

RH PERRY & ASSOCIATES
SEARCH COUNSEL TO HIGHER EDUCATION



EXECUTIVE SEARCH PROFILE

PRESIDENT

EAST PEORIA, ILLINOIS

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The Opportunity

The Illinois Central College (ICC) Board of Trustees invites confidential nominations and applications for the position of President. The Board seeks an accomplished, collaborative, engaging, transparent, visionary leader with a proven record of fostering student success, driving strategic initiatives, and advancing institutional innovation. Ideal candidates will have a proven record of transformational leadership; a strong commitment to student-centered outcomes; expertise in workforce development, regional economic partnerships, and credentialing; skill in building collaborative relationships with employers, community organizations, and educational partners; a forward-thinking orientation toward technology integration, such as AI or ERP systems, alongside the capacity to enhance operational effectiveness; exceptional communication and team-building abilities, to unite stakeholders, break down silos, and sustain engagement across the college; and experience in managing transformational change.

This leader will build on the foundation established under President Sheila Quirk-Bailey, benefitting from transformative accomplishments realized during her tenure, including achieving six consecutive semesters of enrollment growth, while reducing developmental education placements by 66% without compromising student success; launching nationally recognized programs such as the Workforce Empowerment Initiative (WEI), the IT Workforce Accelerator, and the nation's first federal prison education program funded by Pell grants; and leading ICC in securing transformative grants and creating regional workforce ecosystems, including a significant EDA Good Jobs Challenge grant that positions ICC as a system lead in IT credentialing, and employee partnerships across Central Illinois. The next President will be entrusted with sustaining these achievements while guiding the College into its next era of excellence and community service.

Institutional Overview: The College



Illinois Central College is a public community college that provides a dynamic learning environment, fostering excellence, opportunity, and innovation to meet the educational needs of its diverse students and community. ICC serves residents in all or parts of ten Central Illinois counties--Peoria, Tazewell, Woodford, Bureau, Logan, Marshall, Livingston, McLean, Stark, and Mason--covering 2,322 square miles, and a population of approximately 365,000. Three out of ten graduating high school seniors in the ICC district choose to enroll at ICC, and the College awards more than 1,800 degrees and certificates annually.

Illinois Central College opened its East Peoria Campus in September of 1967, in temporary facilities. Today, the campus spans more than 400 acres of scenic and wooded terrain, and includes the Edwards Library and Administration Building, Academic Building, Agricultural and Industrial Technologies Building, CougarPlex, Performing Arts Center, the ThinkBIG Caterpillar Building, the Workforce Sustainability Center, and the Horticulture Land Laboratory within the ICC Arboretum and Gardens.

ICC opened its Peoria Campus in 2002, and completed major renovations within the last decade, including the

comprehensive Student Center. The campus is home to ICC's health career, culinary, and police training programs, as well as the general education courses that support them. The Corporate and Community Education division is also located at the Peoria Campus.

In 2008, ICC opened its Pekin Campus at Riverway Business Park, offering health career programs, welding, workforce training, and general education courses.

In 2024, ICC became the first higher education institution in the nation authorized to offer Pell Grants to federally incarcerated students, beginning with those at the Federal Correctional Institute Pekin Facility.

Illinois Central College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and received a 10-year accreditation with no follow-up reports required. Its next review is scheduled for 2030. A complete listing of ICC programs that have sought and received specialized (program) accreditation can be viewed below.

ICC Programs



Governance



Illinois Central College is governed by a seven-member, locally elected Board of Trustees, and one Student Trustee, in accordance with the Illinois Public Community College Act. The Board establishes institutional policy, ensures the College fulfills its Mission, and delegates day-to-day operations to the President and administration. The President and administration oversee and maintain College programs and activities with input from the shared governance system, which is comprised of standing committees, communications, and input protocols.

Trustees serve staggered, six-year terms, providing stable leadership and continuity for the institution. Dr. Sheila Quirk-Bailey, who has led ICC since 2016, will retire at the end of 2025 after nearly a decade of service as President.

[View our Board of Trustees](#)



Strategic Plan 2024-2029

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS:

1. Belonging
2. Transformation
3. Success
4. Integration

STRATEGIC GOALS:

1. Foster a sustainable culture of belonging where all stakeholders feel welcome.
2. Adopt a more student-centric culture and build an adaptive, agile, innovative infrastructure to meet educational and workforce needs.
3. Improve access to resources that students need to persist and attain their educational goals.
4. Enhance processes to improve student success and create a One ICC culture that supports collaboration with internal and external shareholders.

[2024-2029 Strategic Plan](#)



Diversity Pledge

Illinois Central College stands committed to diversity in all its dimensions. The College embraces values, and encourages diversity at all levels of its operation. The College stands for tolerance, non-discrimination, and cultural sensitivity.

Inclusion is at the core of Illinois Central College's educational and service strategies. Respect for diverse individuals will be evident in the College's interactions with students, employees, and the communities it serves.

Vision

We provide an exceptional educational experience that delights our students and stakeholders.

Mission

Illinois Central College cultivates student learning and enriches the community by offering an exceptional educational experience rooted in accessibility, belonging, and economic advancement.

Core Values

The College is committed to its Core Values:

- Learning
- Community
- Integrity
- Responsibility
- Excellence

Recent Points of Pride



- Illinois Central College received the **2025 ICCTA Equity and Diversity Award**, the association's top statewide honor recognizing leadership and innovation. This award highlights the College's bold, equity-driven initiatives—including the nation's first use of Pell Grants for incarcerated students, the Workforce Empowerment Initiative that has credentialed more than 1,100 students of poverty with strong completion and employment rates, and the Cultivating a Community of Care Initiative.
- Designated a **2025 Achieving the Dream Leader College**, one of just 15 colleges nationwide recognized for sustained improvements in student success, equity gains for minority students, and innovative reforms that reduce barriers and prepare students for high-demand careers.
- ICC received nearly \$15 million in 2022 (Round 1) and \$4.8 million in 2025 (Round 2) of the **Good Jobs Challenge Grant** for their IT Workforce Accelerator Program. ICC is one of only eight funded programs nationwide, is the only institution to receive awards in both rounds, and is the only community college funded. The IT Workforce Accelerator program provides students with industry-recognized IT credentials at no cost, preparing them for high-demand careers.
- **The Workforce Sustainability Center** at ICC equips Central Illinois with a highly skilled workforce by offering pre-apprenticeship and entry-level training in 13 programs in high-demand fields that drive regional economic growth and strengthen the manufacturing sector. ICC was named a 2025 Bellwether Award Finalist in Instructional Programs & Services, and Workforce Development.
- Illinois Central College received a \$349,397 grant from the **National Science Foundation (NSF)** for an Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program, Creating a Workforce Pipeline of STEM Technicians Through Water Analysis, which enables students to conduct original research.
- Illinois Central College (ICC) is proud to be the national winner of the **2020 Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) Charles Kennedy Equity Award**.



The Region



Illinois Central College is centrally located in the vibrant and diverse Peoria region, offering a blend of urban amenities and rural charm. The College's district spans the cities of Peoria and East Peoria, home to the College's main campus, with medium-sized communities such as Pekin, Morton, and Washington, and smaller towns including Farmington, Minonk, and Hanna City. Conveniently located in East Peoria, the College offers educational programs alongside local amenities, while Peoria features the state's largest park district. Both cities provide scenic riverfront areas and numerous family-friendly activities, along with access to cultural and entertainment offerings, making the area an attractive location for learning and community engagement. Major metropolitan areas such as Chicago and St. Louis are within easy driving distance, making day trips and weekend getaways convenient. Rooted in family values and a strong work ethic, Central Illinois is a community where residents take pride in their home and often build lasting, multigenerational ties.

The City of Peoria, located on the Illinois River, had a population of 113,150 as of the 2020 census, making it Illinois' eighth-largest city. The city boasts a vibrant arts and culture scene, including the Peoria Symphony Orchestra, the Peoria Civic Center, the nationally-recognized Peoria Riverfront Museum, excellent restaurants, and a revitalized riverfront district. From festivals like Erin Feis and Oktoberfest, sporting events like the Steamboat Classic, and weekly farmer's markets, the riverfront hosts many of Peoria's events. Despite its many attractions, the city remains easy to navigate.

Peoria has long been an economic hub. The world headquarters for Caterpillar Inc. was located here for more than 110 years and, while it has moved, the city remains a key center for Caterpillar's manufacturing and engineering operations, and continues to be

Peoria's second-largest employer. Healthcare has also become a major driver of the local economy, and includes Carle Health and OSF HealthCare, which has served as Peoria's top employer since 2021. That same year, Peoria was ranked as the sixth midsize healthcare hub in the country by Business Facilities.

The region is affordable, with a cost of living 8% lower than the national average— including 23% lower housing costs, 4% lower utilities, and 2% lower grocery expenses (according to Payscale).

Illinois Central College's service area spans ten Central Illinois counties and covers 2,322 square miles, providing accessible education and workforce development opportunities across the region.



Academics



Illinois Central College offers more than 150 program **pathways** featuring stackable certificates and associate degrees designed to prepare students for transfer and/or the workforce. As of Fall 2025, ICC offers 56 programs of study leading to an Associate in Arts or Associate in Science degree; 2 programs leading to an Associate in Fine Arts degree; an Associate in General Studies and an Associate in Engineering Science; 39 programs of study leading to an Associate Degree in Applied Science; and 62 programs leading to occupational certificates. Programs are grouped by career cluster pathways, including Agriculture & Natural Resources, Education & Training, Architecture and Construction, Manufacturing, Information Technology, Health Sciences, Business Administration, and Finance. ICC offers Career Coach, a tool that helps students explore in-demand jobs connected to academic programs complemented by individual advising to support career and educational planning.

These are ICC's top 20 programs based on full-time equivalent student enrollment:

Rank	Program	Degree	FTES
1	Business Administration	AA	271
2	Nursing (Baccalaureate)	AS	128
3	Psychology	AA	108
4	Registered Nurse	AAS	102
5	Criminal Justice	AA	85
6	Engineering Science	AES	80
7	Education (Elementary)	AA	67
8	Computer Information Systems	AA	55
9	Accountancy	AA	53
10	Education (Secondary)	AA	52

Rank	Program	Degree	FTES
11	Pre-Medical	AS	48
12	Biology	AS	47
13	Engineering	AS	46
14	Caterpillar Dealer Service Tech	AAS	43
15	Diesel Powered Equipment Tech	AAS	42
16	Business	AAS	38
17	Automotive Technology	AAS	37
18	Culinary Arts Management	AAS	34
19	Industrial Electrical Tech	AAS	30
20	Dental Hygienist	AAS	29

In addition, ICC offers Workforce Development and a wide variety of Corporate and Community education (CCE) programs. Workforce development represents the fastest-growing area of the College, and is largely supported by grant funding. These programs meet students where they are, offer innovative modalities, and help students move quickly into gainful employment. ICC is building educational pathways that combine workforce and academic programming to support students' career goals. The College's strong CCE offerings include comprehensive professional development for businesses and individuals, non-credit workshops that promote lifelong learning, and a summer program for youth called College for Kids.

The Performing Arts Center further enriches campus life with a diverse schedule of student and guest musical, theatrical, and other performances.

Students

BE A PART OF THEIR STORY

Annually, ICC serves more than 10,500 credit students and 5,026 professional credit learners pursuing certificates, certifications, or digital badges. As an open-access college, ICC welcomes all who are ready to learn and is dedicated to empowering our community by providing accessible, relevant, and transformative educational opportunities.

Student Engagement

Student Engagement is a retention engine and a leadership pipeline. With 30+ organizations—including Student Government, honor societies, and clubs—students find community, practice leadership, and apply learning to real-world impact. Our portfolio spans six areas: Common Interest, Faith-Based, Career-Focused, Honor Societies, Leadership Development, and Academic Program-Specific.

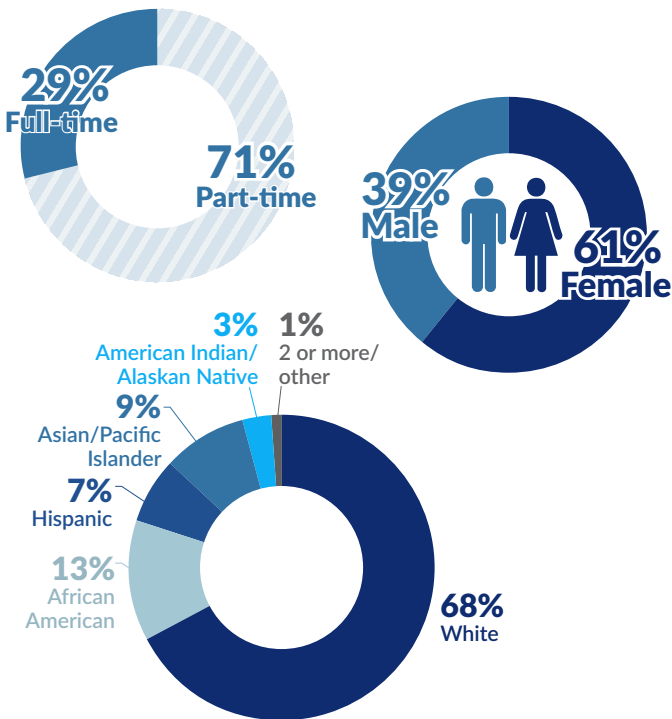
Student Support

Illinois Central College offers a coordinated network of student support—from Student Success Advising and free academic help (in-person/online tutoring, Library research support, and Supplemental Instruction) to transfer planning, career coaching and job connections. Students also have access to comprehensive mental-health and basic-needs services (free counseling, crisis resources, teletherapy, peer support, Cosmo’s Cupboard (food pantry), and Cosmo’s Care Center), disability accommodations through Access Services (e.g., ASL/captioning, alternative formats, testing accommodations, assistive tech), resources for parenting students (child care, vouchers, lactation and family-friendly study spaces), and easy online appointment scheduling across offices. ICC also offers TRiO programs—including Student Support Services for eligible students—to help persist and complete.

Athletics

Illinois Central College fields a competitive, student-centered athletics program in NJCAA Division II, with teams that enrich campus life and connect classroom learning to leadership and teamwork. Women’s sports include basketball, soccer, softball, and volleyball, and men’s sports include baseball, basketball, golf, and soccer. Facilities such as the CougarPlex, Lorene Ramsey Gymnasium, Thome Fields, the soccer field, and the Cougars golf courses support year-round training and competition. ICC’s tradition of excellence is reflected in multiple national tournament appearances and championships. The ICC Athletics Hall of Fame honors student-athletes, coaches, alumni, and community supporters who have made a lasting impact on Cougar athletics. The ICC mascot is Cosmo the Cougar.

ICC Students at a Glance



For a closer look at the vibrant and diverse student body, see the Undergraduate Student Snapshot, which highlights information about the 5,031 students who were enrolled as of August 1, 2025.

[Undergraduate Student Snapshot](#)



The Illinois Central College Educational Foundation

The Illinois Central College Educational Foundation, a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization, plays a key role in advancing the College's mission by securing private support to expand opportunities for students and strengthen institutional excellence. Through scholarships, innovative programs, and strategic initiatives, the Foundation enhances the student experience and contributes to the region's vitality with over \$1,000,000 in scholarships awarded annually.











The next president will collaborate closely with the Foundation's leadership and Board to cultivate philanthropic investment, strengthen community and alumni engagement, and ensure that private support continues to grow in alignment with the College's strategic priorities.

[More Information](#)





Key Indicators

	Operating Budget:	College - \$63.0 million
	Revenue Mix	Tuition/Fees: 37% Local: 50% State: 10% Other: 3%
	Scholarships/Endowment:	\$37,553,407
	Current Tuition	Current FY27
	In-State/In-District:	\$160/credit hour \$167/credit hour
	In-State/Out-of-District on campus:	\$341/credit hour \$356/credit hour
	In-State/Out-of-District online:	\$180/credit hour \$188/credit hour
	Out-of-State/International on campus:	\$405/credit hour \$425/credit hour
	Out-of-State/International online:	\$180/credit hour \$188/credit hour
	Student Enrollment (Fall 2025):	
	FTE:	4,453
	Total Headcount:	8,264
	Student Diversity:	African American: 13% American Indian/Native American: 0.2% Asian/Pacific Islander: 2% Hispanic: 7% White: 68% Other/2+ Races: 10%
	Student Age:	Under 19: 43% 19- 24: 31% 25 and older: 26%
	High School Penetration Rate (FA24):	County graduates/students enrolled at ICC: 24%
	First Year Retention Rate (Fall 2023 to Fall 2024):	First time Full-time: 70% First time Part-time: 53%
	Number of Completions (2024-2025)	
	Degrees:	1038
	Certificates:	1059
	Faculty (Nov 2024 C1 data)	
	FT Faculty:	158
	Part-time Faculty:	254
	Student/Faculty Ratio:	16:1
	Library Collection:	
	Print resources:	41,017 (includes all physical materials)
	Digital Resources:	699,660 (includes all digital materials)
	Intercollegiate Sports:	
	Men's:	Baseball, basketball, golf, soccer
	Women's:	Basketball, soccer, softball, volleyball
	Unions	
	Faculty:	Illinois Central Faculty Forum Faculty Forum Contract
	Staff:	Carpenters Union
	What is Outsourced:	Food Service Operations



The Position



The President of Illinois Central College serves as the Chief Executive Officer, providing vision, leadership, and strategic direction across all areas of the institution. **Positions** reporting directly to the President include the Chief of Staff, Executive Vice President of Administration and Finance, Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs, Vice President of Student Success, Vice President of Workforce and Diversity, Vice President of Marketing, Communications and Recruitment, and the Vice President of Institutional Advancement. The President is responsible for advancing student success, fostering strong relationships with the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, and students, and building partnerships with business, industry, government, and community stakeholders.

The Executive Vice President of Administration and Finance will lead the College as Interim President from January 1, 2026, until July 1, 2026, when the new President takes office. This will be his second term as Interim President. He has postponed his planned retirement until July 2027, in order to provide stability during the leadership transition, and allow ample time to select the next permanent President.

Building on the progress achieved under President Sheila Quirk-Bailey's leadership, the College is well-positioned to advance its mission. At the same time, ICC operates within a dynamic higher education environment that brings both challenges and opportunities. The following areas highlight key priorities that will guide the next President and shape the future of the College.





Challenges & Opportunities

- **ICC must sustain its momentum while navigating the leadership transition.** The next President will be expected to build on the progress achieved under President Sheila Quirk-Bailey in areas such as innovation, workforce alignment, and student-centered strategies, while setting a clear vision for the College's future.
- **Illinois Central College has strong community, business, and educational partnerships.** The next President will have the opportunity to build upon these existing relationships, and cultivate new collaborations that expand opportunities for students and strengthen the region's economic vitality.
- **The College is undergoing a complex transition to Workday as its new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, a process which requires significant staff time, training, and change management.** The next President can lead efforts to fully leverage Workday, using it to streamline operations, strengthen data-informed decision-making, and improve the experience for students, faculty, and staff.
- **The One ICC model has not been fully embraced across all campuses, divisions, and employee groups, leaving it more aspirational than fully realized.** The next President will have the opportunity to advance One ICC as a guiding framework for collaboration, alignment, and student success.
- **Shifts in federal education policies, funding priorities, and regulatory requirements create both challenges and opportunities for ICC.** The next President will be expected to lead with agility and strategic foresight, ensuring the College maintains access to resources, aligns with emerging priorities, and advocates effectively for students and the broader community.
- **The rapid emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) presents both opportunities and uncertainties for higher education institutions.** The next President can position Illinois Central College as a leader in the responsible use of AI to enhance student learning, support faculty innovation, and improve operational efficiency.
- **The Higher Learning Commission has recommended the Board of Trustees strengthen its focus on governance.** The next President will have the opportunity to build a strong foundation for continued success and innovation, by modeling healthy shared governance practices, fostering trust between the Board and administration, clarifying roles, and ensuring institutional decision-making is strategic and collaborative.
- **With the recent closure of campus housing facilities owned by the ICC Educational Foundation, the College is exploring ways to support students seeking a traditional campus experience, including student athletes and international students in need of housing.** This presents an opportunity for the next President to pursue innovative partnerships, alternative housing models, and supportive services that enhance student recruitment, retention, and overall success.
- **Like many institutions across the Midwest, Illinois Central College faces a decline in high school graduates due to shifting regional demographics. At the same time, this trend presents a significant opportunity for the College to expand its reach by strengthening its focus on adult learners, career changers, and other non-traditional students.** The next President will be called upon to develop innovative strategies to attract and support these learners, while ensuring ICC remains a primary pathway for recent high school graduates.
- **Employees have expressed a sense of "initiative fatigue," reflecting concerns about the pace and volume of new projects and changes.** The next President will have the opportunity to review and prioritize initiatives, ensuring they align with the College's mission and that change is strategic, sustainable, and supported by adequate resources.
- **Gaps in internal communication and siloed operations can create barriers to collaboration, innovation, and alignment with institutional priorities.** The next President will be expected to foster a culture of transparency, cross-departmental collaboration, and promote shared ownership of college-wide goals.
- **Some employees seek greater recognition of their expertise, talents, and contributions to the College's mission and success.** The next President can champion inclusive leadership by expanding and strengthening systems that identify, celebrate, and leverage employee expertise across the College.
- **The adoption of eight-week courses presents both challenges and opportunities as ICC works to balance scheduling, faculty workload, and academic rigor with student demand for flexible, accelerated learning options.** The next President will have the opportunity to leverage these course formats to improve student engagement, retention, and timely completion, while ensuring offerings align with workforce and community needs.

Qualifications



Minimum Qualifications

- An earned doctoral degree
- Significant progressive executive leadership experience in a higher education setting, preferably including community college experience
- Demonstrated success in strategic planning and operational leadership, including financial stewardship
- Proven record of promoting student success, retention, completion, and workforce alignment
- Experience working with, or reporting to, a Board of Trustees or similar governance body
- Strong understanding of the accreditation process and regulatory compliance in higher education
- Proven ability to support the success of students from a wide range of backgrounds, and to engage effectively with communities representing varied experiences, perspectives, and needs
- Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written, with the ability to build relationships with faculty, staff, students, community, and external stakeholders
- Described by others as having high emotional intelligence, is humble, approachable, empathetic, engaging, and has a genuine desire to listen to and consider the perspectives of others

Preferred Qualifications

- Faculty experience in higher education, preferably at a community college
- Experience leading in a unionized environment with a shared governance structure
- Proven ability to lead through change in political and policy climates; experience with advocacy, navigating state and federal higher education policy shifts
- Experience implementing innovative models in enrollment, student support, and non-traditional pathways (e.g., adult learners, accelerated formats, hybrid or online learning)
- Experience with grant acquisition, management, and navigating changing federal and state funding landscapes
- Proven experience in Change Management



Application Procedures

Completed applications are due by November 15, 2025. To ensure full consideration, submit: 1) a current resume or CV; 2) a cover letter addressing the position; and 3) the contact information for three professional references. Submit your application securely online [here](#).

For further information, please contact:

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RH Perry Policy

RH Perry & Associates is committed to the highest standards of professionalism in all dealings with candidates, sources, and references. We fully respect the need for confidentiality and assure interested parties that their background and interests will not be discussed without their consent.

Illinois Central College Policy

It is the policy of Illinois Central College that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, disability, sexual orientation, or veterans status, be excluded from consideration for employment, denied employment with or be subject to discrimination of any kind by the College. In accordance with this policy, we support and encourage minority and female participation in all aspects of our institution, as well as with those individuals who interact with us.