

Illinois State Appropriations Higher Education 4-24-25 Audio Transcript

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SPEAKERS

Representative Crawford, Representative Severin, Representative Mah, Ani Yazedjian, Aondover Tarhule, Representative du Buclet, Representative Stuart, Chairperson Ford, Representative Ammons, Representative Chung, Cobi Blair, Representative Hernandez

Chairperson Ford 00:02

Welcome President Tarhule. It's good to see you again.

Aondover Tarhule 00:08

Thank you. Thank you for allowing me to present this testimony on behalf of Illinois State University. I would like to begin by extending my thanks to chairperson Ford, vice chairperson Meyers-Martin, Republican spokesperson Severin and all the committee members. My name is Aondover Tarhule, Illinois State University President. And I would like to introduce Ani Yazedjian, Vice President Academic Affairs and Provost, Glen Nelson, Vice President for Finance and planning and Cobi Blair, student body president, who will also share a few remarks this morning. I'd like to thank Governor Pritzker for his continued commitment to higher education and his proposed budget. The Governor's proposed 3% operating budget increase represents nearly \$2.4 million for Illinois State. We also appreciate the rise in map funding as Illinois State enrolls over 7,100 students who receive MAP funding grant funding. Similarly, Illinois State University has over 3,400 students who are receiving AIM high funds increases to the AIM high program will help retain students in Illinois for FY 26 Illinois State University has requested a \$20 million increase in appropriated operating funds to help cover financial aid, expand high need disciplines in Illinois, and replace tuition revenue for unfunded state mandates. Unfunded state mandates cost Illinois State approximately \$12 million annually in lost tuition and fee revenue. Consequently, I want to express my gratitude to Senator Dave Koehler and co sponsor Senator Paul Faraci for introducing Senate Bill 1987 and to Representative Sharon Chung for agreeing to carry this bill in the House. The bill will allocate, if approved, \$6 billion to Illinois State University to reimburse the school for lost tuition revenue related to state mandated Special Education tuition teacher tuition waiver program. I would be remiss if I did not bring several significant challenges confronting the university to your attention. First, like many universities nationally, Illinois state faces a challenging, physical environment in which expenditures are rising faster than revenues. Second, total compensation increases to return talented faculty and staff reached \$7.6 million in FY 24. Third, our list of unfunded capital maintenance, or deferred maintenance backlog totals \$250 million for state supported buildings to ensure safety and regulatory compliance, we are compelled to charge fees to students who help me to help maintain facilities that the state should support. This raises the cost of attendance, typically for students who are least able to afford it, undermining our efforts to control costs and to support students. In the fall of 2024 Illinois State University took preemptive action to avoid a budget crisis by adopting a multi faceted approach called RISE, Illinois state's parts to resilience, renovation, sustainability and

excellence. Our initial measures included reduced hiring, deferral of non urgent projects, and a university wide budget hold back. It is worth mentioning that Illinois State receives only 14% of our total operating budget from the state today. Therefore, why I'm encouraged by our progress, I must stress that without significant increases in state appropriation on the scale proposed in the equitable funding formula bill, these actions are not sustainable. Consequently, on behalf of Illinois State University, I humbly urge you all to support the adequate and equitable public university funding formula, and here I must especially thank Representative Ammons for your leadership and support for each HB 1581 and SB 13. Despite this challenges, our successes are many. Illinois State is consistently in the nation's top echelon for graduation and retention rates, programmatic quality ratings, value for investment, military friendliness, best college town, civic engagement, low loan default rates, and research and creative scholarship. I'd like to share some additional points of pride with you. Illinois State continues to serve Illinois students and their families. The percentage of in state students at undergraduate students at ISU, who are from Illinois, is 96.2% our total enrollment for fall of 2024 was 21,546 a 2.7% increase over FY 23 which included the largest freshman class in school history. FDIC student retention is 81.4%. Underrepresented students retention has increased significantly from 69.4% to 74.3% during the past six years. A recent study by the Bloomington Normal Economic Development Council showed that Illinois State University contributes approximately \$1 billion in output to the region. It supports further 9,702 jobs, and generates tax revenues totaling \$188 million this study also indicates that for every dollar that ISU spends \$1.75 is returned to our community. Therefore, Illinois State's continued success is vital to our region and to Illinois. Illinois State University is committed to developing academic programs that help meet workforce needs. We graduate nearly 1,000 highly trained K through 12 teachers annually across our 27 licensure pathways, making us the largest provider of teachers in Illinois and one of the largest nationally. We have taken steps to address the nursing shortage in Illinois. Our new College of Engineering will welcome its first class this fall, and a new interdisciplinary major in data science will also welcome its first students. ISU has established strong partnerships and numerous pathways to ensure a smooth and seamless transfer process for community college students with 135 articulated courses, ISU leads the state of Illinois in the Illinois articulation Initiative, or IAI. In addition to IAI courses, ISU has transferred guides with all Illinois community colleges and 38,000 articulated courses. Illinois State also has a Redbird Promise program that guarantees admission for all students who obtain their associate's degrees and end a GPA of 2.5. This collaboration and partnerships have been effective, so we are concerned about the current proposal that which would allow community colleges to offer baccalaureate degrees. Alongside the other presidents of public four year institutions. Illinois State will continue to collaborate with the Governor's office to develop a mechanism that meets the state's workforce creation needs without undermining the viability of existing programs at four year institutions as we look to the future of higher education in our country, we stand at a pivotal moment, shaped by challenges and opportunities in these times of transition, the role of colleges and universities is more crucial than ever in fostering creativity, equity and resilience. Thank you, and at this time, I would like to give the microphone to Cobi for his remarks.

Cobi Blair 08:49

There we go. Good morning. Thank you, President Tarhule. I am very grateful for the opportunity to speak before this committee today. My name is Cobi Blair. I am currently a graduate student studying accounting at Illinois State University as part of a five year program, and in just a few short weeks, I'll be graduating with my master's degree in accounting. I also have the distinct honor and privilege of serving as the student body president for the 2024 2025 academic year. Illinois State has been instrumental in helping me build my success story. I'm the first in my family to attend and graduate from college. I'm from Oakley, Illinois, a small rural community in Macon County, and I was raised by my paternal grandparents from a young age. They were working class people and could not afford to help support me through college. So I knew early on that I would have to make the most of any opportunities that I had. I did well in high school, and was fortunate to be able to take some dual credit courses

through Richland Community College, including accounting 101 and 102. I was surprised at how much I enjoyed accounting and so when the time came to begin applying for universities, I was looking for those that had good accounting programs. I applied to several schools, but Illinois State offered me the best package by far, through generous financial aid and scholarships, my cost to attend was zero. That wasn't just a deciding factor in choosing Illinois State over other colleges and universities. It was a deciding factor for me in choosing whether I'd be able to go to college at all. To be offered complete coverage of expenses was life changing. Illinois State offered a strong BS MPA program in accounting. That's a five year program that ends with a master's degree and CPA exam eligibility. I called ISU admissions, told them about my community college dual credit, and asked them, would I be able to do this five year program in four years? They told me yes, and they followed through with that. So I was looking at a situation where for four years with no student debt, I could get a master's degree and be eligible to become a CPA. I could not believe that opportunity. I accepted the offer and attended Illinois State for my first semester in fall 2021. Coming from a high school with a graduating class of less than 60 to a 21,000 student campus was overwhelming in the best way possible. I got as involved as I could, and by the end of my freshman year, I was elected to our Student Government Association Senate. That's when I discovered another strength of Illinois State, the university's commitment to shared governance and the inclusion of student voices. Our Student Government at Illinois State is deeply involved in the policy making process and works closely with ISU Academic Senate and with the administration. Since then, through Student Government, I have had the opportunity to serve on multiple university committees, from the RISE Task Force dealing with the budget and finance to a task force that about the impacts of AI in higher education and as opportunity to co chair a committee reviewing the student fees, as well as numerous other committees that I have had the opportunity to serve on. These are just a few examples of how ISU empowers its students, and only a few of the groups that I've served on it reflects a culture that truly values student input and involvement through connections in ISU's Department of Accounting, I learned about an internship opportunity at State Farm. I was lucky enough to earn a spot in their summer program, and had a fantastic experience. I was able to apply skills that I learned through the College of Business, especially those involving Excel and data analysis techniques to real world projects during my internship. I believe that that experience backed by is use preparation is what led me to receiving a full time offer as a tax analyst, which I accepted. I'll begin working there in June, while also working towards completing my CPA certifications. I'm still amazed at how far I've come thanks to the opportunities that Illinois State has given me. My starting salary at State Farm is higher than anyone in my family has ever earned. I've not just been able to get involved, but I've been able to lead and to grow and most importantly, I've been treated by the university, not just as a student, but as a valued partner in the university community. While I'm sure I may have found success at other institutions, I genuinely believe that no place but Illinois State could have offered me the opportunities, support, and sense of belonging that I've been fortunate to experience. Thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you today.

Aondover Tarhule 13:41

Thank you, Cobi, and that concludes our remarks. We're happy to take any questions.

Chairperson Ford 13:48

Thank you. The Chair recognizes representative Stuart.

Representative Stuart 13:54

Thank you, and thank you everyone on the panel for being here today and for sharing your story. And Cobi, I'm tearing up a little bit. You're like, the exact, perfect example of what I believe we are all trying to work for and achieve. And then the story just kept getting better and better and better. Like, just to take the leap from what you said your your graduating class was 60. Is that correct?

Cobi Blair 14:20

Yes, I forget the exact number, but I believe it was around 55 to six.

Representative Stuart 14:23

Okay, so far below 100 students to go to this massive campus is first of all scary, and then your first generation, and then to have the wherewithal to figure out how you were going to get this thing paid for, and then to be able to do it without incurring any debt or anything else. It's just amazing. Thank you to the University for supporting students like Cobi. Congratulate, congratulations on your upcoming graduation. I'm sure that's going to feel great, and how great to know that you're going right into a really good job. I mean, that's like the perfect outcome, and it's, it's all the things that we hope that we can help the university support. So congratulations. I'm sure Colby is not the only success story you could have brought with you. We probably could have had a parade of students, but you did an amazing job of representing what the university does well. So thank you for coming. I want to ask the university, how in the world did you grow to the biggest freshman class of all time in this environment? It seems impossible. So I don't know what the magic sauce is. I don't know if you want to give away your secrets in a public setting, but I would love to talk to you about that and learn a little more details of what you did, because we know we're facing a big demographic change. There just frankly, are fewer 18 year olds graduating from high schools across the board. I mean, that's country wide, not not specific to Illinois. We've had a trend for a long time of out migrating those students anyway. So whatever you're doing to pull them in, I commend you. Please keep doing it. Hopefully the things we are doing are helping you support those programs. I hope things like the direct admissions and other programs aim high and all those things are going to help you continue that recruitment model. And if there's anything that's going to mess that up, make sure we have that discussion before we go any further. I appreciate that you brought up specifically the special ed tuition waiver. We all know that we're in a crisis of teachers, partly because of a lack of people going into the field, also due to people in the field choosing to leave. But I think it's important to really emphasize so if you have a student in your school of education who is studying special education and intends to graduate with a licensure for special education. They pay no tuition. Are you the only university required to do that?

Aondover Tarhule 16:53

No. Thank you for the question. Let me clarify so if a student says they want to major in special ed, and they plan to work in the state of Illinois upon graduation, there's a state bill that says they're not supposed to pay tuition and fees. So we, our special ed department, we have Provost who can provide more accurate numbers, but I think we're close to 800 students, and more than half don't pay any tuition or fees. So think about running a program of more than 400 students with faculty and all the support. But we have no revenue. So this accounts for about \$6 million for us annually. But specifically to your question, you said, Are we the only institution? No, we're not. But because we're the largest program teaching special ed, we bear 58% of all the special ed waivers in the state. So the university is absorbing 58% of the cost of all the special aid waivers. So this is a, obviously a disproportionate amount of burden that is being borne by one institution, and we are very proud of what we do with our special ed program. Obviously, it's successful, and would like to continue to do that, because we know if we don't prepare this, the teachers, then the K through 12 programs are not going to have special ed teachers. So we'd like to continue to do this, but we're really looking for support to be able to do it in an affordable way. Because given the budget constraints, it's becoming increasingly harder for us to continue to offer those kinds of programs without some reimbursement from the state.

Representative Stuart 18:45

Thank you. I wanted to make sure that we emphasized that. And again, I think it's pretty well known that if you're in I mean, my husband's quite older than the freshman on your campus, but when he was looking to go to school, he had no desire to stay home and close to mom and dad in Edwardsville, and

he knew he wanted to be a teacher, and it was a no brainer he was going to ISU, like, that's where you went if you wanted to be a teacher. And I know that that's very common across the whole state, which is why your program is so big. And I know your teachers get hired across the state. We have lots of them working in the districts that I represent, but I just, I think it's important, and we have to realize, when we do, which I think that's a laudable thing that we do, is, have you, you know, waive the tuition and fees, but we have to realize first, that you are taking on the biggest burden of it, the other you're at about 60% the other 40% are dispersed all around different institutions. It's not like there's 40% in one other place. You really take the biggest hit on that. And then often, we know that that just it causes a burden shift, and you're trying to do all these other things, like supporting, you know, a student like Cobi, who was not a special educator, but an accountant. It makes it harder for you to also do what you can to support those students. And then sometimes it ends up that we know that burden shift goes to higher tuition, to other tuition paying folks. So I hopefully we can do something to help with that relief, and I appreciate it. I don't know that I have any more specific questions. I would assume, when we talked to the previous university, we talked about challenges of procurement and how that in you know, impacts deferred maintenance and buildings. I know that you're you've got some new construction going on on campus. I don't know if you wanted to talk just a little bit if you would agree that maybe some procurement help could make things more efficient and affordable.

Aondover Tarhule 20:44

Absolutely. One example is our fine arts, College of Fine Arts. Since that college was approved for funding, the cost to do it now has gone up by 75% because of the delay in the construction. So it was originally approved for about \$50 million to do that project now is almost \$88 million. There's over 38 million that the state could have saved if we had implemented this project 5-10, years ago. So there is all that additional waste of money because it has taken so long that the cost has escalated. That's not an increase in the scope of work. In fact, we're still having to reduce the scope and lose \$38 million in delays, and this doesn't account for the cost that the university has borne to accommodate functions and activities that could have been taking place in that space. So I think one, one way that we can really save money is to increase the pace at which we are able to construct projects. My very strong recommendation, I think, because CDB is overwhelmed, is to allow the universities to be able to execute projects that cost below a certain threshold. Because we are following exactly the same procurement laws, we don't follow a different procurement process and compliance requirement from the CDB. It's all comes from the state. And so we can do and be subject to the same type of accountability and oversight that the CDB has to go through. And that allows us, if we other sister universities, can do low value projects, maybe five, five to \$20 million allowing the CDB to focus on those high value projects. I think it would be a win win for everybody, not only with projects, gets done much faster. The state could save a lot of money. Imagine if we saved \$88 million from executing this project much more speedily. That's money that could go into something else, and that's just one project at one university. Calculate the lost revenue from cause from those delays throughout the system and the state, and it's a lot of wasted money. So I would strongly advocate if one way that you can help us is to allow universities to take on execution for low value projects, so CDB can focus on the on the high end.

Representative Stuart 23:33

And thank you. And I think also, in addition to that, I imagine, you know we, everyone's competing for students, everybody's being very innovative and new programs and new ways to meet students where they are and but what you need in order to serve all those students would be faculty, and I know that it is also a common challenge that faculty recruitment. I would imagine, not having state of the art research facilities and other things would make it much harder for you to draw someone from some wide reaching place to come. Why am I coming to Central Illinois to be in an old lab, a building that doesn't have, you know, a good roof, or whatever it is, when I could go, you know, maybe work in the, you know, Silicon Valley area, and be in that climate with state of the art, equipment everywhere. So I

would imagine, if we could help you to make these projects more efficient, get done faster, you could keep up pace with a lot of other schools that are maybe making it harder for you to recruit the faculty that you're trying to recruit.

Aondover Tarhule 24:34

I agree completely. But let me tell you what really worries me as president, it's the safety. We had a chunk of concrete fall down in our library. Fortunately, it didn't hit any student, but it could have hit a student. Imagine if that happened and a student got hurt. What would be the liability? What's the PR? But what is the the impact on the family that sends their children to come and study with us in what should be a safe environment. But we have a building that was completed in 1975 we've not been able to update it. We have a building where the shingles are flying off during the storm. What would happen if a student got hit? So yes, the ability to attract and retain faculty is obviously important, but I'm not even asking for that. I'm just asking to be able to maintain safety for our students. That's what deferred maintenance and some of the deferred maintenance issues have placed us to where we're constantly worrying what would happen to a student. This should not be. Students and families, and everyone in Illinois deserves the right to know that when they send their students to universities that it's a safe environment over things that we ought to be able to maintain, and we are not able to do that. I know this risk. I'm very concerned about this risk. I just can't find the money to fix them. So if you can help me get there, I'll take the old labs and deal with the maintenance issues, the recruitment issues another way. I just like to make sure that at least we keep our facilities to a level where they are safe.

Representative Stuart 26:25

I think that really put things in perspective. Thank you very much. I will leave the floor open to the rest of my colleagues. Thank you.

Chairperson Ford 26:33

Would the clerk please add representative Lisa Hernandez to the roll, and the chair recognizes representative Chung,

Representative Chung 26:41

thank you so much, Chair, President. I really great to see you. And Cobi, I just want to congratulate you on your comments. I think, like leader Stuart said that we were all sort of moved here, but so thank you. And I have to tell you, I texted my my babysitter, my office intern, she's a student at ISU. And I told her that you were speaking, and I told her, you're doing great. And she said, I wouldn't expect anything less from him. So congratulations. And so speaking to some of the things you talk talked about Cobi, I think that again, we talk here a lot about giving students, those first generation students, that that opportunity to be able to go to college. And what's, you know, we talk a lot again, about students, of course, like in more urban areas, but I think that what you made the case for is also students in rural areas to be able to get that that opportunity. So I really appreciate your perspective. I think it also is important for a lot of us to know that, again, first generation students are all around the state and come from all different sorts of communities. So thank you for making that case today. President Tarhule, I think that the thing I know that. Well, I first want to say that you have made them I just turned to my colleague here. I said, I think you've made the most sort of forceful, definitive comments about deferred maintenance and its effect on the university. So thank you so much for being able to put that on record. I know a lot of us are here, are aware of those challenges throughout all the university systems and public universities here in our state, but I think for you to be able to really reiterate that and put that into context in such a way today is really helpful for us. I also wanted to talk, I wanted to see if you could talk a little bit about, again, the we have this chart here about the per student funding that we have. Because, again, I think that's something, at least from my perspective, being in Bloomington Normal for so long, and seeing ISU through different presidents, and sort of knowing the financial health of the university, I have

always felt that with Illinois State, sort of being able to weather the storm when it economically over some tough budget years, I feel like they've been sort of, maybe, I'll just say, punished in a way for maintenance, being conservative in their spending, and also maybe, and even kind of along that same theme, again, ISU is sort of being punished in a way for being good at what they do. Again, with special education, that's a it's a huge hub for students to be able to do that. So in that way that that I can see how that can feel a little unfair, so I would want you to maybe elaborate on that a little bit here.

Aondover Tarhule 29:24

Thank you. Thank you so much. I appreciate the question, and just to make sure everybody is on the same page, when Dr Lisa Freeman from Northern spoke just before just before us, she said that the current higher ed allocation process is not a formula. Nobody knows exactly why it's done. So if you were to take the amount of appropriation that we get, and every university gets from the state and divided by the number of students we serve, ISU has consistently ranked at the bottom of that list. We get only about \$4,000 per student. The average is around \$7,000. Now there's a couple of points that are important here. Education costs a certain amount to deliver. If we take a simple example and assume that it costs \$10 to educate a student, if we get \$4 from the state, it means we'll charge the students \$6. That's what it would cost to give deliver that education. If we get \$2 from the state, it means we'll charge the students \$8. Because ISU gets so little from the state, it becomes really difficult for us to keep our costs affordable and competitive, because the students are having to contribute a lot more to that number. So that's one of the challenges. The second challenge is this, and it's an important one, because the appropriations are not based on any formula. They are cost the flat rates that every university gets over time. Schools like us that have actually grown in population are now getting less and less pay students every year, whereas the schools that are losing numbers are getting more and more. It's not that they are getting more allocation, but it's converting to more and more pay student every year. This is backwards. So in the places where we are attracting our students want to go and more student, which means that the students want to get the experience and the education, it's becoming harder and harder for us to offer that education. So again, it speaks to why a very strong supporter and advocate for the new equitable funding formula, because it's based on metrics, because it's based on a rational formula that we can understand, and because it's dynamic in this way, as numbers change or enrollments change, and the composition of the students you serve changes, the changes will be reflected in the appropriations that you get quite on top of the fact that Illinois States is getting only about 55% of what the state deems is adequate for us to run the university. So I would strongly advocate and champion that anyone who can support, not can, I hope everyone is able to support the new equitable funding formula. It will make a world of difference for us.

Representative Chung 32:29

Thank you so much. And I also wanted to address what leader Stewart asked about, what the secret is? I think it's because Bloomington almost a really great place to live. I'm going to say it, but thank you again.

Aondover Tarhule 32:40

We have another secret, but I'm not going to divulge it, but thank you so much. The secret is sitting behind me, but I'm not going to say that,

Representative Chung 32:49

but thank you again for being here today.

Chairperson Ford 32:53

The Chair recognizes representative Mah.

Representative Mah 32:58

Thank you. I'd like to thank all of you for being here and providing testimony, and like my colleagues, I'd like to especially congratulate Cobi for your testimony and your successes at ISU. There was a part of your testimony that I could especially relate to because I graduated from high school with a class of 80 girls, and then I ended up going to college at a university with more than 30,000 students on the campus, and so this idea of being overwhelmed in the best way possible, is something that I also experienced, and I myself went on to receive a PhD, and in my former life, I was a college professor in Ohio, and one of my former students did end up enrolling at ISU for his teacher training in your school of education. And I recall that he got in contact with me when he was finished, he was applying for positions here in the state of Illinois, even though he was originally from Ohio, and in the end, did not receive a job offer from a school in Illinois and ended up going back home to Ohio. And it just made me wonder, you know, if there are supports and resources that help your graduates be successful in applying for positions here in Illinois. Because, you know, of course, we are dealing with a teacher shortage, like many other places. But you know, having the, this incredible training program here, is something that could give our state an advantage in recruiting and getting those students to stay in our school systems after they graduate. And so I wonder, you know, if there are existing resources that direct your graduates to successfully apply for positions here in the state?

Aondover Tarhule 35:33

Yes, there are, but let me invite the provost to take that question.

Ani Yazedjian 35:38

Thank you. Was the student an undergraduate student or a doctoral student? Were they pursuing a graduate degree or an undergraduate degree?

Representative Mah 35:47

He was in the School of Education. He was training to be a teacher. Yeah.

Ani Yazedjian 35:52

So we do have the Lauby Teacher Education Center that does provide services for students in terms of helping secure placements, but really, I think at the end of the day, it goes back to what the President was saying. We have supports, but we also have limited funding. And so if we have additional funding, then we can pour even more resources into providing students the support they need. You know, we're doing a great job with what we have, but what we can do is also limited in terms of the personnel that we can provide, and given the number of students that the pre service teachers that we serve, so we do have resources in place. It is unfortunate that your former student was unable to get a job in the state of Illinois, but we would certainly want to increase the support and resources that we can offer.

Chairperson Ford 36:42

Thank you. The Chair recognizes representative du Buclet.

Representative du Buclet 36:48

Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a few questions. My first question is, what is your matriculation rate for African American students versus the general population?

Aondover Tarhule 37:03

I would have to check that. To provide you the number, we divide it into male and female, so the black male, black females, Hispanic male. So I'd have to check that number, if you don't mind.

Representative du Buclet 37:18

No, that's fine. And then secondly, speaking of black males, there seems to be a huge disparity in the black population with black males. I think attending college at 20 to 30% rate versus black females. Do you have any thoughts around that?

Aondover Tarhule 37:38

this is indeed a national crisis almost everywhere you look, it's not just graduating, it's also staying. It's not just attending, it's also staying, persisting and graduating. At Illinois State, one of the things that we did several years ago was to launch a program to try to close the gap between students, between different demographics and the general students population. So I think that program is now in its fourth year, where we've been trying to close that gap, and we've had considerable success with it. I think our biggest challenge is upscaling the program so that it serves all students, which is a function of limitation. So the exact reasons why we have that disparity, I don't, I don't know, we take on the problem at the point where the students have registered and our goal when our new strategic plan is to make sure that every student who comes to Illinois State gets the same kind of experience and achieves the same kind of outcomes as everybody has. So this is something we are aware of, and this is something that we are we have taken on as an institutional priority.

Representative du Buclet 39:04

Thank you. I appreciate that. I was first generation college student. I attended University of Illinois, and this question may be more for them, but I remember that they accepted a large number of black students, but the majority of them did not graduate, but that's for the next panel, or two panels away, and then I have a DEI question, similar to the one I asked the previous panel with all the DEI initiatives coming down from Washington DC, are you doing anything to change your policies, or are you keeping things the Same? Or how are you dealing with that?

Aondover Tarhule 39:42

So when the executive order started coming down, I constituted a committee to review each order as it comes and then to look at what the order is in relation to whether we are being in compliance with the law as we know it, first of all, and then the executive orders. And so we have been very thoughtful and very deliberate in interpreting the places where we know we might not be entirely within the existing law, because that tends to happen as over year, over time, as processes evolve and we'll we know we have to be in compliance with the law, so we're taking every steps to bring ourselves in alignment. Other than that, as you know, a lot of the orders are very complicated to interpret, so we collaborate with the other public universities, and we look at resources from a variety of places to help us interpret what they mean and what we should be doing about it. And in some cases, there is not enough clarity about exactly the intent or the application, and we continue to work with the governor's office, other entities, to see if we can get additional clarity before we decide the best way to respond.

Representative du Buclet 41:12

So have you changed anything?

Aondover Tarhule 41:19

What do you mean? Like, what's an example of,

Representative du Buclet 41:23

well, have you changed any of your policies, any of your programs? Separate question is, do you think these DEI policies are going to affect your African American studies program? Any change?

Aondover Tarhule 41:33

Not yet. We're still studying. We're still studying the policies, and looking at where we think there may be change.

Representative du Buclet 41:44

So you're considering change, and I think I heard you say, because you wanted to be in compliance?

Aondover Tarhule 41:48

We definitely want to be in compliance with the law, and we have a review committee that has identified areas where we need to make some adjustments, and I'm looking forward to making those adjustments, [but] specific programs and academic curriculum in particular we have not touched.

Chairperson Ford 42:15

Chair recognizes representative Ammons.

Representative Ammons 42:22

Thank you, President. It's very good to see all of you certainly. We just want every one of those students to have the opportunity experience that Cobi just explained an amazing story. And we congratulate you from this committee, for sure, and certainly wish you much success to help other students from small communities have the experience that you had the opportunity to have. And the most important thing you said is without the debt, without the debt, because families are absorbing the debt in ways that harms, actually the economy long term. And your story should be all of the student's story, and that's what I hope that we are going to work toward. President, I had the pleasure of being on campus with you recently, and what an amazing campus. It is a secret there, right? We're downstate, so we're in central Illinois, and I was leaving out of the campus, and I said, this just feels so much like Urbana Champaign without the big buildings. And we hope to help you get out of this safety issue. Your appropriations request is just about \$20 million dollars, which we know is woefully inadequate. You're being very kind to the state with this appropriations request, and I'm certain your Financial Committee and the provost have a lot more that they say to you in relationship to financing, but you've made the point that this system ISU receives the least per pupil funding in the state of Illinois. As a member of this committee for 11 years, I served five years as chair. When I first came on, I didn't quite understand what was happening here. I didn't understand how appropriations was actually being decided, and we had working groups that sat down and went through each of our universities budgets and said, Well, what can we do? We cut this and cut that and so on and so forth. And I refused to participate in the cut scenario, because for three decades, all of our universities, not one of our universities, is 100% adequately funded. We know that by way of the commission that you serve honorably on and help to make me the smartest person I could be on how university funding works. But in that request, what I understand is you've just said that you lose money on special education at \$6 million, you didn't give us a number on the veterans programs, the waivers, if you could provide for us at some point, all of the waivers that you issue at ISU, and what that loss revenue is, that would help us. But I also want to draw the attention again, as I did in the previous panel to documents we've given to all the committee. I know you've seen these documents. You served on the Commission, as well as drafting the bill. ISU over a 10 year historic period, if we look at nominal funding that we do now, 2% 3% funding doesn't allow you to ever catch up, because your funding level would be annually about a little bit over 4 million additional dollars that you may see, but it doesn't make up the 30 years of divestment. If we looked at a rolling average of 10 years just hypothetically, of the funding formula that would get you to just over \$143 million in that same 10 year stretch of time. Can you talk to us about what the equitable funding model means to ISU in relationship to the waivers, the loss, the safety of the buildings, and all of those things, if you would?

Aondover Tarhule 46:24

Thank you so much for the question. By the way, the mandated waivers should be of all of our mandated waivers, and the laws should be in one of the package that you received. So we call at the top mandated waivers, and we broke it down. Let me answer your question in two ways. First of all, I'll go back to the funding, and I want to be I want to make sure everybody understands this. In 2000, so 25 years ago, ISU received \$92 million from the state in 2000. This last year, we received \$80 million, so in absolute terms, we're now receiving, actually, it's close to \$13 million less now than we got 25 years ago from the state without accounting for inflation. If you account for inflation, what we're getting now is the equivalent of \$45 million so what we're getting now is less than half of what we used to get 25 years ago. And in that time, costs have gone up, numbers have gone up. That's the situation we're dealing with. So as we look at the cost of funding, affordability for students, if, as we look to try and produce more students like Cobi, I think the more that we can get additional funding, additional support from the equitable funding formula, first of all, the first thing it does is it allows us to reduce the cost of attendance. I go back to my example I gave before, universities don't make a profit. All we try to do is to cover our cost. And so if we have a cost of \$10 and \$6 is covered from the state, it means we can charge the students only \$4 and if we get only \$1 from the state, we charge the students \$9. We don't make a profit, we just cover cost. So the first thing that we do is help us with affordability. The second thing that we do is support for students. Students have a lot more support now. In mental health, they have a lot more stress to deal with. And so the more that we can provide those kinds of services, the more students can graduate. 60% of students who drop out of school are not dropping out because they are academically deficient. They are dropping out because they can't afford it. Finances account for 60% of the reasons why students drop out. So if you talk about retention or graduation rates and improving our successful students by decreasing the amount of money that students owe or the financial burdens that they face if students have to work two or three jobs in order to go to school, obviously they're not going to graduate on time. So the second thing that we do is allow us to improve retention rate, allow us to graduate students much faster, and allow us to support the students so that they can become all around, complete, well experienced students. Students don't go to universities just to get a degree. This is the place where socialization happens. This is the first time they are learning to live with people who are not like them, people who come from other cultures. And that extracurricular participation is what creates an all rounded education, educated citizen. If students have to work and spend a limited amount of time they have left over for studies. They missed out on the true college experience. So given the students all those experiences have mean that we need to reduce the burden and the cost and the time that they're having to walk in order to pay for college. This is what the equitable funding formula, as the numbers that you have cited will do for us. And I can't say again enough, I'm a big advocate for the formula.

Representative Ammons 50:30

Thank you, President, you've been critical in helping to understand how the funding process works, which at some point I hope all of the members really get to see the behind the scenes of how universities are actually funded, which informs what we do in this committee. Over the long term, you've given us some, I actually had not looked at it this way, so I appreciate you identifying that we're actually giving you less money in nominal dollars period, if we were able to pass the funding formula, what is it that you would prioritize in year one? In year one, it may for ISU, it would move you from this year's status quo a little bit over 2 million to 13, a little bit over 13 million in the first year. So we wouldn't get you all the way to the 20 million ask, but we would, in first year, get you very close. What would you all be able to do with that?

Aondover Tarhule 51:27

Cost of attendance. Cost of Attendance, if we could get more money so we don't have to raise tuition, fees, I think that absolutely that would be the first consideration. Because we know that education, the cost of a college degree, is almost at the limit of what students are able or willing to pay and families, and so the more we have to raise that in order to attract students, the fewer students are going to be

able to come to school, which is the exact opposite of what would like to do. And so I would like to be able to hold our cost of attendance constant, if not decrease it, so that we give opportunities for more students to come. And then the second would be making sure that we improve the support services so that more students can graduate. In our new strategic plan, I have set very ambitious goals for retention and graduation rates. I tell everybody what I would like to be my legacy at Illinois State is student success, and so our ability to offer students more programming, more support. So first of all, they stay and they can graduate much faster, those would be the priorities where the money goes.

Representative Ammons 52:44

And then finally, I would just like to understand what setbacks federal reductions, additional reductions, will do with ISU. And are you concerned about students, as my colleague asked about DEI not choosing to come to SIU. Oh, I mean, I'm sorry, excuse me. ISU, because A, they can't afford it, and B, that there are programming that specifically support the needs of diverse communities that are being eliminated at your campus. How are you going to address the what we know is the cliff of enrollment that clearly, I think, is going to be on double time now.

Aondover Tarhule 53:26

Yes, it makes it will make our job, it makes our job significantly harder, maybe even impossible. We are pretty close to middle in the state of Illinois in terms of our demographics, the composition of our students, and we were very excited about that. This might, this might set us back. Everything that is happening with DEI is likely to slow that down. I really liked the comments that President Freeman made about the instances where some people seem to conflate DEI with with lack of merit, there are times when I take that personally. I like to feel that I'm where I am based on merit. I like to feel that I acknowledge I got a lot of help and a lot of support and assistance from many people, but the idea that somehow that DEI is directly correlated with a lack of merit, I think it's dangerous, and I hope it's something we don't buy into. So looking forward, I think one of the bigger fears is if we ever create the message for underrepresented people that somehow they are not capable unless they get additional support or any kinds of accomplishments they make, it's because they've got some waivers. I think that is really dangerous for our society and for our nation and not where we'd like to go. For a university specifically, I think we have identified the challenges absolutely correctly. I think that. Let me make this point this way, if students don't learn to interact with people in other cultures in a university, where are they going to learn that? And so if you don't have diversity programs to support that, where does that happen? So as a country, we are not just trying to produce people who get degrees. This is the time when students are their most impressionable. This is a time when they learn the habits and values that will stick with them forever. I think it's important that students learn to engage, to interact with other people, and some of this comes from the diversity and inclusivity training and activities that universities are maybe the only places provided on campus. So I would hope that we don't lose that. I just hope we don't lose that.

Representative Ammons 56:08

Can I ask a final question of what the impact of federal reductions are in nominal dollars for you all?

Aondover Tarhule 56:16

Right now, it's a little over a million dollars. I think we have lost, we have lost one grant that we are a core 300,000 something like that, and then we've lost another grant that was about 748, over \$700,000, not directly from the from the federal government, but as a result of the actions of the federal government. The biggest concern we face is the reduction in the IDC, if you cut IDC, [but I don't know what IDC is], oh, I'm sorry. Indirect cost, so the F&A, the cost assists that we take on in order to execute a project. Cutting it back to 15% is an unfunded mandate. It's almost the same as the teacher waiver program, because there are real costs associated with running a grant. Somebody has to

administer the money. We need accountants to pay the money. We have utilities. We have laboratory equipment on which the research has to be done. All of that is what that IDC covers. And so by cutting it back to 15% previous governments recognized that the cost was more than 15% and that's what we negotiated. So by arbitrary setting it at 15% the federal government is in essence asking universities to absorb the additional cost over and above the 15% necessary for executing research, that's going to put a lot of universities like ISU out of the research business, and it takes all of us to do research. That's a that's a major concern, that we face.

Representative Ammons 58:01

Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll yield back to you.

Chairperson Ford 58:06

Thank you. The Chair now recognizes representative Severin. Thank you.

Representative Severin 58:12

Thank you and I appreciate it, and I think that almost every one of my questions someone stole my thunder. So what I'm going to jump in with this? I know what the secret is to go to ISU, you can stop by Avantis and get a gondola. So I wanted to open up with that, but first I want to, before I get a couple questions, I want to make this comment, I appreciate your commitment to Special Olympics and Father's Day weekend for me every year, has has a special place in my heart, and so does Hancock stadium. And so I appreciate that, that support, not for the last few weeks, months, but decades. And so that that means a lot to me. I appreciate that, and also for what it's worth, I grew up in the same neighborhood with Doug Collins, so give a shout out to Doug. So I just wanted to say that. Question for you, in 2000, how many students were on campus? What was your enrollment? Any idea, you talked about 2000, 2025. Any idea?

Aondover Tarhule 59:05

I can't quote exactly, but here's the thing, ISU's population was pretty close to 20,000 I would guess. So, we are 21,546 now we were, I would guess, pretty close to 20,000 one side or the other in 2000.

Representative Severin 59:23

Thank you. I appreciate that. And the I hear your your pain, as far as the deferred maintenance, and so my thought is listening to your conversations and statements, as far as if you the new funding formula, if in fact, that would be put in place, and the funds that you would get actually, couple things come to my mind. Or looking at the numbers, you still would be one the lowest or the second lowest university, as far as you funding in the state. Correct me if I'm wrong.

Aondover Tarhule 59:50

We would still be the lowest, yes.

Representative Severin 59:53

Yeah, ok. And then the other thing, as far as the deferred maintenance, so if, in fact, you receive more funds. Two things you're going to try to do, address the deferred maintenance. Correct me if I'm wrong, if you address those things, then you'll have less money to offer for your students, but if you get this new funding, you're going to have more money to put towards the deferred maintenance, so you'll have more money for the students. Is it's kind of a two edged sword, am I'm making sense here?

Aondover Tarhule 1:00:23

You are. One of the things that that hurts us quite a bit, that for me, I feel pain is we're actually charging students money now in order to maintain those safety issues that I just talked about. So that's the kind

of fee. So we call it the academic enhancement fee. What it is is students pay money per credit hour. And we have said, you know, when the board approved this fee, the only thing we can use that money for is to maintain academic spaces. And in that maintenance, we have prioritized issues of safety, issues of health and issues of regulatory compliance. So that's a fee that we wouldn't need to charge if we had money that was maintaining this and that reduces proportionately, the amount of cost that students would have to pay. So in looking at the example of the special ed waivers, imagine trying to run a program of 400 students, you have faculty, you have staff, you have support, but you have no money for it. Just think about trying to run a school of 400 students that is entirely free. Where does the money come from? So we're taking money from all the functions and other programs to subsidize this. That's money that we would be able to put back into those functions if we got that money from the state. So there's a variety of ways in which we're able to move money around resourcefully in order to cover the totality of our expenses. We don't expect every program to pay for itself. We know there are some things that are mission critical. Special Ed is mission critical, which is why we continue to do it even when we don't have money. But given the escalation of cost and other things, it's getting harder and harder to do this.

Representative Severin 1:02:22

I appreciate that. You know something, a question that I asked the NIU and I'll ask you also. I don't want to ask you about undocumented students, but how many visa students? Do you have any idea what a number that number is?

Aondover Tarhule 1:02:34

550 international students.

Representative Severin 1:02:38

I appreciate that. And I want to say this, that, Cobi, I appreciate your story and exciting to hear. And you did catch a nerve with me, though I come from a family of workaholics, and so when you talked about the experience on a university as far as the social part, you kind of hit a nerve with me there. I don't have any problem with people working, having some skin in the game and the social part, you know, is great also, but I think it's important that the students, they have an opportunity to come to the university, no matter what their race is, and be able to participate, as far as socially and things. But I don't have any problem with them having some skin in the game and having to work. I don't have any problem with them having to work more than one job. I won't tell my story, or my family's story, my wife and how those kinds of things, but I just want to say, for the for those of us that are workaholics, that I just want to say that the social aspect is fine. I'm a social kind of guy, but a workaholic ain't all that bad. So I just wanted to throw that out there. And so, and I want to say that your story is inspiring, and I appreciate your going places, and you're a great example for people that they know. We talk about this generation, that you know what they're doing or not doing. So I won't belabor the point there. I appreciate that and I just, I'm going to finish with this. It ain't all that bad to work.

Chairperson Ford 1:04:03

Thank you. The Chair now recognizes representative Crawford.

Representative Crawford 1:04:12

Thank you, Madam Chair. Now I'll be brief. Thanks for your testimony. You just struck me with something you just said about DEI as well, and I thank you for that. As a PhD holder and a former Chief Academic and Student Affairs Officer at an institution, I don't want anyone to get anything twisted when they look at me about what I've earned, rightfully earned, and if anyone has any question about that, I asked them to write their own dissertation, because it wasn't given. Just a couple of things here, and you very poignantly made the case. And thank you for providing the data. But can you tell us just

lightning round style, what percentage of the overall appropriation do you get from for the overall higher ed appropriation does Illinois State get?

Aondover Tarhule 1:04:59

Of our operating budget?

Representative Crawford 1:05:02

The entire state higher ed appropriation. It's right here, but I want you to say it on record.

Aondover Tarhule 1:05:09

Can you help me with that? 6%

Representative Crawford 1:05:14

Thank you. Thank you for that.

Aondover Tarhule 1:05:17

We educate 11% of the students, and we get 6% of the appropriation.

Representative Crawford 1:05:23

Absolutely. And I think that that's, you know, truly a testament to the need for a funding formula, but also to, as you pointed out, to ISU's success. As a former admissions officer at NIU, ISU came on like a freight train at one point, and just really grew and was, in turn, kind of punished for that. And it's something we have to have to fix. One question about endowments as well, is there a certain percentage of your unrestricted endowments that go towards scholarship?

Aondover Tarhule 1:05:55

We don't have much unrestricted endowments. Most of our endowment is restricted. So when people supply, give us money on endowments, they want it to go to specific needs. A lot of it is scholarships. And so we're getting four or \$5 million from our endowments that is supporting scholarships. But that is restricted. I think they are restricted amount is, don't know if I would guess it, but probably less than 3%.

Representative Crawford 1:06:22

So nominal, okay, and then also, you heard me speak about Hope Chicago. How is that? What's the impact of Hope Chicago at Illinois State

Aondover Tarhule 1:06:29

We have 150 students from the Hope Chicago program on our school, and first year was rough, but since then, we have really increased the retention rates and our partnership with that program. So it's made a big difference in terms of increasing the diversity and opening up access to students that we otherwise might not have been able to reach.

Representative Crawford 1:06:55

Excellent, thank you.

Chairperson Ford 1:06:59

The Chair recognizes Representative Swanson.

Representative Swanson 1:07:05

Thank you, Madam Chair, and always great to see you. Mr. President. Couple of comments. First, I'll start off with my daughter in law is a graduate of ISU. She went through the special education program. Now she's a special ed teacher at Atwood schools at the elementary school. Wonderful, wonderful program, a wonderful, wonderful granddaughter and teacher. My son graduated from ISU, and he's now a successful farmer. He went through the ag program. So appreciate that input. Now let's talk about some funding and deferred maintenance. What's your deferred maintenance at now?

Aondover Tarhule 1:07:42

Now, deferred maintenance for what we call the GR, the state supported bill is about \$250 million.

Representative Swanson 1:07:52

And how much of the GRF funds you receive go towards deferred maintenance today?

Aondover Tarhule 1:08:02

That's tricky to answer. When we get money, I think President Freeman answered this question the same way. We get state appropriations, and we get tuition dollars, and we mix it all up and call it general revenue, and then we disperse it as the needs arise. So it's pretty it's hard to say this is how much of the deferred maintenance. We have not intentionally allocated appropriations in different ways. We're working on a new funding budget model that will allow us do that, but at the present time, it's hard to tease out.

Speaker 6 1:08:48

Yeah, and that, that's what supports my argument when I talk about the buckets of receiving the equitable funding model in those three buckets, because then you know how much has to go back into maintenance, you know how much has to go back in the classroom and you know how much goes to the third bucket, and with that, it's deferred maintenance isn't in the formula, right?

Aondover Tarhule 1:09:08

No, it's not. [It's only current and upkeep maintenance?] Correct.

Speaker 6 1:09:13

So, unless we put that total money towards that maintenance program, that's when things start falling apart. I'm a farmer. I prevent deferred maintenance by doing the maintenance up front, [yes] and that's how we things break down, and we're going to have those catastrophes of heating boiler system going out. But that's why I'm a strong believer in that money going into that maintenance bucket, that third bucket, because that's where all the data comes from, and that then makes us spend that money in that area, and that's how we can't fix deferred maintenance, but we prevent further maintenance problems. So I guess that's all I had. Once again, appreciate seeing you all here and thank you. Great job, young man. Good luck. [Thank you.]

Chairperson Ford 1:10:09

Thank you. Are there any other questions from members? Representative Ammons.

Representative Ammons 1:10:21

Thank you. I appreciate the question on the deferred maintenance. I'm gonna give you the robbing Peter to pay Paul scenario currently that you operate under. At the rate that we're currently going in funding, how quickly will you get to your deferred maintenance? And that can be a very short answer. [Never.] I don't think you ever will. [Never.] At the increase of the equitable funding model, will you then be able to take some of the other revenues and begin to drop down the tree that's called deferred

maintenance. [Absolutely.] Do you need me to identify specifically that I want you to put a certain amount in these buckets for you?

Aondover Tarhule 1:10:58

No, we will automatically do that as we prioritize those issues I've already outlined.

Representative Ammons 1:11:05

I appreciate that. I know you have the capability on your campus to determine where resources need to go if additional resources are provided to you. And finally, I'll ask in closing that part of the equitable funding model holds all of the universities harmless, and you understand that provision? [Correct.] We're discussing right now distribution of additional resources. We are asking 135 million be that number. It might be 70 million. Might be 135 million. Would you see the need for us to add the additional 130 million at any distribution level for ISU?

Aondover Tarhule 1:11:43

Absolutely, the current system just doesn't work. The way I have described this on my campus is we are doing as good a job as we can to manage the budget crisis that we know is coming. But the reality is this, we are like somebody who is falling off the cliff and is holding on by their fingernails. If we don't get additional help coming in, eventually we will crash. So they defer the additional funding through the new appropriations formula, is the rescue we are waiting for. So we hold on and we wait for rescue to come. If we don't get the rescue, even schools that are strong as Illinois State, and we're very strong compared to many other institutions, we will not be able to do it, make it financially in the long term, and given the current funding model. The rate of cost, the rate at which costs are increasing, is simply far faster than the rate at which we can generate revenue through tuition and any other means. Eventually, we're going to face the same kind of crisis that you see other universities going through. It will take longer, because we're starting from from a stronger base, but it's still not sustainable.

Representative Ammons 1:13:09

I appreciate you, doctor. I'll close with this, Madam Chair. You know, I went and bought a reluctantly, actually bought a dozen of eggs this week. Reluctantly, I'm trying to buy chickens. But I bought, I told my husband. I said, Hey, on your way home, would you stop and pick up a dozen of eggs? He text me back. He said, the eggs was \$7.99 and I said, what? I said this, I had already started the recipe, and I needed the eggs, so I said, you know, God, you need to find us some chickens, because we're going to go over the cliff here on eggs. The point that I'm making here is that what has been done for decades in this house has built this system that is fundamentally flawed, and it is incumbent upon us to respond to the fundamental flaw, but not do that in a methodology that puts up barriers within the argument. Well, if you don't say, specifically maintenance, deferred maintenance, then it's a bad model. What I would suggest is that what we've already done clearly doesn't work, because we have universities who are having things fall from the ceiling. We have universities closing administrative buildings. We have universities laying off faculty because they can't pay them. And we also have universities who are not able to sustain something as simple as their driveways up to their buildings. That should tell us as legislators that this does not work, and we should be arguing for a new system that actually works better. I will not promise any member in this room that the equitable funding model is going to solve all of the problems of ISU or any other university, because the eggs are \$7.99 now, as opposed to what they were 20 years ago. Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll yield back.

Chairperson Ford 1:15:08

Thank you, and the Chair now recognizes Representative Barbara Hernandez.

Representative Hernandez 1:15:16

Thank you. Same questions that I had with the other panel. What are some things that you guys are doing to help us the students that are getting their visas revoked? Do you guys have any students currently that have their visas revoked, and how many and where?

Aondover Tarhule 1:15:36

Thanks for that. Let me take a little bit of a detour to respond to Representative Ammons. If you worry about the cost of 18 eggs, I think we have a vice president for student affairs behind I think we buy about 100,000 eggs to feed the students in our campus. So consider the cost of that for us. Yes, we have students with visas revoked right now, it's about eight, three of them that are currently enrolled, and we are doing much of the same kinds of things that other institutions are doing, because we get together and talk about it and explore what our options are, trying to get them legal services to try and understand what their rights and options are. And depending on where they are in the program, our goal is to try and make sure they complete the program so they don't drop out halfway. We are also, next month, bringing on campus an immigration lawyer to talk to our international students and faculty communities about some of the things that they can do, or prepare to make, the major challenge people face is when this comes at them so instantaneously, they don't have time to respond. It's a much, it's a much bigger shock in terms of how they respond. So trying to get people prepared ahead of time about what they should know and what they can or cannot do, I think that information, it's not much, but it's what we can do, and that's what we're trying to do now.

Representative Hernandez 1:17:24

Thank you. And out of those eight, how many have decided to go back home and have you also offered remote services to them?

Aondover Tarhule 1:17:37

I don't have that number. Let me see if the provost does.

Ani Yazedjian 1:17:43

I don't have that number off the top of my head, but we only have three students who are currently enrolled. The rest of the students are in OPT, so for those students that are enrolled, we're working with them on individual plans.

Chairperson Ford 1:17:55

Thank you. Thank you. And are there any other questions? Hearing none. Thank you so much to Illinois State University for such a comprehensive presentation. [Thank you. We appreciate your time.] Thank you.