

Illinois Board of Higher Education



John Atkinson
Chair



Ginger Ostro
Executive Director

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), created in 1961, is the planning and coordinating body that oversees academic affairs, budgeting, grants and capital improvement for the state's four-year public universities, plus limited coordination over most private colleges and business and vocational schools. It provides budgeting oversight for community colleges and student assistance programs and holds a wealth of data on student demographics.

In September 2020, the board embarked on a strategic planning initiative to establish the blueprint for a higher education ecosystem to ensure individuals, families and communities thrive across the state. Although it is not yet final, the plan will focus on:

- Increasing postsecondary credential and degree attainment to develop the talent that drives Illinois' economy.
- Closing equity gaps for those who have been left behind by the higher education system.
- Improving affordability, increasing access and managing costs.

This new initiative occurred despite the COVID-19 pandemic, during which the IBHE distributed \$30 million in federal funds through the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund, private funding for emergency student grants, and initiated the creation of a drive-up Wi-Fi hotspot map.

The board consists of 16 members, including 10 members appointed for six-year terms, the respective chairs of the Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission; a member of a public university governing board; a member of an independent college or university board of trustees; and two student members elected by the recognized Student Advisory Committee to the board.

Board Members: John Atkinson, *chair*; Veronica Herrero, *vice chair*; *public university trustee member*; Lazaro Lopez, *ex-officio member*, Illinois Community College Board; Kevin Huber, *ex-officio member*, Illinois Student Assistance Commission; Clarence Wyatt, independent colleges and universities; Max Coffey; Derek Douglas; Andrea Evans; Jennifer Garrison; Veronica Gloria; Alice Marie Jacobs; Pranav G. Kothari, Kenneth Shaw; Jennifer Delaney; Mackenzi Matthews, *student representative*; and Maria Cruz, *nontraditional student representative*.