

STUDENT ACCESS/ENTRY/SERVICES

Illinois Central College provides a variety of student support services designed to help students derive the greatest value from their college experience. This chapter provides a description and an analysis of services provided for a student from recruitment to entry to academic support while in classes.

Recruitment/Marketing

Illinois Central College supports two departments responsible for marketing to and recruitment of students. The primary mission of the Marketing Department, under the President, is to identify and create strategies aimed at increasing enrollments and cultivating a positive support system from the community. In the past, the Marketing Department utilized every major mass marketing avenue to promote and market the College. Unfortunately, very little evaluative data exist on the effectiveness of the strategies or plans. Recently with a change of leadership in the director's position, the goals of the Marketing Department now include the creation and monitoring of performance measures for all marketing programs. Another goal is to create an overall master marketing plan with measurable objectives. Currently, the most effective methods of reaching the community are local newspapers and Illinois Central College schedules and publications. According to the Self-Study Community Questionnaire, 78.4% of the respondents have read an Illinois Central College class schedule, and 77.5% have read about the College in a local newspaper.

The office of Enrollment Management, under the Dean of Student Services, was created in June 1992, shortly after the last self-study was completed. The reorganization combined the services provided in Recruitment with Admissions, Records, and Graduation. At that time, the department was reassigned under the direction of the Vice President of Academic and Student Services and reporting directly to the Dean. The Recruitment Office has the primary responsibilities for visiting the high schools, businesses, and other community agencies in the District to reach potential students.

This office also sponsors a number of campus events aimed at recruiting students such as College Night, Parent Night, Minority Recruitment Fair, FYI (Fun Yet Information) days, Counselor Articulation Luncheon, Home Educator Day, and Showcase ICC along with traditional campus visits by potential students and their families. The recruiters visit every high school at least once each semester. During the 2000-2001 school year, the recruiters completed 155 high school visits and visited with 1680 seniors and 166 juniors. The College's district high school population has been fairly constant over the past ten years with a typical senior class of 4200 graduates, according to the Annual Fall Enrollment Census Report. The College enrolls approximately 1450 of these students for the fall semester following their spring graduations. The purpose of the high school visits is to assist these graduates' transition to the College. One area of concern is the lack of effectiveness data for each school on a consistent basis. To solve this, enrollment data by school are now being kept.

Over the last three years, new programs such as Parent Night, Showcase ICC, the Minority Recruitment Fair, and Changing Faces in the New Millennium have been initiated. Showcase ICC is a presentation to the senior class, a campus visit by the junior class, and a campus visit by entire faculty and staff members from each school. Changing Faces in the New Millennium and the Minority Recruitment Fair were initiated in spring 2001.

Illinois Central College is very active in recruiting and marketing through high school visits, college-sponsored events, and numerous community fairs and activities. Likewise, the College campus has been a resource for numerous activities with over 500 events held per year. All of these functions are considered marketing and potential recruitment opportunities. Although the College is active in the community and acts as a resource for it, very little data exist in measuring the effectiveness of such activities.

Admissions and Registration

The College operates as an open-door higher education institution accepting applications for admission throughout the year while remaining in compliance with State-mandated admission standards. Certain academic programs may require an additional application and admissions process. These programs are more commonly found in the Health Careers and other occupational/vocational programs.

The registration process for full-time students varies from that of part-time students.

FULL-TIME REGISTRATION PROCESS

1. Students must submit a completed Illinois Central College application and any necessary transcripts.
2. Students must take the academic placement exams for English and math. (Note: Beginning Fall Semester 2001, students registering for courses requiring “high levels of reading” must take a reading placement exam also).
3. All full-time students must go through the academic advisement process and obtain an advisor’s signature.

PART-TIME REGISTRATION PROCESS

1. Students must submit a completed Illinois Central College application and any necessary transcripts.
2. Any student taking an English or math course must take that portion of the Academic Placement Exam. (Note: This is not necessary if a student successfully completed a prerequisite course at another college or university.)
3. Students may then register for classes.

Registration services meet the needs of both traditional and nontraditional student populations. Standard Monday-Friday business hours are supplemented with early evening hours four days a week. Weekend hours are available at the Perley Building in Peoria. For a three-week period at the beginning of each semester, the evening hours are extended to provide additional assistance.

All students have the following registration options available: in person, touch-tone, operator-assisted, mail-in, off-site, and TTY (for the hearing impaired). Both touch-tone and off-site registration options are new since the last North Central visit. Because the College is in the process of switching from the main-frame system to a client-server system, PeopleSoft®, registration options in the future will include web-based registration. According to the Self-Study student survey, over 70% of the students surveyed “would use” or “probably would use” web-based registration. In general, students are satisfied with the available registration options. Approximately 42% have used phone registration (operator-assisted) with a 97.5% satisfaction rate. In addition, 38.3% have registered via the touch-tone system with a 91.3% satisfaction rate.

The Admissions Office also issues student transcripts. Each year, approximately 15,000-16,000 transcripts are requested by nearly 10,000 students. In addition to the standard processing of next-business day transcripts, students are given an option to request a “while-you-wait” transcript beginning in 1995 with over 1,700 “while-you-wait” transcripts provided last year. Electronic exchange of transcripts between Illinois Central College, Illinois State University, and Bradley University was implemented in 1995. This exchange greatly enhances the transfer process for students who have attended Illinois Central College. Last year over 2,100 transcripts were sent electronically. Long-term plans include expansion of electronic exchange to high schools.

Concern over the admissions and registration process has focused on customer service and responsiveness, according to the 1999 visioning process. Student verbatims identified a pattern of “poor” or “unsatisfactory” customer service. (See student verbatims in Illinois Central College Visioning Report located in the Resource Room.) However, 85% of the student respondents on the Self-Study survey responded they had been treated with dignity by personnel in the Admissions Office.

Other concerns voiced by faculty and staff members through interviews relate to late registration and withdrawal for students. The process for late course additions and end of semester withdrawals is very cumbersome and difficult for students.

Academic Advisement

Academic advisement services are available to all students attending Illinois Central College. Advisors assist students in planning an appropriate program of study as well as aiding in the selection and scheduling of classes. All full-time students are required to obtain academic advisement prior to the start of each semester while part-time students are strongly encouraged to seek advisement. Students are assigned an advisor if they have declared an academic area of interest. Undecided students are assigned to the Counseling and Advisement Department for academic advisement until a major is declared. A Computerized Advisement Plan (CAP) provides the student and advisor with accurate and current advisement information. The CAP printout serves as a degree audit, and indicates courses required or recommended for the student’s curriculum, and compares the student’s coursework with these criteria. Students may request their CAP from the Counseling and Advisement Office.

Academic Advisement is provided by a number of different faculty and staff members throughout the College. For instance, academic advisement is handled within the academic departments by department chairs, departmental advisors, program coordinators, and faculty members. Advisement is also conducted through the Counseling and Advisement Department, under the Dean of Student Services, for undecided students and reinstated students. Similarly, academic advisement is provided through numerous other specialty programs such as QUEST, athletics, the Honors Program, the New World Academic Support Program, the Transfer Center, and the Disability Services Office.

Overall, Illinois Central College recognizes the fact that academic advisement is vital to the success of students. Since the last NCA visit, the College has developed and implemented a number of programs and processes to aid in the improvement of academic advisement. For example, through the acquisition of a Title III Grant in 1993, advisors were added to assist with the advisement process within each department. At the end of the Title III grant, the College retained the departmental advisors, funding their positions through an \$80,000 annual institutional commitment.

In 1996, a year-long New Faculty Orientation was introduced. Within this faculty development model is an hour and a half academic advisement-training module. While this is an improvement, the faculty members who have experienced the training module have commented that too much information is presented in the time allocated. When the academic advisement-training module was presented to other personnel who conduct advisement, these staff members agreed.

In addition, since the last accreditation visit, a number of new processes and tools have been developed and implemented to assist with the availability and success of academic advisement. For example, an optional advisement process has been piloted for part-time students who reach two different benchmarks, i.e., 15-20 credit hours and 30-35 credit hours. When degree-seeking part-time students reach these two benchmarks,

they receive a letter, a CAP, and encouragement to meet with the advisor assigned to them. Unfortunately, very few students respond to the notice; therefore, a good tracking system does not exist. As a result, the College is left wondering if students are self-advising from the CAP or if they are not concerned with the advisement process.

In 1998, a new Grade Exclusion Policy was adopted, which allows students to be readmitted with an option to exclude past failing grades from their cumulative grade point average but not from the transcript. All students readmitted through the Grade Exclusion Policy must receive academic advisement in order to exclude their past grades (See Grade Exclusion Policy in Resource Room.)

While all of these additions have helped improve academic advisement, a number of concerns still exist. For example, according to the student verbatims in the 1999 *Illinois Central College Visioning Report*, a number of students expressed dissatisfaction with transfer advisement. Many students commented that they were misadvised for their courses and programs which are designed for transfer to four-year institutions. (See student verbatims, located in the Resource Room.) Another primary concern is the lack of a formalized advisement process for the part-time students. While an optional process is available to students, the Illinois Central College Academic Standards Committee strongly believes that a formalized advisement process for part-time students should be instituted and a better tracking system incorporated to identify the number of part-time students receiving advisement.

Full-time faculty members express another concern in regard to the number of advisees per advisor. According to the full-time faculty members' survey, 31% of the full-time faculty members advise 5 or less students while 30% advise 20 or more students in a given semester. The data reflect an inequitable distribution of advisees to faculty advisors. As a result, faculty members believe this inequity affects the quality of academic advisement. Concern is also expressed by faculty and staff members about the effectiveness and frequency of the communication of advisement information between all entities involved, i.e., faculty advisors, Transfer Center, and Counseling and Advisement.

Academic Placement Testing through Testing Center

Over 33% of entering full-time freshmen students enroll as an undecided major. This emphasizes the need for the College to provide a varied, in-depth career counseling delivery system. Undecided majors are referred to Career Counseling, where they are administered a variety of tests to aid them in their choice of a career. Common tests recommended are the Career Occupational Preference System (COPS) and the Career Ability Placement Survey (CAPS). Some students are encouraged to enroll in Psychology 119, a one-hour vocational choice course. These students complete CAPS, COPS, Career Orientation Placement & Evaluation Survey (COPES), and the Myers-Briggs Personality Preference Inventory career preference instruments. Students found all methods to be helpful with the COPS having the highest satisfaction rating of 95% followed by 83% for the Myers-Briggs, 80% for COPES, and 76% for the CAPS. These high ratings suggest that the tests benefit the student. Overall, 76% of the student respondents agree that the services are beneficial, and 74% are satisfied.

Another career preference test is the Career Spectrum, a computerized career guidance program designed to provide assistance in the career/educational planning process. Illinois Central College offers this program to area high schools, junior high schools, community agencies, College departments, and adult residents of the community. Over the past 15 years, over 100,000 requests for the Career Spectrum have been processed.

Academic placement tests for reading, mathematics, and English are administered to all incoming students and are required of all students before registering for a course in any of these three disciplines. These tests may be taken at the College's Testing Centers, East Peoria or Peoria, or at one of the high schools in District #514 through the Testing Center's High School Outreach Program. Since these Basic Skills Tests have become mandatory and through utilizing the High School Program, the number of academic placement exams has increased from 733 in 1993 to 1694 in 2000. Studies by the Advisement and Counseling Department have shown a direct relationship between Basic Skills Test Scores and success in selected courses. Consequently, an aggressive approach to testing all incoming freshmen should be continued. Making the tests available at 28 in-district high school sites has made the tests more accessible for students and should be continued or even expanded. Furthermore, students have found the tests to be beneficial with 87% of respondents satisfied with the math and English tests, and 81% of those satisfied with the overall Academic Testing and Placement services. Also, approximately 80% of the student respondents believe that the tests are beneficial in recommending the appropriate course.

Newly adopted in summer 2001 is the Computerized Adaptive Placement Assessment and Support System (COMPASS). Prior to May 1, 2001, all placement exams were written. The new software is an exciting addition to the testing area, but the implementation of the software, along with converting everyone over from a written format to a computerized one, will be a challenge in the coming months.

Also available to students through the Testing Center are departmental proficiency and CLEP exams and placement tests for English as a Second Language, engineering, music theory as well as other assessment instruments for critical thinking and mechanical reasoning. The Testing Center continues to provide a valuable service that contributes highly to the early success of our students.

Academic Support Services

Academic Support Services are the responsibilities of either the Dean of the Peoria Site or the Dean of the East Peoria Site rather than the Dean of Student Services.

H.E.L.P. LAB

The Helping Environment for the Learning Process (H.E.L.P.) Lab is located in both Peoria and East Peoria and offers academic assistance to students enrolled in various courses. Services include computer tutorials, tutoring, and study groups. Materials such as videos and tapes, previously used or past tests, solution manuals, and study skills handouts are also available. Both H.E.L.P. Labs are new since the last NCA visit and have helped address a number of student academic needs.

Eight part-time tutors, one part-time program manager, and one part-time student worker staff the H.E.L.P. Lab in the Peoria Perley Building. Funding for the lab comes from various grants and departmental monies. The East Peoria H.E.L.P. Lab is staffed with one full-time coordinator, one part-time professional staff member, and eight part-time tutors.

Both labs maintain a daily log. These logs reveal the number of students served annually has been approximately 2,000 students. Both labs are witnessing a growing number of at-risk students, with at-risk in this context referring to a lack of academic preparedness. Reports prepared for the class of 1999 and 2000 identify at-risk students by the academic variables of high school percentile rank, ACT composite score, academic placement, and undecided majors. These reports indicate an increase in at-risk students for 1999 and 2000 of 15% and 11%, respectively. For a more detailed summary of this population, see At-Risk Students, Class of 1999 and 2000 reports in the Resource Room.

One major problem for the lab is the lack of a budget for hiring tutors. Peer tutors are either volunteer or are paid by other grants or departments. This does not enable the coordinator to plan ahead and have tutors in place when the semester begins. As a result, there are often students in need of tutoring with no tutor available due to the lack of funding.

According to the Self-Study student survey, 69.4% of students are aware of the H.E.L.P. Labs, but only about 25% use them. Among the students who use the labs, there is a 94.5% satisfaction rate. Faculty members rate both H.E.L.P. Labs highly.

WRITING LAB

The Writing Lab provides a variety of services for students who are enrolled at Illinois Central College. A student can receive help with a writing assignment for any course. A lab instructor can assist students with identification of errors, correction of errors, help with organization, information about documentation, answers to individual questions, and handouts on various writing problems. The English Placement Test may be taken in the Writing Lab on a walk-in basis. Computers for researching and word processing are available for student use. In addition, the following one-semester hour courses are available through the lab:

English Skills 101 - Spelling Improvement

English Skills 103 - English Grammar I

English Skills 104 - English Grammar II

English Skills 105 - Vocabulary Enrichment I

English Skills 106 - Vocabulary Enrichment II

One full-time and seven part-time employees presently staff the Writing Lab. All of the workers in the lab have at least a bachelor's degree in English or a related field, and all have taught at either the elementary or high school level.

Since the last North Central evaluation, the Writing Lab has been remodeled to include sixteen computers for general student use. Equipment such as a text enlarger, computer with Drag and Dictate program, and a CCTV has been added to accommodate students with disabilities. The lab has extended the test proctoring service to include all departments of the campus.

The Writing Lab has also experienced an increase in the number of students served per day from 75-125. The lab serves approximately 5,500 students each semester. In order to serve the students in the best way possible, those enrolled in English Skills courses must complete exit evaluations which are used as part of the decision-making process to determine changes or improvement of services.

According to the NCA Student Survey 78% of the students are fairly aware of the lab and its services; approximately 25% utilize the lab. Ninety-five percent of the lab users are satisfied with the lab and its services. In addition, 80% of full-time and part-time faculty members rate the Writing Lab high (4.13/5.00 and 4.35/5.00) on their overall satisfaction with the lab and its services, according to the NCA faculty surveys.

One issue of concern regarding the Writing Lab is the hours of operation. The Writing Lab is open during the traditional semesters, fall, spring, and summer and is closed during the three minimesters. As a result, these students do not have the benefit of utilizing the lab during these time frames. Similarly, evening hours of operations in the Writing Lab are available, but staffing is limited.

READING /STUDY SKILLS LAB

The Reading/Study Skills Lab is located on the East Peoria campus. This lab provides testing of reading skills, advice on study skills, and a variety of reading and study skills courses. The lab is open to students via course registration only. The lab is staffed with one full-time, four part-time faculty members, and three part-time tutors.

The primary concerns are space, availability, and stable funding. Currently, the tutors are paid through a grant. From the students' perspective, approximately 74% are aware of the lab, and 18.5% have used the lab. Of the students who have used the lab, the satisfaction rate is 97.1%. Eighty-five percent of the faculty members are satisfied with the lab and its services.

LEARNING LAB

The Peoria Site also offers writing and reading services in a combined lab called the Learning Lab. Grant funds enable the staffing of two part-time staff members each morning and one part-time staff member during some evenings. Due to staffing constraints and student demand, the Learning Lab is not open for services during the remaining hours of the week. Based on the Self-Study faculty surveys, full- and part-time faculty members rate the Learning Lab almost as strong as the East Peoria equivalent labs (4.13/5.00 and 4.35/5.00) on overall satisfaction with the lab and its services.

MATH LAB

The East Peoria Math Lab offers individualized help to students needing assistance with mathematics courses in which they are enrolled. In addition, microcomputers are available for special mathematics assignments and extra drill. Students may also use math audio and videocassettes which supplement texts. Assistance in mathematics for students on the Peoria Site is offered through the H.E.L.P. Lab.

The East Peoria Math Lab is currently staffed with one part-time coordinator, six full-time faculty members working in the lab as part of their faculty load, twelve part-time faculty tutors, one tutor, two student tutors, and additional volunteers. Attendance in the Math Lab is recorded through daily log sheets each semester, but totals are not tallied.

According to the Self-Study student survey, 79.9% of students are aware of the Math Lab, and 32.7% of these students have used the lab. Approximately 89.3% of the students who have used the Math Lab are satisfied with the assistance received. Faculty member s' satisfaction of the Math Lab is higher among part-time (4.23/5.00) than full-time faculty members (3.87/5.00).

Three issues of concern with the Math Lab are that it is the only academic lab on campus without a full-time coordinator; it has become increasingly difficult to hire "A" student tutors with the special math skills necessary to staff the lab and assist students because of low pay and finally, the lab is in need of regular evening hour coverage for better service to students.

LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER

The Learning Resource Center (LRC) collects and distributes a variety of materials and equipment. The LRC is divided into the two departments, the library and the Instructional Technologies Services area. The library maintains over 3,483 periodical titles and a book collection of 92,000 volumes. The Instructional Technologies Services area houses an extensive audio-visual equipment collection, teaching materials, production center, and auto-tutorial laboratory with a multimedia collection and computer laboratories.

The LRC has locations in the Health and Public Services Building and the Library/Administration Building in East Peoria. The library is linked electronically to a number of additional libraries locally, statewide, and nationally. Illinois Central College library cards are honored at most area libraries.

SPECIAL FINANCIAL AND ACADEMIC SERVICES

Through funding from the Carl Perkins Act, special financial and academic services such as tutoring and financial aid or support for required equipment and supplies are available for qualified vocational students in applied science degrees or certificates. In addition, personalized assistance is available to students having difficulty with any class because of the need to improve study skills or basic academic skills.

NonAcademic Student Support Services

CAREER PLANNING AND PLACEMENT

The Career Planning and Placement Center for career development and off-campus employment is located in the Library/Administration Building in East Peoria as well as in the Perley Building in Peoria. The Career Planning and Placement Center assists students, staff, and the community in locating and researching careers, colleges, and the job market through the use of printed materials, videos, career software, career counselors, Internet sources and various job search strategies.

This dual office provides three options for those interested in career exploration: individuals may walk in anytime to do career research; they may register for Psychology 119, a vocational choice self-paced class; or they may sign up for free workshops given monthly covering topics such as career planning, resumes, interviewing, and Myers-Briggs analysis. Of the students surveyed, only 36% are aware of the career planning, and of those, 6.2% have used it. This is much too low considering the number of students at the College who have undecided majors. However, 74% of those who have used the services of the Center are "generally satisfied." Greater efforts need to be made to encourage students to use this service.

Over the last ten years, Career Planning and Placement has seen a relatively stable employment market with the flow of students within the Placement Office stable. Students are provided with a resume service, a computerized job matching system, internship opportunities, on-campus recruiting, and a spring career/job fair. Over 60% of surveyed students are aware of the placement service. The Placement Office monitors quantitative services to students and employers through the Placement Center Report and the Internet Direct Pipeline System. Approximately 1100 employer job orders were entered into the mainframe job matching system for 2000-2001. This is a slight increase from 1999-2000. These figures do not include additional job listings posted independently on job boards. In conjunction, 486 students registered through the College's mainframe job matching system. This was an increase from 415 students in 1999-2000. Valid records were not kept prior to 1999.

The Internet Direct Pipeline System offers employers the opportunity to view online resumes of Illinois Central College program graduates. Likewise, the service allows graduates to post/scan their resumes directly into the system. This service is new this past year. As of June 1, 2001, over 80 employers have registered for the new Internet Direct Pipeline System, and 104 graduates have scanned their resumes into the system.

The Career Center has also served a number of students through courses and career fairs throughout the year. Over 215 students enrolled for the PSYCH 119/Vocational Choice course this past year, and the staff conducted 115 on- and off-campus presentations. The staff of Career Planning and Placement conducted 98 on-campus presentations for approximately 1450 students and 18 off-campus presentations for over 530 individuals. In addition, the office conducted a new Health Careers Fair and Career/Job Fair in both 2000 and 2001 with an increased attendance. The evaluations from the participants, career representatives, and high school counselors are very positive (See Career/Job Fair report in Resource Room).

Based on the student responses in the Self-Study questionnaire, there are two primary concerns. Only 7.8% of the students use the Job Placement services, and 6.2% use the Career Center services. In addition, the satisfaction rate for students using the services is low in comparison to other services on campus. The satisfaction rate for students using the Job Placement office is 79.3% while the satisfaction rate for Career Center services is 73.9%. It is hoped that the planned expansion of space over the next three years, using monies from the State Capital Expenditures will encourage more students to use these services.

ILLINOIS CENTRAL COLLEGE CHILD CENTERS

The Illinois Central College Child Care Center's philosophy is to provide quality care and a developmentally appropriate curriculum, which meets the needs of children as individuals. The Child Care Centers offer two options for care and development: an all-day program and an hourly service. The Centers serve children ages two to five.

The Centers are located on the East Peoria Site and the Perley Building in Peoria. Their hours of operation are from 7:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. The hourly service is available from 7:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

The all-day program at the East Peoria Site currently serves 35 children each semester while the hourly program serves an average of 16 children. The Peoria center serves 16 children each semester, a combination of all day and hourly. This center has the space capacity to serve more children and/or provide an infant care program. Fifty-eight percent of the students are aware of the service with 3.5% using it.

DISABILITY SERVICES

The Disability Services Office provides services to students with varying abilities and disabilities. The office assists students with disabilities to function competitively in the classroom and ultimately in the workplace. Students with varying learning disabilities such as attention deficit disorder and physical, mental, and health-related disabilities are presently receiving assistance. The office is governed by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990.

Services and adaptive equipment are available based on individual student needs. Services include note taking, testing assistance, typing, research assistance, tutoring, enlargement of classroom materials and tests, steno interpreting, and sign language interpreting. Equipment includes tape recorders, spell masters, adaptive computer software and hardware, talking calculators, closed-circuit televisions, Braille 'n Speak, closed-caption decoder, the Aladdin Ambassador Pro Personal Reader, and other adaptive devices. In addition, a Galileo Reading System, which reads text aloud, is available in the library in East Peoria.

Since the last NCA visit, staffing has increased from two part-time staff members totaling 24 hours per week to one full-time staff member. The College is currently exploring the addition of another part-time staff member. Staff availability is a major concern for this office as students with varying disabilities have been one of the fastest growing populations at the College. The number of students from 1990 to present has increased from 95 to approximately 180 per semester. This number is expected to continue to grow. Likewise, new rules from the Office of Rehabilitation Services, requiring students with disabilities to enroll full time instead of part time in order to receive services, will place a greater demand on the office resources, both financial and human capital. Specific learning disabilities comprised 72% of the disabled served in Spring Semester 2001. Students with audio, visual, and orthopedic problems make up approximately 17% of the students served with the remaining 11% having other varying health impairments.

An end-of-semester survey was developed and administered to all students with disabilities beginning in the fall of 2000. The survey results indicate an overall satisfaction with the services provided; however, there has been some dissatisfaction with the College's tutoring services and advisement provided to those using

Disabilities Services. Students have expressed dissatisfaction with the constant turnover of staff within the office since there have been four different coordinators in the past six years. Much of the turnover in the position has been a result of part-time status and the pay rate. Possibly this problem has been solved as the position is now a full-time one.

FINANCIAL AID

Illinois Central College is committed to the philosophy that all individuals who need, want, and are able to benefit from higher education should be provided the opportunity to realize their aspirations and goals. The College offers financial assistance to students who may need it while pursuing their education.

Financial Aid Awards are divided into three primary categories: Federal Title IV Programs, State and Federal Programs, and College and Foundation Programs. In 1998-1999, Illinois Central College awarded a total of \$6.99 million in financial aid. Federal Title IV Programs accounted for 39.6% of the award dollars with the Pell Grant providing 91.9%. State and Federal Programs accounted for 43% of the total financial aid dollars awarded. Monies from the College and Foundation Program accounted for the remaining 17%. Student employment and tuition waivers made up some of the College and Foundation Program dollars allocated.

Trends in the Illinois Central College financial aid awards have indicated stability. From 1995-1999 the number of awards stabilized, and the value increased. In State and Federal programs, the increase is due to higher limits of the awarding amounts established by the government agencies. The College and Foundation Programs have also shown a steady increase since 1993.

Currently, approximately 43% of students receive some form of financial assistance. The Financial Aid Office provides financial aid information free of charge and is active at events such as College Night, Parent Night, Career Fair, and high school recruitment events.

The Financial Aid Office has been diligent in advising loan recipients. The College's Student Loan Default Rate has decreased substantially over the past several years from 15.4% in 1994 to 7.9% in 1999. The low default rate is indicative of the fiscal responsibility demonstrated within the office.

The student satisfaction survey indicates that over 81.5% of students are aware of the Financial Aid Office and 37% have used the services. However, the overall satisfaction rate of 81.9% is slightly lower in comparison to the other student service offices. The primary concern voiced by students in the Visioning Survey conducted in 1999 and the Student Satisfaction Survey is the quality of service by the staff. In short, students feel they are not treated kindly or with respect. There is concern that ultimately this may affect students applying for financial aid and negatively impact retention and enrollments.

HEALTH SERVICES

A registered nurse is available on the East Peoria Site from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday to provide confidential health care services. The Health Services Office also provides a number of free testing services which include free examinations for diabetes, anemia, urinalysis, TB skin tests, blood pressure, vision, and hearing. All services provided by the Health Services Office are available to faculty members, staff, and students.

Health services are only available on a full-time basis at the East Peoria Site, with special testing services being made available to the staff and students on the Peoria Site. A concern is that the Health Services Office is not open during evening hours when the College has many people on campus and many who are

older, nontraditional students. According to the Self-Study student survey, only 46.4% of the students are aware of the services available to them. Of those students who used the Health Service Center, 95.5% are satisfied with the services received. Likewise, full- and part-time faculty members rated the services provided very highly (4.3/5.00 and 4.11/5.00, respectively).

Over this past year the Health Services Office and the Illinois Central College Fitness Center have joined to develop and implement a “Wellness Works” program for all faculty and staff members. The early feedback has been very positive. Similarly, the Health Services Office has sponsored other events such as the Sober Party for students and has been responsible for the coordination of the Illinois Central College Alcohol and Drug Presentation Team (A.D.A.P.T.), which provides awareness programs for students, staff, and the community.



CAFETERIA

The Illinois Central College Cafeteria/Food Service offers a full menu of entrees for breakfast, lunch, and dinner at the East Peoria Site from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 7:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Friday during the academic school year; and 7:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday during summer school. Vending machines are available throughout the East Peoria and Peoria facilities.

Eighty-eight percent of the students surveyed for the self-study are aware of the cafeteria, and 72.1% use it with 90.3% satisfied with services.

A primary concern has been the availability of affordable food service at the Peoria Site. The College has explored numerous options from discount cards, reduced rates at neighboring restaurants, and food coupons for food service. However, the challenge of affordable food service for Peoria students still exists.

BOOKSTORE

The Bookstore is the center for the sale of textbooks, notebooks, writing/laboratory/art supplies, and computer software. A wide selection of paperbacks, sweatshirts, jackets and gifts are also available. Students may also purchase books and supplies at the bookstore located in the Perley Building.

The Bookstore operates with a “for-profit” philosophy. Profits generated by the Bookstore help subsidize athletics, Student Activities, and the Performing Arts Center. The Bookstore has operated with an average annual profit of approximately \$500,000.

Student Programs

Q.U.E.S.T.

The Quality Undergraduate Education for Student Transfers (Q.U.E.S.T.) is open to students who are enrolled in a transfer program at Illinois Central College and have either a 20 or higher ACT composite score or rank in the upper half of their high school graduating class. The Q.U.E.S.T. Program enrolls over 475 students annually, and although it appears to be decreasing in enrollment, the coordinator attributes the decrease to a more accurate accounting of students.

The program sponsors social trips, college visits, activities, and recruitment events.

In addition, the program offers academic advisement, special course sections open only to Q.U.E.S.T. students, and a student lounge. The majority of Q.U.E.S.T. students transfer to Illinois State University and Bradley University, according to their exit interviews in 1998 and 1999. Students in the program are satisfied with the staff and services received (Q.U.E.S.T. report in the Resource Room).



ATHLETICS

Illinois Central College is a member of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) for men and women. Students who meet eligibility requirements established by the College and by the NJCAA can try out for either men's or women's sports. Teams include golf, baseball, and basketball for men and volleyball, basketball, and softball for women.



Intercollegiate athletics continues to be a strength of the institution in terms of academic and participatory success. Approximately 100 student athletes participate in at least one of the six teams at Illinois Central College. In 1995, the Athlete Monitoring Program was incorporated as part of the athletic program to increase the academic success of the students and teams. As a result, the program has helped develop eight Academic All-Americans and three Academic All-American Teams since 1995. Also, team grade point averages have risen over the past six years. The athletic teams have also continued to achieve success on the field. During the 1990's, Illinois Central College was recognized for five national championships, fourteen final-four finishes, and ten additional national tournament appearances.

In 2000, the Board of Trustees increased the number of tuition waivers for each sport to remain competitive with other two-year schools in Region XXIV. One area of concern is the amount of resources available and/or allocated to the athletic program. The athletic program also needs to investigate the possibility of program evaluations by athletes and coaches.

NEW WORLD ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAM (Trio-Student Support Services)

The mission of New World is to enhance the academic careers as well as the personal and professional development of students by improving their academic skills. The goal of the program is to increase retention, graduation, and transfer rates through improvement of the students' academic skills. All New World participants must meet one of the following criteria: first generation college student, economically disadvantaged, and/or physically disabled.

Over the last six years, the program has addressed a number of challenges such as filling staff vacancies, meeting enrollment goals, improving programmatic components, and adjusting to organizational restructuring. Meeting enrollment goals has been the greatest challenge, with participant enrollment ranging from 172-177 students. The program has a documented 75% retention rate, and 86% of the participants are in good academic standing. Likewise, the program has had 66 students graduate over the past three years, and 100% of the transfer-ready participants have transferred.

The program has introduced a number of new initiatives over the past three years, including a redesign of the tutoring process and better utilization of databases for tracking students. In addition, the program has partnered with private and community agencies to secure an annual \$3000 transfer scholarship and a \$500 Illinois Central College scholarship.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Illinois Central College provides a wealth of opportunities for student involvement and interaction outside the classroom through a broad range of social, cultural, recreational, and intellectual programs and activities that extend learning into real-life applications and experiences. The mission of Student Activities is to complement and enhance the academic programs of the College and contribute to the overall growth and development of the individual.

A number of new initiatives and student organizations have been incorporated since the last NCA visit. Programs and initiatives such as Connections, which is a student leadership and staff development program, and D.E.T.A.I.L.S. (Development of Excellence through Activities and Involvement in Leadership and Service), an activity cocurricular and extracurricular transcript for students, have added a number of learning and service experiences for students. In addition, recognized student organizations have doubled over the past five years from 20 to 44 (A complete listing is in the Appendix.) Although opportunities have been initiated, only 17.3% of the students actively participate in campus organizations and activities. The College must continue to investigate new involvement opportunities that engage students in learning experiences outside of the classroom. Overall, 84.5% of the students are satisfied with the activities.

Strengths

- The College has made a commitment to support, with institutional funds, the seven department advisors originally hired through Title III funds.
- A new Grade Exclusion Policy has been adopted.
- The Testing Center's High School Outreach Program has made academic testing more accessible for students.
- The placement exam is now computerized for students.
- Services have expanded for students with disabilities, and the coordinator's position is a full-time one.
- Students have various labs available to them for help with individual courses, writing, and study materials.
- Forty-three percent of students enrolled in credit hours receive financial aid.
- The College's student default rate has decreased substantially in the last several years. The low default rate is indicative of fiscal responsibility of the Financial Aid Office.
- Students have many different ways available to register for classes.

Opportunities for Improvement

- The HELP Lab lacks a budget for hiring tutors and expanding.
- The labs are open only during the traditional semesters of fall, spring, and summer. Some labs and offices do not provide services during the three minimester time frames.
- The Math Lab does not have a full-time coordinator.
- The effectiveness of marketing and recruitment activities is not measured, and very little data exists as to the recruitment effectiveness of campus-held events for the community.
- The process for late course additions and end-of-semester withdrawals is cumbersome and difficult for students.
- Students express some dissatisfaction with transfer advisement.
- No required part-time advisement exists, and there is no tracking system to identify the number of part-time students who do receive advisement.
- An inequitable distribution of advisees to faculty advisors exists.
- Few students use the Job Placement Office and the Career Center services. The satisfaction of those using the Career Center is not as high as that of other areas of the College.
- Limited food services exist for downtown students and staff.

Recommendations

- Develop a tracking and measurement system to evaluate the effectiveness of all marketing and recruitment event.
- Develop ongoing staff development in customer service for staff in Admissions and Records and the Financial Aid Offices.
- Review the late registration and late withdrawal process.
- Enlarge the East Peoria H.E.L.P. Lab.
- Establish standard hours of operation for all academic and support services, i.e., consistency of all-day, evening, and weekend services.
- Hire a full-time Coordinator in the Math Lab to provide more consistent coverage and assistance with the coordination of tutors.
- Increase the space for the Reading Lab and stabilize the funding.
- Enhance the promotion of services from the Career and Placement Office to students in order to increase utilization and investigate partnering with the Illinois Department of Employment Securities.
- Explore options for offering infant childcare at one of the two centers.
- Add more staff to the Disabilities Office.
- Develop a mechanism to measure attendance at campus activities.
- Continue to research methods to provide affordable food service for the Peoria Site.
- Institute an athletic program evaluation process designed to measure overall effectiveness.
- Revise the advisement process by hiring an Advisement Coordinator, developing more training modules, equalizing the number of students assigned to advisees, and forming a required advising process for part-time students.
- Investigate ways to encourage more students to use the services that are available in the Career Center.

