

2006 PERFORMANCE REPORT

Illinois Wesleyan University

SECTION I: INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Mission Statement

Provide the institution's mission statement.

Illinois Wesleyan University, an independent, residential, liberal arts university founded in 1850, strives to attain the ideal of a liberal education while providing unique opportunities with its distinctive curricula and programs. A liberal education at Illinois Wesleyan fosters creativity, critical thinking, effective communication, strength of character and a spirit of inquiry; it deepens the specialized knowledge of a discipline with a comprehensive world view. It affords the greatest possibilities for realizing individual potential while preparing students for democratic citizenship and life in a global society. As the University pursues this ideal for all its students, it helps students to follow a wide range of career and life paths, offering diverse curricula in liberal arts, fine arts and professional programs as well as opportunities for interdisciplinary study and off-campus learning. The University through its policies, programs and practices is committed to diversity, social justice and environmental sustainability. A tightly knit, supportive university community, together with a variety of opportunities for close interaction with excellent faculty, both challenges and supports students in their personal and intellectual development.

Environmental Analysis

Provide a brief synopsis (in bulleted format) of the factors influencing the institution and how these factors affect the institution's ability to address the six policy areas of *The Illinois Commitment*.

- As we have noted in recent reports, the near-term upward trend in the number of Illinois high-school graduates offers the possibility of continuing to meet our admissions goals while serving state interests well. Because the capacity of public institutions is limited and state resources remain tight, we believe that IWU and other private institutions in Illinois can play a significant role in keeping this talented future generation in-state. Our student body is, and always has been, more heavily drawn from our home state than is typical of liberal arts colleges with our selectivity, many of whom draw 50% or more of their students from outside the state in which they are located. In contrast, Illinois students typically comprise 80-90% of our student body.
- The increasing diversity of the Illinois population provides rich opportunities for creating and sustaining a multicultural campus and thus improving the quality of education for all students. Our two most recent incoming classes, the most diverse in the history of the University, have hailed largely from Illinois
- The University's reputation for academic excellence, its high retention and graduation rates relative to national and state averages, its superb physical facilities, and its financial soundness provide a strong base from which to operate. Although we suffered endowment losses in the first part of this decade that forced us to tighten our operating budgets somewhat in recent years, the endowment is now on a growth trajectory again.
- The increased number of college-bound students with mental, emotional, or physical disabilities challenges the University to provide services and facilities to better meet those students' needs. We have added counseling resources over the past 5 years, and we

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monitor student mental health issues closely; the addition of a nurse practitioner to our Health Service in Fall 2005 was an important step forward in addressing students' health needs.

- We continue to improve our physical facilities, although on a more modest scale than in the 1990s. In Summer 2006, for example, we installed an elevator in Stevenson Hall, our oldest building (dating to 1910). It was a costly and complicated project, but one that will make a significant difference to the accessibility of several classrooms, offices, and labs. Sometime in 2006-07, IWU President Richard Wilson expects to announce the groundbreaking for a new facility housing the Admissions Office and the Career Center. Completion of this facility will enhance accessibility for those two key offices and allow us to relocate other important services to vacated handicap-accessible spaces.
- Students and parents bring increased expectations to a college search; not only do applicants demand excellent faculty and academic facilities, but expectations for state-of-the-art technology, private rooms, and superior recreational facilities have also skyrocketed. Parents also want to be more involved with their sons' or daughters' curricular choices and academic progress and to interact more with campus officials. We introduced a parent survey to our assessment program in Fall 2005. The survey confirmed that our students' parents expect to be involved in their children's college experience. Thus, we are working to better assist students in making good choices—ones that will allow them to fulfill their personal and professional goals—in this new environment of greater parental involvement.
- Some parents and students appear to view a college education as a commodity for which they can bargain with one or more “sellers” to get the best offering price, not as a long-term investment in intellectual development and personal growth. Thus, financial aid budgets at private colleges face increasing pressure, and *merit scholarship programs* (which often aid students whose families could otherwise afford to pay) have emerged as major competitive tools for private colleges. A number of public institutions are also introducing or increasing the size of their merit scholarship programs. In the long run, many experts argue that cutthroat competition for high-achieving students will not contribute to the financial health of the higher education community in general and may also threaten access for students who are admissible but who do not qualify for merit aid. Illinois Wesleyan continues to review its financial aid programs in light of these potentially conflicting conditions.
- The increasingly generous *need-based aid programs* offered by prominent American universities including Harvard and Princeton make it difficult for private colleges with more modest endowments and fewer financial resources to attract low-income or first-generation college students with strong academic records. Illinois Wesleyan has lost outstanding admitted students to competing institutions with greater means to offer full-tuition (or even larger) financial aid packages.
- Congressional criticism of college tuition increases at the same time that the relative share of federal and state funding for higher education has been cut places a difficult, and sometimes disproportionate, burden on tuition-dependent institutions; for example, the recent decision to eliminate the Illinois Financial Assistance Act for Nonpublic Institutions of Higher Learning (IFAA), despite private colleges' significant role in educating Illinois students, reduces our non-tuition revenue, making it more likely that we will have to increase tuition in the future. Furthermore, it can be argued that a program such as IFAA

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was, in fact, a very good use of state resources because it cost the state less per student than the state's cost of subsidizing the education of another student at a public university.

- On the other hand, we are grateful for increases in MAP funding (including (MAP-plus) that will be available to many of our students in 2006-07. Because we cannot meet most students' full need with University grants, the additional MAP funding should reduce the funding gap that many of our students face. We further anticipate that some of our students will qualify for additional financial aid through the new federal SMART and Academic Competitiveness Grants.
- The improving economic picture in the state and nation since 2003 has eased the budget crisis in higher education somewhat, but the rate of Illinois's economic recovery continues to lag that of most states. We see the effects of this slower recovery in many ways—it affects students' family resources, the University's endowment income, and gift and grant funding; these simultaneous effects are particularly difficult for tuition-driven institutions, such as small private colleges, to manage. At the same time, we face increased competition for students from public and other in-state private institutions; this development heightens the pressure on the admissions staff and the financial aid budget since Illinois is the second-largest net exporter of students, behind New Jersey, to colleges and universities to other states.
- As state funding for public higher education in Illinois continues to languish, private colleges face increased fund-raising competition from public institutions, particularly those located in the same or nearby communities.
- Escalating and uncontrollable operating costs—e.g., health benefits for faculty and staff—produce additional financial challenges; because the State of Illinois offers generous health benefits to faculty and staff at public institutions, private colleges with large public institutions nearby must offer reasonably competitive benefits as well to attract a well-qualified staff. We continue to study our retiree medical benefits program, having already tightened some of the eligibility requirements just this past academic year. It is not possible to tell yet whether we will have difficulty competing for staff as a result of these changes.
- Unfunded state mandates, however laudable their objectives, can place severe budgetary pressures on private colleges. The requirement that college residence halls be fully sprinklered by 2013 is an example; the cost to Illinois Wesleyan to comply with this mandate is estimated to exceed \$2,000,000. We plan to step up sprinkler installation in Summer 2007 and to proceed as quickly thereafter as our budget will allow, but we recognize that we may have to defer other projects (e.g., improving building security through the installation of card-swipe systems) that may have an equal or greater effect on student safety to meet the state mandate.
- Stepped-up lobbying by for-profit colleges and universities (some of which have a strong foothold in Illinois) has resulted in considerable Congressional attention to accreditation, financial aid policies, and other higher education issues that could be potentially detrimental to not-for-profit institutions whose educational values and missions are considerably different from those of the for-profits. The protracted discussions of the Higher Education Authorization Act have been interpreted as strongly supportive of the for-profit sector; thus, it remains to be seen how aggressively these organizations will move to take advantage of

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potential new opportunities. Adding to this uncertainty is the Spellings Commission report, which also appears to draw few distinctions between conditions and issues facing for-profit and not-for-profit higher education organizations.

- Highly publicized allegations that politically liberal college and university faculty are unfair to students and faculty colleagues with conservative views may cause some parents and students to be needlessly worried about what occurs in college classrooms. Furthermore, efforts to pressure institutions to teach theories that are not widely accepted by the academic community are troubling challenges to the longstanding American tradition that faculty members are the most qualified group to determine the curriculum. We are grateful that to date these pressures have been largely absent in Illinois.

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SECTION II: PROGRESS

POLICY AREA ONE: Higher education will help Illinois sustain strong economic growth through its teaching, service, and research activities.

COMMON INSTITUTIONAL INDICATORS

Percent of undergraduate degree/certificate recipients either employed or enrolled in further education within one year of graduation

| Number Employed and/or Enrolled | Number of Survey Respondents | Percent Employed and/or Enrolled |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 283* | 289 | 98% |

**Includes 11 respondents employed part-time and 2 respondents enrolled in further education on a part-time basis; 276 respondents were either employed full-time or enrolled full-time, and only 6 respondents were neither employed nor continuing their education at all. These responses represent 60.3% of the class that graduated in 2005.*

a) Institutional goal(s) for this indicator:

Illinois Wesleyan does not set specific goals for this indicator. Because some graduates each year are likely to choose, for personal reasons, to remain out of the work force or to forgo additional education immediately, a 100% goal would not be realistic, however appealing it might seem at first glance.

b) Brief interpretation of institutional performance and related implications:

The results suggest that almost all Illinois Wesleyan graduates are able to find employment or secure spots in graduate or professional programs if they wish to do so. Please note, too, that of the 180 respondents from the Class of 2005 reporting full-time employment, 128 (over 70%) were employed in Illinois and are now contributing to the state's economy.

MISSION-SPECIFIC INDICATORS

Provide the following information for mission-specific indicators developed by the institution pertaining to Policy Area One:

- Identification of the mission-specific indicator and its relationship to the institution's mission;
- Performance goal;
- Data for the three most recent years (2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04), if applicable; and
- A brief description/interpretation of performance and related implications.

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POLICY AREA TWO: Higher education will join elementary and secondary education to improve teaching and learning at all levels.

COMMON INSTITUTIONAL INDICATORS

Annual number of undergraduate students completing requirements for initial teacher certification by certificate area (Applies only to institutions with teacher education programs)

| Certificate Area | 2002-03 | 2003-04 | 2004-05 |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Early Childhood Education | | | |
| Elementary Education | 27 | 12 | 24 |
| Secondary Education | 15 | 22 | 23 |
| Special Education | | | |
| Music Education (K-12) | 18 | 14 | 17 |
| Total | 60 | 48 | 64 |

a) Institutional goal(s) for this indicator:

Illinois Wesleyan does not establish numerical goals for any major.

b) Brief interpretation of institutional performance and related implications:

Illinois Wesleyan continues to attract and retain students at all three general levels (elementary, secondary, and K-12 music) in which it offers teacher certification programs.

MISSION-SPECIFIC INDICATORS

Provide the following information for mission-specific indicators developed by the institution pertaining to Policy Area Two:

- Identification of the mission-specific indicator and its relationship to the institution's mission;
- Performance goal;
- Data for the three most recent years (2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04), if applicable; and
- A brief description/interpretation of performance and related implications.

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POLICY AREA THREE: No Illinois citizen will be denied an opportunity for a college education because of financial need.

COMMON INSTITUTIONAL INDICATORS

Net price of attendance for undergraduates who apply for aid by income quintile, after MAP, IIA, Pell, SEOG, and institutional grant aid are subtracted

Fall 2004 Data

Total Cost of Attendance (Full-time, Dependent Freshmen living on campus) **\$32,270** (full year's tuition, room, board, and mandatory fees)

Total Number of First-time, Full-time Dependent Freshmen enrolled: **549** (466 from Illinois)

| Student/Family Income | Total Unduplicated Recipient Headcount | GIFT ASSISTANCE AWARDED TO DEPENDENT FULL-TIME, FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN, FALL 2004 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|--|--------|-------|--------|----------------|---------|-----|-------|---|-----------|-----------------|----|
| | | Federal Programs | | | | State Programs | | | | Institutional Programs | | | |
| | | PELL | | FSEOG | | MAP | | IIA | | Scholarships, Grants, Fellowships, Traineeships | | Tuition Waivers | |
| | | # | \$ | # | \$ | # | \$ | # | \$ | # | \$ | # | \$ |
| \$0-27,067 | 20 | 17 | 54,600 | 17 | 27,425 | 16 | 71,238 | 6 | 3,000 | 19 | 214,165 | 0 | 0 |
| \$27,068-47,617 | 39 | 24 | 49,800 | 24 | 39,780 | 34 | 149,068 | 0 | 0 | 39 | 567,996 | 0 | 0 |
| \$47,618-71,811 | 70 | 7 | 8,200 | 7 | 9,010 | 45 | 194,568 | 0 | 0 | 69 | 868,084 | 0 | 0 |
| \$71,812-101,999 | 89 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 72,963 | 0 | 0 | 89 | 947,366 | 0 | 0 |
| \$102,000 & Up | 144 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4,422 | 0 | 0 | 125 | 1,150,135 | 0 | 0 |
| Unknown | 104 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 73 | 628,335 | 0 | 0 |

Please note that the data in the table above include only first-year students from Illinois.

a) Institutional goal(s) for this indicator:

A strategic plan for the University, completed in stages between 2004 and 2006, identifies increasing diversity, including socioeconomic diversity, as a priority. Although the University has not adopted a fixed percentage of the student body that should hail from any particular socioeconomic group, the President has added funds to the financial aid budget to allow more generous aid packages to be offered to students with the greatest need. The Spellings Commission's emphasis on improving college access to students from modest to low-income backgrounds has also caused us to review our financial aid policies with that objective in mind.

▪ **Brief interpretation of institutional performance and related implications:**

We know from recent, more intensive analyses of publicly available data that Illinois Wesleyan does not enroll as large a share of Pell grant recipients as some other selective

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private colleges in the Midwest. As we work to implement our strategic plan, we will pay considerable attention to addressing issues of access and affordability.

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POLICY AREA FOUR: Illinois will increase the number and diversity of citizens completing training and education programs.

COMMON INSTITUTIONAL INDICATORS

Completions by race/ethnicity and gender

Source: IPEDS Degrees Conferred Survey. [Supporting data is available on the IBHE website.]
Institutions are not required to submit additional data.

a) Institutional goal(s) for this indicator:

IWU's 6-year graduation rate for all students has remained around 80% for the past several years (most years slightly higher, occasionally lower). We strive to maintain or increase that rate in the future, and we would like the 6-year graduation rate for ALANA students to equal the all-University rate.

b) Brief interpretation of institutional performance and related implications:

Graduation rates by ethnic group indicate that IWU's focus should be on improving 6-year completions among, African-American, Hispanic and Native American students. Recent reports suggest that these three ethnic groups also graduate at lower rates nationally, and it may be useful for private colleges to share ideas for better supporting these students from entry through completion. In 2005-06, Illinois Wesleyan revamped its method for tracking retention and attrition so that we can better focus on students most at-risk. Preliminary analyses indicate that ALANA males and students from all ethnic backgrounds who are undecided on a major may require special attention.

MISSION-SPECIFIC INDICATORS

Provide the following information for mission-specific indicators developed by the institution pertaining to Policy Area Four:

- Identification of the mission-specific indicator and its relationship to the institution's mission;
- Performance goal;
- Data for the three most recent years (2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04), if applicable; and
- A brief description/interpretation of performance and related implications.

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POLICY AREA FIVE: Illinois colleges and universities will be accountable for providing high quality academic programs and the systematic assessment of student learning outcomes while holding students to ever higher expectations for learning and growth.

Fiscal Year 2006 Accomplishments

Fiscal/academic year 2005-06 was extremely active for Illinois Wesleyan's assessment program. In addition to standard activities prescribed by the University's assessment plan [administering the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) survey to incoming students in Fall 2005, using the College Student Survey (CSS) as a follow-up to the CIRP for a group of upperclass students in Spring 2006, and asking both first-year students and seniors to respond to NSSE in Spring 2006], we conducted a survey of incoming students' parents, hoping to learn more about their expectations of their students' academic and cocurricular experiences and their anticipated interactions with their students. A member of our Psychology faculty, in cooperation with the Director of the Counseling Center, conducted an telephone-based adjustment study with particular emphasis on first-year and transfer ALANA students; results of this study were presented to Trustees and incorporated into current programming to ease adjustment issues for all new students.

Other major assessment activities in 2005-06 flowed from Illinois Wesleyan's membership in a 6-college consortium studying "value-added" liberal education and funded by the Teagle Foundation. In Fall 2005, a random sample of first-year students took the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), a performance-based exam that stresses critical thinking and analytical writing. In Spring 2006, a sample of graduating seniors also took this test. We will compare results for our first-year students to those of our seniors, and we will also work with the other colleges in the consortium to discover what practices and policies seem to lead to relatively greater "value-added" learning. Also resulting from the Teagle grant was an intensive study of comparative writing instruction among consortium institutions. Nearly 1,000 papers were collected from first-year students and juniors at the consortium colleges, and four faculty members from each college met at one of the institutions in June 2006 to read papers and score them using a rubric previously developed by participating faculty. Analysis is currently underway to determine differences, if any, among first-year students and juniors at each college as well as comparative differences among the colleges that suggest more and less effective methods of writing instruction.

In addition to these activities, in Spring 2006, fourteen trained faculty and staff members at Illinois Wesleyan conducted nearly 70 individual interviews with IWU students. The project was modeled along the lines of the Harvard Assessment Project that Professor Richard Light has written and spoken about for the past several years to a wide range of higher education professionals. Interview questions were based on issues and concerns that had arisen as a result of our study of previous assessment results (including NSSE, YFCY, and CSS surveys). These interviews are currently being transcribed and analyzed with the assistance of Atlas.ti content analysis software.

Finally, throughout 2005-06, the Retention Committee worked to revise and refine the way we collect and analyze information on students who withdraw from the university or take leaves of absence. The revisions and new reporting format should allow us to do a more focused study of

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persistence and attrition, including comparisons of the characteristics of students who leave to students who persist to graduation.

Fiscal Year 2007 Plans

Besides the usual surveys mentioned in the previous section, in 2006-07, Illinois Wesleyan will conduct several special assessment activities related to the Teagle grant and our recently completed strategic plan. This, the second year of the Teagle project, will include completion of the work on improving student writing as well as major emphasis on a second focus of the grant—critical thinking and its relationship to writing. Faculty from the six consortium institutions will gather on the Illinois Wesleyan campus in September 2006 for a workshop on critical thinking led by one of the leading national experts in the field; they will then gather again at another college in June 2007 to evaluate student assignments, drawn from each campus, with critical-thinking components. At both of these consortial gatherings, we will also begin work on the methods by which we will approach the third major component of the Teagle grant—liberal education and civic engagement.

Also in 2006-07, we will circulate the results of two of 2005-06's major assessment efforts—a report on retention and a synthesis of individual student interviews.

Finally, in 2006-07, under the leadership of a new Provost/Dean of the Faculty, we will begin a study of curriculum and faculty resources as mandated in our strategic plan. Assessment results from a variety of sources will inform this important review, which is the first step toward developing a system of strategic curricular planning.

Fiscal Year 2007 Challenges

As with virtually all assessment efforts, the real challenge is to be able to devote enough human and temporal resources to the task. It seems safe to say that at this point, we are making progress toward overcoming the strong faculty resistance to outcomes assessment that characterized much of the 1990s, but it is still a challenge to find the time and the proper venues in which to disseminate and discuss assessment results and to tie those results directly back to program improvement. In addition, assessment practices at the department/program level vary across campus in intensity and quality; some departments are exemplary, while others' efforts are desultory.

COMMON INSTITUTIONAL INDICATORS

Extent to which institutional quality and effectiveness are recognized by graduates through alumni surveys:

Option 1. If your institution participated in NSSE, please provide the Senior survey results for the following questions for the most recent year ([Spring 2005 data](#)):

| Questions from The College Student Report, NSSE 2005 | Mean Score |
|--|------------|
| To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? (Q11) | |

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| | |
|---|-------------|
| ▪ Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills | 3.00 |
| ▪ Thinking critically and analytically | 3.47 |
| ▪ Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds | 2.42 |
| ▪ Developing a personal code of values and ethics | 2.50 |
| ▪ Contributing to the welfare of your community | 2.28 |
| How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution? (Q13) | 3.33 |
| If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending? (Q14) | 3.09 |

Note: All the reported responses are on a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 being the most favorable rating.

Pass rates on professional/occupational licensure examinations relative to national averages

| Field | Examination | Pass Rate Information for Selected Exams: Number of Students Tested, Institutional Pass Rate & National Pass Rate | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|--|---------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|-----------|
| | | 2002-2003 | | | 2003-2004 | | | 2004-2005 | | |
| | | # Students | Pass Rate (%) | | # Students | Pass Rate (%) | | # Students | Pass Rate (%) | |
| | | | Inst'l | Nat'l | | Inst'l | Nat'l | | Inst'l | Nat'l |
| Law | Illinois Bar Exam: First-Time Takers, Summer | | | | | | | | | |
| Medicine | U.S. Medical Exam, Step 2 | | | | | | | | | |
| Dentistry | National Dental Board Exam, Part II | | | | | | | | | |
| Nursing | National Council Licensure Exam, RN | 24 | 96 | 88 | 22 | 100 | 85 | 19 | 95 | 88 |

- a) **Institutional goal(s) for this indicator:** The School of Nursing at Illinois Wesleyan seeks to exceed the national pass rate for BSN candidates taking NCLEX for the first time.
- b) **Brief interpretation of institutional performance and related implications:** The institutional goal was surpassed in each of the past three years.

MISSION-SPECIFIC INDICATORS

Provide the following information for mission-specific indicators developed by the institution pertaining to Policy Area Five:

- Identification of the mission-specific indicator and its relationship to the institution's mission;
- Performance goal;
- Data for the three most recent years (2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04), if applicable; and
- A brief description/interpretation of performance and related implications.

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POLICY AREA SIX: Illinois colleges and universities will continually improve productivity, cost-effectiveness, and accountability.

Fiscal Year 2006 Accomplishments

The fiscal challenges outlined in the first section of this report, as well as a number of strategies adopted in the strategic plan, have spurred a host of initiatives at Illinois Wesleyan in the areas of productivity, cost-effectiveness, and accountability in the past fiscal year (a few of these items stretch back into the last part of the previous fiscal year). Among other things, we have:

- reduced the rate of tuition increase between 2005-06 to 2006-07 to 5.3%, down from a projected increase of 6.5% just two years ago
- through close work with the providers of our employee/retiree health care plans and a strong emphasis on wellness, held the rate of increase in our health care premiums to an average of 2% over the past two years
- initiated a benchmarking process for all major functional areas of the University, comparing IWU on a variety of performance indicators not only to its own past history but to aspirational, peer, and competitor institutions
- negotiated a new food service contract that yielded \$1.5 million in capital contributions and \$250K in annual operating contributions to the University over the next four years
- eliminated the University's payment of credit card fees for students who pay their tuition bills with a credit card; students now pay a convenience fee to the credit card processor, saving the University about \$250,000 annually
- improved cash management techniques through better use of sweep accounts, investing in short-term commercial paper, continued use of the Common Fund, and more frequent review of cash position (estimated additional revenue of \$50,000 annually)
- restructured the Controller position to bring more accountability to the office, resulting in "clean" audits, more understandable management reports, and a reduction in audit fees (estimated savings \$25,000 to \$30,000 annually)
- revised the billing process for a more efficient use of University resources and a more customer-friendly bill
- implemented a "content management system" to make the University website more accessible and to allow more efficient and timely updating of content
- added an information technology professional to the Development Office to improve the productivity and accountability of the office
- instituted a new and more rigorous process for documenting donor intentions when a gift is made to the University

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- incorporated a new performance evaluation system for major gift officers to monitor their success in working with donors and meeting University fund-raising goals
- insisted upon environmentally sustainable processes and materials in plans for a new building to house admissions and career services
- piloted an accountability process for participants in selected faculty development workshops such that participants do not receive full funding for a project until an interim progress review indicates that the curricular goals of the workshop are being met.

Fiscal 2007 Plans

Many of our activities in Fiscal 2007 are tied to the strategic plan. For example, we intend to refine the University benchmarking project begun very late in Fiscal 2006 and to institute a regular reporting schedule for key performance indicators. We will continue to diversify our endowment portfolio to achieve greater stability in returns, thus minimizing the risk that a severe downturn in one or more asset markets could put undesirable pressure on our operating budget. The Fall Faculty Conference in August 2006 focused on the optimal use of academic resources to achieve program improvement and enhance student learning. The upcoming review of the curriculum and faculty resources mentioned above under Policy Area 5 raises the possibility of resource reallocation to better achieve the University's mission and planning objectives. We also intend to continue our efforts to lower the rate at which tuition increases from year to year, building on the success we have had in this area over the past two years.

Another series of plans concentrates on cost-reduction. We plan to bring the processing of our payroll in-house in Fiscal 2007, reducing the current cost of outsourcing. As the fiscal year begins, we are conducting an audit of copier and printer usage to allow us both to reduce usage and to better negotiate our contract with our suppliers. We have purchased new room scheduling software to allow for more efficient use of rooms and to make more productive use of human resources. We are renegotiating several professional service contracts in an effort to reduce the cost of these services without sacrificing quality. Finally, we will be replacing the University's boilers with more energy-efficient units to reduce natural gas consumption; we estimate a savings of between \$75,000 and \$100,000 annually when replacement is complete at the beginning of Fiscal 2008.

Fiscal 2007 Challenges

Our benchmarking work has already indicated that, compared to many excellent liberal arts colleges nationwide, Illinois Wesleyan spends less on instruction per student. Our faculty salaries are also lower than many comparable colleges nationally, and our rate of salary increases has been very low in the last 2-3 years compared to competing institutions. Thus, continuing to reduce the rate of tuition increases while at the same time containing costs will indeed be a challenge if we want to attract the best students, faculty, and staff. This challenge in turn sets the agenda for our development staff--to raise money to fund those enhancements that cannot be paid for through tuition increases or cost savings alone.

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COMMON INSTITUTIONAL INDICATORS

Percent of first-time, full-time degree-seeking freshmen who complete their degree within 150 percent of catalog time

Source: IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey. [Supporting data is available on the IBHE website.]
Institutions are not required to submit additional data.

a) Institutional goal(s) for this indicator:

IWU's 6-year graduation rate for all students has remained around 80% for the past several years; for the class entering in Fall 1999, the 6-year rate was 82%, our highest ever. It is not easy to increase graduation rates quickly, although we would very much like to get to the mid-80s over the next several years.

b) Brief interpretation of institutional performance and related implications:

Illinois Wesleyan's 150% (6-year) completion rates compare favorably to completion rates nationally. The challenge is to maintain or increase this performance.

MISSION-SPECIFIC INDICATORS

Provide the following information for mission-specific indicators developed by the institution pertaining to Policy Area Six:

- Identification of the mission-specific indicator and its relationship to the institution's mission;
- Performance goal;
- Data for the three most recent years (2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04), if applicable; and
- A brief description/interpretation of performance and related implications.