after-school evaluation, health and human service reform, and prevention science. The Center focuses on an ecological framework, where populations and environment intersect. It specializes in policy analysis, applied research and evaluation, online data systems and professional development and training.

**Student learning outcomes**

• **National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment**: discover and disseminate ways that academic programs and institutions can productively use assessment data internally to inform and strengthen undergraduate education, and externally to communicate with policy makers, families and other stakeholders.
• **Office of International Programs:** provides leadership in expanding the presence and strategic impact of the College of Education globally with research, exchange programs, study tours, and educational programs. The office continually seeks new opportunities and arrangements with international partners.

• **Future Scholars Institute:** A program designed specifically for students from countries around the world to provide a supportive learning environment that allows students to enhance their English communication skills and learn more about the academic and social aspects of American higher education.

• **Field Education Office:** Provides students with the opportunity to apply and integrate classroom theoretical concepts into a practice setting. Students complete a supervised internship at agencies/organizations that are located in Champaign/Urbana.

• **LINC- Learning in Community:** A course based service learning program for students from all colleges. Student teams do projects for community organizations, both logically and globally. Each section of the course is dedicated to a nonprofit organization that has proposed one or more projects of importance to the organization.

• **Diversity – Global Education:** This institution values the vast range of perspectives of individuals of all backgrounds. It’s a diversity that ignites critical thinking and scholarly debate and inspires a common passion for exploring the world of education and robust knowledge to produce learners, teachers, and educational professionals of distinction.

**Community college research and policy**

• **Office of Community College Research Lab:** researches policies, programs, and practices with a focus on P-20 preparation, transition, and completion.
Academic Offerings

- **Bachelor in Early Childhood School Education**: focuses on preparing teachers for preschool, kindergarten, and the early primary grades (one through three) of the elementary school. Graduates of the program qualify for the early childhood certificate with early childhood special education approval.

- **Bachelor in Elementary Education**: prepares teachers for grades kindergarten through nine.

- **Bachelor in Special Education**: prepares special education teachers for students aged 5-21.

- **Minor in Secondary School Teaching**: a component of the teaching option within the following Science and Letters majors: biology, chemistry, English, geology, history, mathematics, and physics.

- **Masters and PhD in Curriculum and Instruction**: consists of programs that prepare degree candidates for careers involving research and scholarship, including those in colleges and universities where research is generally combined with teacher education. Prepares scholarly practitioners for leadership positions in teacher training institutions, state education agencies, and public school districts.

- **Masters and PhD in Education Policy, Organization and Leadership**: meets the academic and professional interests of individuals preparing for careers as academic professionals, adult educators, college professors, corporate trainers, educational policy analysts, governmental administrators, instructional designers/technologists, non-profit representatives, organizational development specialists, and university administration leaders.

- **Masters and PhD in Educational Psychology**: researches a broad spectrum of diverse educational topics and contribute to progress in education through work as administrators, researchers, counselors, and a variety of other positions in scholastic, government and business arenas, as well as esteemed faculty at major universities here and abroad.

- **Masters and PhD in Special Education**: provides the opportunity to be involved in research, university teaching, and service to the field of special education during their doctoral studies.

- **Certificate in Community College Teaching and Learning Graduate Certificate Program**: increases teaching effectiveness of community college faculty and builds the instructional leadership of supervisory personnel.

- **Certificate in Human Resource Development Graduate Certificate Program**: designed for the working professional looking to increase their skill set of core HRD competencies. This curriculum provides learners with current trends accompanied with facilitation skills, and can be tailored to specific professional development needs.

- **Certificate in eLearning Graduate Certificate Program**: designed for the working professional looking to increase their skill set of core eLearning competencies.
• *Students Pushing Innovation (SPIN)* is designed to drive big ideas, skill and creativity under the direction of NCSA mentors. The program offers up to 15 paid fellowships for undergraduate students of the University of Illinois. Following a Fall 2012 kick-off open house at which students met potential mentors and learned about NCSA projects, ten students were selected to begin work in Spring 2013 on projects including XSEDE, the Illinois Informatics Institute, and eDream.

### Development and Prioritization of Potential Actions

During the session on February 25, 2013, each of the participants brainstormed potential actions that would allow the campus to make progress either in the short-term (12-18 months) or in the mid-term (3-5 years) in the theme area of Economic Development. The participants used as a reference the word cloud for this theme that was developed as a result of the first set of Visioning Excellence sessions last academic year. This word cloud is embedded below:

![Word Cloud](image)

Notes from each of the small groups were summarized and presented at the second session on February 28, 2013. The same set of participants discussed the potential set of recommended actions for the short and mid-term. After the group discussion, each individual was asked to prioritize the set of actions. To assist with the prioritization exercise, a high-level assessment of the time and financial resources needed to implement each potential action was provided (high, medium or low). Each participant was given four votes to place on the short-term actions and the three separate votes on the mid-term actions. The notes from the session and voting are provided below.
## Short-term (12-18 months)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended Potential Actions</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Create a single, visible, campus-wide entity to support excellence in teaching in all modalities (Education Quality and Value)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Provide incentives to drive the initiatives that will support excellent teaching and an enriched undergraduate experience on our campus</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Harness the Provost’s Initiative on Teaching Advancement and the Center for Teaching Excellence to retrain faculty in various practices (e.g., flipping the classroom)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Define the attributes that we want our students to obtain by the time they leave our campus, including democracy and citizenship (Learning and Critical Thinking)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Encourage faculty to recognize and appreciate undergraduate students as a “power base” (Learning and Critical Thinking)</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Provide professional development for all educators (e.g., faculty, K-12 teachers, informal educators, etc.) (Education Quality and Value)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Evaluate academic support programs to identify and promote integration and best practices (Education quality and value)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Inventory and assess the strengths and weaknesses of existing programs and practices focused on P-12 outreach (P-12)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Expand offerings (e.g., AP, College Prep, Remedial Math, etc.) for the under-resourced schools through online materials (Access)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Rebrand, re-launch student funding program and extend the target, particularly at the entry level (Access)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Identify sites of institutional scalability and develop a campus charge for public education (P-12) outreach (P-12)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Promote/ market and sell the University of Illinois classroom experience, in part to counteract negative perceptions of the large size of Illinois (Learning and Critical Thinking)</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Provide opportunities for alumni to conduct “TED talks” to expand learning opportunities (P-12+)</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Develop certificate programs for informal educators (e.g., community youth workers) (Educational Quality and Value)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Create mechanism to provide open badges/ credentialing (Education Quality and Value)</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Mid-term (3-5 years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended Potential Actions</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Develop an incubator/learning science laboratory to invent educational tools, practices and spaces for the future of teaching and learning (Educational Reform and Delivery)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Design curricula around promoting leadership, critical thinking, navigating uncertainty, information literacy, etc. (Learning and Critical Thinking)</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Promote opportunities for integrated, experiential learning (e.g., first year experience, service learning, diversity focused activities, etc.) (Learning and Critical Thinking)</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Create partnerships across the state/nation/globe with schools (e.g., IMSA) to better recruit students – leverage technology and other communication mechanisms to reach potential students (Access)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Launch a visible initiative to enrich the undergraduate experience, including articulating the value-add of the residential experience (Education Quality and Value)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Create systems for alumni access to lifelong learning tools (P-12+)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Develop innovative strategies to make sure students are better prepared for college (e.g., summer programs, online modules, etc.)/Partner with K-12 to build information literacy/critical thinking for higher education success (Access)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Assertively raise scholarship funds at campus level to increase affordability (Access)</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. On an ongoing basis, evaluate how the campus uses resources we have to manage costs and promote quality (Education Quality and Value)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Reduce the time to degree through increased summer offerings, blend of online offerings, etc. (Access)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Expand capstone courses/experiences as a transition to lifelong learning and the workplace (Education Quality and Value)</td>
<td>M</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Remain vigilant about the costs associated with obtaining an education from Illinois (Access)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Expand innovation/invention competitions, recognitions and other opportunities for undergraduate students (Education Quality and Value)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>0</td>
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A campus committee consisting of the Chancellor, the Provost, the Vice Chancellor for Research, and the Associate Chancellor for Budget and Planning will be reviewing these recommendations. They will also look at other strategic priorities for the campus and develop the campus action plan. This action plan will be presented to the Council of Deans. The plan may be revised based on input received from the Council of Deans. The final action plan will be released during the spring of 2013.