

Reaching Higher: Strategic Directions for Higher Education in Indiana

On June 8, 2007, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education unanimously adopted *Reaching Higher: Strategic Directions for Higher Education in Indiana* as its plan for the future of higher education. *Reaching Higher* provides a comprehensive look at the future of postsecondary education in Indiana and desired outcomes for the system by outlining a series of recommendations in the areas of access, affordability, student success, college preparation and contributions to Indiana's economy. The strategic directions outlined focus on the important challenge areas, as identified by the Commission through the work of its subcommittee that began its work in November 2006.

Over the 2007-08 academic year, the Commission will concentrate on five key areas of *Reaching Higher* that call for:

- Improving College Completion Rates by defining state and institution performance objectives for student success. This includes developing a comprehensive plan for improving minority and at-risk student success, expanding college performance outcomes and expanding student learning experiences.
- Making College Affordable by examining ways to make at least two years of postsecondary education available at a nominal cost to all qualified and financially at-risk recent high school graduates; developing financial aid options for middle-class students; providing need-based aid that supplements federal and state aid; and developing a comprehensive financial aid plan for adult students.
- Taking the Community College to the Next Level by building upon the significant successes in the past six years. This includes defining, branding and publicizing what a comprehensive community college can be for the state of Indiana; moving a vast majority of college remediation courses to Indiana's two-year colleges; determining a statewide standard of quality, consistency and efficiency at all community college campuses; ensuring that tuition and fees are as affordable as possible; and sharpening its dual responsibility of providing workforce training and preparing students for degrees and transfer opportunities.
- Embracing Accountability for Results by holding itself accountable for results and being transparent about reporting performance-related data across all areas.
- Ensuring that Indiana University and Purdue University are top-tier major research universities.

To assist with this implementation phase, the Commission has appointed a strategic directions committee to guide the work over the 2007-08 academic year. The Strategic Directions Committee is meeting monthly, engaged in deliberate dialogue with Indiana's college and university leadership to advance these areas, and using the Commission's regular monthly business meetings to discuss and allow for public input at a broader level. The process includes formalizing a working paper in each area outlining specific recommendations, detailing action steps for moving forward, providing data as appropriate, and including snapshots from literature reviews.

