

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Relationship to Mission

One of the cornerstones of the Mission of Illinois Central College is to serve as a resource for the educational and cultural needs of the community. To quote the College's Mission, "Illinois Central College exists to serve the community." To accomplish this, the College offers programs, services, and courses targeted to the needs of the community. In addition, the College strives to embrace and enhance the ethnic and cultural diversity of the community.

Community Outreach Programs

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

The Community Education Department of Illinois Central College offers a variety of noncredit classes and workshops targeted towards individuals wanting to learn for personal enrichment. Along with offering basic classes and workshops on finance, dance, exercise, and crafts, the department offers classes on current trends and interests such as Feng Shui and Basic Beading.

These offerings are constantly growing and changing to meet the needs of the community. Noncredit classes and workshop offerings have increased within the last year. There were 123 offerings in fall 1999 and 176 in fall 2000, a 43% increase. Spring 2000 there were 124 offerings compared to 145 in spring 2001, a 17% increase. Enrollment has also increased. For example, fall 1999 enrollment was 1,424 students, and in fall 2000 1,825 students enrolled, a 28% increase.

As the department grows, it continues to receive positive feedback from the student evaluations completed at the end of each class and workshop. Over the past year, most students gave both the instructors and the classes high ratings and outstanding comments.

There are several areas of concern within the Community Education Department. Low pay and lack of raises make finding and retaining community education workshop instructors challenging. Workshop instructors do not receive raises for performance or length of employment while credit course instructors do. Instructors for computer and exercise workshops are the most difficult to find because the outside community pays these instructors at a substantially higher rate and gives raises based upon seniority.

Another concern is the requirement that the curriculum committee must approve all noncredit classes. Although this process has been substantially shortened in the last ten years, it is still a lengthy process. This makes offering timely, "trendy" classes upon demand difficult. Frequently, an instructor must wait a semester to teach a requested noncredit class because there is not enough time to get all the paperwork approved by the curriculum committee before the Community Education schedule is due for printing.

COLLEGE FOR KIDS

College for Kids, a short-term, noncredit program, aims to stimulate the curiosity of fourth through tenth graders by enabling them to explore an interest and enrich their summer educational experience. From 1990-1994, courses were offered during spring and fall semesters as well as during the summer. Most recently, classes have been scheduled for two weeks in June and two weeks in July. Class topics include 20 to 30 different selections, including reading, science, writing, math, study skills, art, drama, computers, and various careers. More than 700 youngsters participated during a recent summer session. Some students come every summer - one stated that she has participated for the last three years.

The College for Kids program offers an excellent opportunity for community outreach and provides opportunities for youth to visit the campus. Every student who comes to the campus has the potential of becoming a future Illinois Central College student. In addition, the program serves as a way for the College to work with businesses and service organizations in the community. Community organizations involved in the planning of the recent College for Kids program include: Hult Education Center, Caterpillar Inc, Peoria Education Region for Employment and Career Training (P.E.R.F.E.C.T.), Mount Hawley Airport and Byerly Aviation, Boys and Girls Club, Tri County Urban League, Lutheran Social Service, Catholic Social Service, OSF Saint Francis Medical Center, and Methodist Medical Center.

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Illinois Central College's involvement with high schools covers a wide spectrum, including recruitment, career assessments, academic offerings, vocational training, optional education, scholarships, special programs designed for specific groups such as minorities and at-risk students, special summer athletic camps, and social programs. The relationship between the District 514 high schools and the College has resulted in increased cooperation and collaboration on educational issues. Following is a partial list of the College's involvement with high schools through cooperative linkages and/or programs designed to serve high school age students.

DUAL-CREDIT/DISTANCE LEARNING COURSES

College courses are offered to secondary school students who enroll and receive both college credit and credit toward secondary school graduation. These courses are offered at one of the College's main sites, off campus sites such as a high school or neighborhood location, or through various media such as distance learning or the internet. In 2000-2001, nearly 700 high school students took advantage of this opportunity.

OPTIONAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The Academy at Illinois Central College: The purpose of the Academy is to provide alternative education for potential and high school dropouts. It is intended for students who want to change their lives and make a fresh start with their education. Students at risk of dropping out of high school are referred by local high schools and the Truants and Alternative and Optional Education Programs serving District 514. The curriculum at the Academy includes traditional high school and college courses, counseling, student development seminars, and vocational-technical training designed to meet requirements for a diploma. Since 1988, over 300 students have received diplomas, and over 100 have earned GEDs.

Basic Skills Tutoring Program: The primary objective of this program is to prevent students who are truant and at risk of failing from dropping out of the 27 high schools within the College district. The Basic Skills Tutoring Program provides in-school tutoring to students in public high schools in District #514. More information is available in the Basic Skills Tutoring Program 1999-2000 report in the Resource Room.

Safe Schools Program: This program is designed in collaboration with all junior and senior high schools in Tazewell County, Illinois Central College, and the Regional Office of Education of Tazewell County to serve disruptive students in grades 6-12 who have been expelled from school.

CAREER SPECTRUM

Career Spectrum, a computerized career guidance program, provides assistance in the career/educational planning process. Area high schools, junior high schools, agencies, Illinois Central College departments, and adult residents of the community have access to this program which has resulted in over 5,000 interest

inventories being made available to assist in the career/educational planning process during the 1999-2000 year. According to the Career Spectrum Usage report in the Resource Room, over the past 15 years, more than 100,000 requests have been processed.

CAREER/JOB FAIR AND HIGH SCHOOL CAREER FAIRS

While high school career fairs provide information to students within individual high schools, the Career/Job Fair is an annual event held in cooperation with all the local district high schools, local businesses, area hospitals, and other employers. This program is open to all high school sophomores, juniors and seniors, their parents, Illinois Central College students, and the entire tri-county community.

COLLEGE NIGHT

College Night is an annual event at which Illinois Central College hosts over eighty colleges and universities from across the country for high school students and their parents.

ACADEMIC DISCOVERY PROGRAM

This program is a career exploration-type program for undecided students which helps expose high school juniors and seniors to different career opportunities and identifies where their interests lie. Through a number of interest inventory tests, Myers-Briggs, and career exploration activities, these students gain valuable insight into themselves. Approximately 50-60% of the high schools within the local district take advantage of this program.

ACADEMIC PLACEMENT

Illinois Central College provides Computerized Placement Assessment and Support System (COMPASS) in reading, writing, and math placement exams at the high school sites. Approximately 80% of our feeder high schools participate because the majority of their students decide to attend the College as their first educational option. After providing academic placement exams on site at the high schools, the College offers academic advisement. In the future, the College plans to have on-site registration at those high schools.

DISCOVER COLLEGE PROGRAM

The Discover College Program is a College-sponsored event on campus targeted to high school sophomore, junior, and senior students looking at a baccalaureate-bound program.

NON-ACT COMPLETERS PROGRAM

The College admissions staff goes to district high schools and meets with students who have not taken the ACT during their junior or senior year. Since the ACT is not a requirement of community colleges, many students who do not take the ACT still plan to attend the College. This service is an opportunity to expose students to different programs at the College and career options that they may have as they pursue their degrees.

THE WASHINGTON LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

In this program Illinois Central College students provide leadership training for seniors of Washington High School who in turn conduct leadership training for freshman and sophomore students at the high school.

THE AES/CILCO COLLEGE YES PROGRAM

A four-year program specifically for Manual High School students which provides mentors, both internal within the high school and external within the community. These mentors encourage students to complete their high school education. Then AES/CILCO provides necessary funds for the student to attend Illinois Central College.

Future programs include the Caterpillar Young Scholars Program that will target middle school and high school students in the areas of information technology and engineering.

College-Level Community Programs

UPWARD BOUND AND NEW WORLD PROGRAMS

The Upward Bound Program is the second phase of the “trio programs” aimed at high school students who are first-generation college students, economically disadvantaged, and/or physically disabled. The third phase of the program is student support services or New World. This program identifies the same target areas but focuses on freshman and sophomore college students with the intent of assisting them in transferring to a baccalaureate institution.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS FOR THE EDUCATIONALLY DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS

The Early School Leavers Program is a cooperative education GED program for students 16-21. It provides skills needed for finding a job, exploring career areas of interest, and receiving individualized instruction to review subjects covered on the GED test. The Adult Basic Education (ABE) Programs include Adult Basic Education, GED, English as a Second Language, work skills, and life skills. The program provides all levels of ABE instruction as well as instruction in life skills and job skills for students 16 and older. These academic programs collaborate and coordinate with area school districts, businesses, and agencies to provide a range of services for the educationally disadvantaged. The program coordinators have developed partnerships with area businesses to provide sites for student work-based learning experiences, services to determine client needs through academic assessments, and consultation with potential students to determine appropriate placements. The programs also offer in-school tutoring programs. Classes are also held in community libraries, community centers, and local schools.

There is no effort to track students who participate in College for Kids and other high school programs to see if they attend Illinois Central College or other institutions. Also, many of these programs rely predominantly on external funding to maintain their level of services. As a result, programs may shrink or disappear if funding sources cease to exist. This has already occurred with such programs as Early School Leavers and Student Literacy Corps, a literacy volunteer program. While the College has demonstrated its support of these programs through increasing financial assistance, the costs for the College will only increase if educational funding decreases.

Cultural Events and Programs

Cultural events are designed to serve Illinois Central College students by providing education in the arts and to enrich the life of the community through artistic programming. Nearly 72% of community members surveyed felt that the College offers a good balance of cultural programs.

Student Activities programs and community-wide events are two examples of how Illinois Central College strives to respond to cultural diversity in the community. Other programs such as the Lively Arts series and the Arts Preview programs offer a diverse series of activities designed to enrich the life of the community.

Quantitative data strongly suggest that these Illinois Central College programs appeal to the community. Many people are served, and all of the offerings have good to excellent attendance. The marketing of these programs occurs throughout the community and reaches many community members. Various reviews in the local media praise the performances of these programs.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Providing opportunities for the area's minority members is an important consideration. The College is making serious efforts to provide for a diverse community and to provide students with opportunities to learn about and experience aspects of various cultures. The College has an internal standing committee, the Cultural Diversity Committee, to promote cultural diversity by recruitment and retention of minority faculty members and students. Other programs which also facilitate cultural diversity at the College range from International and African-American studies to Workforce Development.

Even with these programs in place, the College is not highly successful in getting the City of Peoria's minority population to enroll. For example, Illinois Central College's 9% student enrollment of African-Americans is substantially lower when compared with the 55% African-American enrollment in the Peoria Public Schools. While the argument can be made that these figures reflect the 7% African-American enrollment in District 514 overall, the College should improve efforts to reach the members of the minority groups living in Peoria.

Faculty Outreach and Community Relationships

Faculty members are considered a vital component of the community service commitment of the College, and it actively encourages faculty members to get involved in community service. According to the full-time faculty questionnaire, 71% of the faculty members "agreed" with the statement "I am involved with community service." Unfortunately, although many faculty members are actively involved, there is no formal record of community involvement, nor does the College attempt to coordinate these efforts. Such records would be a valuable resource to other faculty members who might want to engage in outreach activities. These records also might be useful for reviving and revising programs. This same information could play an important role in how the community views the College and in the recruitment of new students. According to the community respondents on the NCA community survey, 75.9% felt that the College is involved in the community, and 21.8% had "no opinion." Thus, the College might do a better job of informing the community as to the involvement of its faculty members.

Evidence that the College supports involvement in community service is the promotion process which includes community service as one of its criteria. Faculty members also record community involvement on the annual faculty evaluation, and this is considered as the department chair writes each faculty member's evaluation. Although this practice is required, no consistency exists among administrators'/department chairs' support on actual faculty community involvement. Some administrators, despite the fact that such efforts are in every sense a positive for both the individual and the College, do not support community activities by members.

The College does occasionally nominate faculty members for community awards and recognition. This nomination is not done on a consistent basis, nor is it well publicized. The College's concern with how it is viewed in the community should cause it to be more proactive in encouraging and recognizing the work of faculty members in the community.

In the past, as part of the College's community outreach, the marketing department maintained a Speakers Bureau whereby community members could call and request speakers from the College. However, this was discontinued three years ago. Now community requests are informally forwarded by the marketing department to the department chairs. To enhance the College's outreach in the community, reactivation of the Speaker's Bureau might be considered.

Extension Sites

In an attempt to meet a growing demand for diversity in classes and to allow greater accessibility, Illinois Central College continues to offer classes at extension centers located in high schools, community centers, and business sites in District 514. The classes offered are designed to be cost effective while meeting a variety of educational needs of the community.

Enrollment at extension centers has continued to grow. Currently, more than 35 extension sites provide an offering of courses meeting the requirements for degrees and continuing education. Since 1995, off-Campus extension sites account for more than 4000 credit hours and 3000 registrations annually. Courses have been offered on the basis of student needs determined by faculty, staff, and student surveys. Site locations have been chosen in an attempt to best serve the community and increase opportunities for lifelong learning. Sixty-five percent of the community respondents knew there was an extension site located near their home while 25.8% had “no opinion” or did not know.

The strengths of Illinois Central College’s extension centers lie in the College’s ability to attract and retain quality teaching staff and to offer a diversity of courses at times that meet the needs of students. This is shown in the Fall Semester 2000 Census Master Course Seat Listing, which shows a total of 139 sections of English, including English 105, 110, 111, and 113 being offered. Three hundred and five students enrolled in these courses at 19 different extension and distance-learning sites. Students were also able to enroll in economics, psychology, history, philosophy, political science, accounting, and data processing at all of these sites.

Illinois Central College has been successful at anticipating student course needs and attracting and retaining a high quality adjunct teaching staff, thereby increasing the popularity and use of extension sites for students who work full time. Success has also bred certain challenges. The College must continue to evaluate course offerings and site locations in order to better serve the needs of the community. The College must continue to search for and find qualified teachers who are willing to teach in remote locations, sometimes in excess of 50 miles from the Illinois Central College campus.

Corrections System

When the Corrections System, both State of Illinois and Federal, indicated a need for academic classes for inmates, the College was able to respond to meet it. Currently, 44 transfer-level classes are offered at the Illinois River Correctional Center. Students there have the opportunity to earn an Associate in General Studies and an Associate in Applied Science in Business with 15 associate degrees being awarded in 2000. Classes for eight certificate programs are also offered. The certificate programs were created by the Department of Corrections but approved by the College’s curriculum committee and the Illinois Community College Board. The College was able to serve over 800 students during FY 2000 by acting to meet this need. Classes are also offered at the Hanna City Work Camp, the Pekin Federal Prison, and the Pekin Women’s Camp.

Serving the Businesses in the Community

The Professional Development Institute (PDI) is designed to offer short-term, intensive training for businesses in the area. Some examples of training provided by PDI include:

- Computer training
- Industrial/Technical training
- Professional Development and Business Effectiveness Skills
- Continuing Professional Development
- Driver Improvement
- Children First
- Tractor/Trailer Driver Certificate Program

Working with organizations of all sizes, the PDI specializes in developing customized workforce training. For example, the PDI developed the Step Up program for the Peoria Housing Authority. It was an intensive training program to prepare residents for entry into several building trades' apprentice programs. Another program, the 21st Century Leadership Series, was developed in response to requests for updated management and supervisory development workshops.

The majority of PDI offerings award continuing education units (CEU's); however, some computer workshops are offered for Vocational Skills credit, and the Tractor/Trailer program awards Occupational Skills credit.

The PDI shares the College vision of being on the leading edge in preparing individuals to succeed in career advancement and lifelong learning. Within the College, PDI serves as a focal point for coordinating training activities for businesses and organizations quickly and efficiently. In addition, the PDI also publicizes all services of the College to the community.

In 1983, Illinois Central College established the Illinois Central College Business Services Center, a "One-Stop Shop" located in downtown Peoria, Illinois, with the partners in economic development, including Peoria, Heartland Partnership, Illinois Business Financial Services, Peoria Area Chambers of Commerce, Peoria Area Economic Development Council, and Senior Corps of Retired Executives (Score). The purpose of this joint partnership is to provide a communication system that simplifies maximum community interagency collaboration, thereby creating an effective delivery system for business retention, training, jobs creation, and enhancement of community economic development. As a partner, the College has played a major role in the economic growth of District 514. As a result of this venture's efforts, numerous small businesses, many owned by women and minorities, have been awarded grants and loans.

Strengths

- Community outreach programs at Illinois Central College are well received and well attended by the community. Nearly 76% of the community members surveyed felt that the College is actively involved in the community and that programs at Illinois Central College are developed in accordance with community need. In addition, 75% of students surveyed felt that faculty and staff members are actively involved in community service work, and 92% felt the College is adequately serving the needs of the community.
- Community outreach at Illinois Central College embraces a wide spectrum of the community, including children, high school students, traditional college students, adults, and minority populations.
- Faculty and staff members are given the freedom to develop programs that target the needs of the community on many different levels.
- PDI's close linkages with businesses and organizations allow the College to assess continually the community's workforce needs and trends to create or offer services to meet those needs.

Opportunities for Improvement

- There is a lack of coordination and documentation of faculty and staff members' community involvement. Community involvement occurs in almost every department and program on campus, yet these efforts are not coordinated by a central office/department. This leads to the problem of similar or duplicate programs and wasted time.
- Many of the community programs rely predominantly on external funding to maintain their level of services.
- Low pay and lack of raises make finding and keeping community education workshop instructors challenging.

- There is a need to recruit and enroll Peoria minority members.
- The curriculum committee must approve all noncredit classes. Although this process has been shortened in the last ten years, it is still a lengthy one.

Recommendations

- The College needs to establish a person/office that promotes community involvement, keeps records and coordinates the needs of the community with the expertise of the school, and secures outside funding for the community programs.
- Measures need to be developed to determine which programs are increasing cultural diversity at the College. The school should consider hiring a full-time Minority Outreach Officer.
- A formal recognition process for faculty and staff members who are actively engaged in community service should be established.
- A faculty/staff workshop should be conducted on community involvement.
- The discrepancy in pay between workshop and class instructors needs to be rectified. There should be some flexibility with pay based upon instructors' disciplines so that the College can be competitive in hiring and retaining instructors.
- The requirement that noncredit classes need to be approved by the curriculum committee needs to be reevaluated.

