



ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Illinois' first public university



ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

FOUNDED 1857

Associate Provost

LEADERSHIP PROFILE

2025



Associate Provost

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This leadership profile is intended to provide information about Illinois State University and the position of associate provost. It is designed to assist qualified individuals in assessing their interest in this position.



About Illinois State University

On February 18, 1857, Illinois Gov. William Bissell signed a bill creating a normal school and establishing the Board of Education of the state of Illinois as its governing body. The bill stipulated that the permanent location would be the place that offered the most favorable inducements. Jesse W. Fell took up the campaign for Bloomington and obtained financial backing totaling \$141,000. Abraham Lincoln, acting as attorney for the Board, drew up the bond guaranteeing the Bloomington citizens would fulfill their financial pledges. Illinois State University was consequently founded as the first public institution of higher education in the state.

Established as a teacher education institution, Illinois State has developed into a multipurpose university with degree programs at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels. Seven colleges offer approximately 174 undergraduate majors, 97 master's programs, 17 doctoral degrees, and 40 certificate options. One of 12 public universities in Illinois, the alumni base has now grown to more than 235,000.

In fall 2024, Illinois State welcomed its largest freshman class in university history and enrolled a total of 21,546 students. Illinois State's students appreciate the average 19:1 student-faculty ratio. Professors teach in the classroom, mentor, and partner with both undergraduates and graduates in research endeavors. Within the faculty, 98 percent hold a terminal degree in their field. Additional examples of excellence include Illinois State placing in the top 100 on the 2024 *U.S. News & World Report* Best Value Schools-National Universities rankings. Students return to campus and complete their degrees, as

shown by the fact the University's retention rate is among the highest in the nation at 81.3 percent. Graduation rates are more than 66 percent, which is well above the national average. Illinois State is also praised for providing an affordable education, with *Washington Monthly* honoring the University as one of the Best Bang for the Buck Colleges in the Midwest. There are many other reasons that reveal Illinois State's competitive advantage as a premier undergraduate institution—from record-breaking fundraising to student civic engagement and scholarly breakthroughs. Each explains the reason Illinois State University is “Redbird Proud.”

Illinois State affirms and encourages community belonging and a respect for differences. The University fosters an inclusive environment characterized by cultural understanding and engagement, ethical behavior, and a commitment to social justice. The University supports a diverse faculty and staff who mentor a diverse student population. The institution endeavors to provide opportunities for students, staff, and faculty to participate productively in a global society and be civically engaged.

Campus diversity at Illinois State increasingly reflects the nation's changing demographics. In the 2024-25 academic year, nearly 45 percent of the freshman class came from traditionally underrepresented groups. Over the past five years, there has been a 14 percent increase in African American students and a 9 percent increase in Latinx students. Students are mentored by a faculty that includes numerous teacher-scholars recognized at national and international levels, all dedicated to superior teaching.





Community

Illinois State is in the Central Illinois community of Bloomington-Normal, which has a combined population of 132,000. The community is home to Illinois Wesleyan University, Heartland Community College, OSF St. Joseph Medical Center, Carle BroMenn Medical Center, Rivian Motors, COUNTRY Financial, and State Farm Insurance Corporate Headquarters. The community has distinguished itself for its outstanding school systems and educational attainment, parks and recreation, health care, job growth, economic opportunity, and low crime. The University's hometown was ranked as one of the top three [best college towns in America](#) based on its affordability and safety, while its entertainment scene, community, and quality of life are listed as reasons it also ranks as one of the [Best Places to Live in the United States](#).

There are plentiful activities, cultural events, and entertainment opportunities for students and staff locally, with more opportunity to explore nearby. Normal is centrally located in Illinois, making it possible to drive or catch a train to major cities such as Chicago, St. Louis, and Indianapolis. All are within 2-3 hours from campus. Public

transportation systems make the community easily accessible, with a train and bus station within a few blocks of campus. There is also a regional airport with free parking that removes many of the hassles of flying. For more information on our community, please visit visitbn.org.

Ranked the No. 3 Best Small City for Job-Seeking College Grads, Bloomington-Normal offers multiple opportunities for students upon graduation. Illinois State partners with companies in the area, including State Farm Insurance and COUNTRY Financial—both with headquarters in the community—to provide internships and employment.

There are ample leisure activities as well, with five public golf courses in the area, several lakes, and the 45-plus miles of the hard-surfaced Constitution Trail. Converted from an abandoned railroad, the trail is bustling with individuals walking, biking, running, and blading. There are numerous restaurants and shops to visit as well. Uptown Normal is home to locally owned retail outlets with quality products and delectable food. There are unique movies, concerts, theatrical performances, and festivals to attend in every season.



Academics

Illinois State University is currently composed of seven academic colleges and Milner Library, each of which contains academic departments and centers designed to provide—singly and collectively—a comprehensive and robust academic experience for students. Degrees are offered at the bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral levels. Secondary education students major in their academic disciplines while completing their teacher preparation requirements under the auspices of the Council for Teacher Education. The University’s academic programs are supported by the services and collections of Milner Library.

College of Applied Sciences and Technology houses the Department of Agriculture, Department of Criminal Justice Sciences, Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, Department of Health Sciences, School of Information Technology, School of Kinesiology and Recreation, Department of Military Science, and Department of Technology. The college also includes several significant centers, including the University Farm; Horticulture Center; the Child Care Center; and Illinois State’s well-known Gamma Phi Circus, the nation’s oldest collegiate circus.

College of Arts and Sciences houses 16 departments and offers many majors and minors at the undergraduate level. Some of these programs are interdisciplinary, including African American Studies; Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; and Latin American and Latina/o Studies. Many departments have graduate programs leading to master’s and doctoral degrees. The college houses many of Illinois State’s study abroad opportunities, the Center for Child Welfare and Adoption Studies, and the University’s NPR radio station, WGLT.

College of Business is known for its comprehensive undergraduate programs, highly regarded master’s programs, and the outstanding accomplishments of its alumni. It is one of only 188 business colleges in the world to hold both business and accounting accreditation by AACSB International. It is also the only college of business in a public university in Illinois that has earned STEM designation for all its master’s programs.

College of Education prepares early childhood through middle-level teachers, special educators, and administrators in addition to partnering with departments across the University to offer teacher education programs in a wide variety of academic programs and areas of study. With 44 accredited teacher education programs and offerings at the bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral levels, Illinois State remains true to its founding as Illinois State Normal University, specializing in teacher education. The College of Education is also home to Metcalf and University High School Laboratory Schools serving approximately 1,000 students.

College of Engineering anticipates enrolling its first cohort of students in fall 2025 with an initial offering of electrical, mechanical, and general engineering degree programs. The college will be uniquely designed with a vision of student success, diversity, and workforce development. Leveraging Illinois State’s reputation as a student-focused institution, the College of Engineering will prepare students for success by melding theory and practice in core engineering disciplines and innovative cross-disciplinary experiences.

Menonite College of Nursing offers nursing degrees at the bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral levels. Building on the rich history of nursing education at Menonite College, established in 1919,

the College of Nursing was incorporated into the University in 1999 as Illinois State’s sixth academic college. The college is proud of NCLEX and FNP pass rates consistently exceeding state and national averages and offers a state-of-the-art Nursing Simulation Center with diverse clinical placements that prepare students to practice in a complex health care system.

Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts includes the Wonsook Kim School of Art; the School of Music; School of Theatre, Dance, and Film; and the School of Creative Technologies. University Galleries, the Illinois Shakespeare Festival, Theatre for Young Audiences, the String Project, and the Big Red Marching Machine are also housed within the Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts. Notable alumni include Jane Lynch, Sean Hayes, Brendan Hunt, Nicolas Africano, LaRoyce Hawkins, Gary Cole, Judith Ivey, Terry Kinney, John Malkovich, Laurie Metcalf, Jeff Perry, Cecilia Suárez, and Michelle Williams.

Milner Library personnel work closely with academic units to provide services and research materials across the academic spectrum. Librarians collaborate with faculty in all colleges, schools, and departments on information fluency instruction, collection development, and research assistance. Group study areas, quiet floors, collaboration stations, and a technology-rich environment support varied student learning styles. Library resources support textbook affordability initiatives, open access publishing, and primary source research. Milner is home to distinctive collections in Special Collections and the University Archives as well as a Federal Depository Collection of government information begun in 1858.

Strategic Plan

The University's strategic plan, *Excellence by Design: 2024-2029*, approved by the Board of Trustees in the spring of 2024, is a shining example of the University's commitment to shared governance, with faculty, staff, students, and campus stakeholders playing an active role in contributing to the creation of the document. Guided by a strong foundational design and building on our past strategic plan, *Educate • Connect • Elevate: Illinois State: 2018-2023*, the plan emphasizes Illinois State's commitment to excellence through continued improvement to shape an exciting future.

Excellence by Design: 2024-2029 lists our seven core values: Excellence in Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship; Individualized Attention; Equity, Diversity, Access, and Belonging; Collaboration; Community and Civic Engagement; Respect; and Integrity. By acting on these values, we create a learning environment that results in our university being the first-choice public university in Illinois for high-achieving, motivated students who seek an individualized educational experience combined with the resources of a large university.

With its four strategic directions—Cultivate a Culture of Success and Belonging, Foster a Culture of Responsible Stewardship, Elevate our Institutional Excellence, and Expand Mutually Beneficial Partnerships—*Excellence by Design: 2024-2029* will serve as a practical guide for all units within the University for planning and resource allocation decisions. This plan will guide Illinois State as it forges a new educational path across the next five years.

Illinois State University is in its first year of the campus-wide implementation of *Excellence by Design: 2024-2029*. Action teams are in the process of developing actions and metrics that will support the goals and objectives in the strategic plan.

Master Plan

The Master Plan presents a long-range blueprint for the physical development of Illinois State University—its future size, form, function, character, image, and environment. The plan presents a series of recommendations designed to further the University's physical transformation beyond what has been accomplished in recent years. These recommendations have been tailored to support and enhance the University's strategic plan. A mid-plan review is currently underway.

For more information, visit MasterPlan.IllinoisState.edu.



ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

METRICS OF

Excellence



FIRST-CHOICE INSTITUTION

Illinois State has welcomed our largest freshman class in history. We enroll more than 21,500 students, while maintaining academic quality and small class sizes.



BANG FOR THE BUCK

Illinois State is ranked among the top universities for return on investment. *U.S. News & World Report* recognized the University as one of the Best Value Schools in the nation, and *Washington Monthly* included the University on the Best Bang for the Buck list in the Midwest. In addition, the University was also ranked among the top 30 percent of four-year higher education institutions for graduates' return on investment.



HIGH RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES

Illinois State students complete their degrees on time. ISU's retention rate remains among the highest in the nation at over 81.3 percent, and our high graduation rate (66.3 percent) is well above the national average.



TOP PUBLIC UNIVERSITY

Washington Monthly ranked the University in the top 106 out of all public national universities for the institution's contribution to the public good through social mobility, research, and public services. Illinois State made *U.S. News & World Report's* 2025 rankings of America's top public schools, at No. 119. In addition, the University was ranked in the upper echelon of *Money's* 2024 list of Best Colleges in America for quality education and affordability.



DIVERSE CAMPUS

Illinois State provides accessible opportunity and increasingly reflects the nation's changing demographics. We enrolled our most diverse

freshman class in school history this year with nearly 45 percent of these students and 34 percent of the total student population coming from traditionally underrepresented groups.



RECORD FUNDRAISING

Illinois State University raised more than \$35.4 million in private support, reaching its third highest private support total in university history. Through these donations, more than 4,474 scholarships were awarded last fiscal year and 85 new scholarships were created.



TOP COLLEGE TOWN

The University's hometown ranks as one of the top 3 best college towns in America based on its affordability and safety, while its entertainment scene, community, and quality of life are listed as reasons it also ranks as one of the Best Places to Live in the United States.



MILITARY FRIENDLY SCHOOL

Illinois State supports veterans and those in the military. We are ranked a top 10 Military Friendly School by VIQTORY.



CIVICALLY ENGAGED CAMPUS

Illinois State's campuswide commitment to our core value of civic engagement has earned us recognition with the Elective Classification for Community Engagement, as an Excellence and Innovation Award for Civic Learning and Community Engagement recipient, and as a Voter Friendly Campus.



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Associate Provost

Illinois State University is committed to increasing the diversity of the campus community and supporting the University's core value of Equity, Diversity, Access, and Belonging. Illinois State University recognizes that a diverse faculty, staff, and student body enriches the educational experiences of the entire campus and greater community.

Illinois State University seeks a highly organized and strategic leader to serve as its next associate provost, the second-ranking position within the Office of the Provost. Reporting directly to the vice president for Academic Affairs and provost, the associate provost will serve as a trusted advisor and key collaborator, taking responsibility for critical academic and administrative functions to successfully implement institutional priorities. This position will provide leadership in advancing institutional effectiveness through assessment, accreditation, data-informed decision-making, and strategic planning. The associate provost will operationalize a commitment to

continuous improvement within Academic Affairs while championing efforts to foster inclusive systems of support and strengthen leadership capacity across the division. The associate provost also has supervisory responsibilities for the assistant vice president for Academic Planning and the operations and personnel of academic centers/units that report directly to the Office of the Provost.

The ideal candidate for this role should be prepared for potential changes in their portfolio as the institution undergoes a time of transformation. The successful candidate will be a team player who is adaptable and can manage competing priorities effectively while demonstrating flexibility and a collaborative spirit. The next associate provost should be an individual who understands and is prepared to navigate the rapidly changing landscape of higher education more broadly, while contributing to the institution's evolution and long-term success.



Opportunities *and* expectations

FOR LEADERSHIP

- **Academic program leadership:** Collaborate with deans, department chairs/school directors, and faculty to develop and advance innovative academic programs that meet the needs of a diverse student body and evolving workforce demands. Serve as Academic Affairs liaison to the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE); oversee approval processes for new or revised academic programs through university, IBHE, and Higher Learning Commission (HLC) procedures; and ensure timely submission of required reports.
- **Assessment and accreditation:** Provide executive leadership for institutional and program-level assessment to measure and enhance academic and operational effectiveness, ensuring alignment with institutional goals. Lead institutional and program-level accreditation efforts, maintaining compliance and supporting continuous improvement. Serve as the University's accreditation liaison officer to the HLC and ensure appropriate monitoring of program accreditation with regional and specialized accrediting bodies.
- **Strategic coordination and institutional planning:** Serve as a key strategic advisor to the provost, ensuring alignment of academic priorities with institutional goals and promoting innovation. Direct and monitor the progress of key projects and initiatives within Academic Affairs, ensuring timelines, budgets, and deliverables are met. Collaborate with university leadership on strategic planning, data-informed decision-making, and institutional initiative assessments. Serve on the University's Strategic Planning Steering Team.
- **Strategic resource stewardship:** Partner with the provost and senior leadership to drive strategic budget planning and resource optimization, ensuring fiscal alignment with academic priorities and institutional objectives and enhancing operational efficiency, sustainability, and impact.
- **Communication and crisis management:** Build collaborative relationships across campus and with external partners. Serve as the primary point of contact in the Office of the Provost to manage multiple emerging issues at the same time, craft institutional responses, and address sensitive matters with professionalism and discretion.
- **Institutional effectiveness:** Lead efforts to advance institutional effectiveness by fostering a culture of continuous improvement, ensuring compliance with accreditation standards, and leveraging data to inform strategic decisions and policy development.
- **Leadership development:** For the immediate future, foster a culture of continuous learning and leadership excellence by strengthening and expanding leadership development and professional growth initiatives across Academic Affairs. Provide strategic oversight of the Provost Fellows program, ensuring meaningful engagement and impactful project outcomes.
- **Other duties as assigned:** Represent the provost at meetings or events as needed, serve as a liaison to an Academic Senate committee, and take on other responsibilities aligned to support the provost in achieving the University's strategic priorities.

Qualifications *and* personal qualities

The ideal candidate must possess the following qualifications:

1. A terminal degree from an accredited institution in a discipline related to the University's curricula.
2. A record of outstanding scholarship and teaching, meriting tenure within a department or school at Illinois State University.
3. A record of full-time administrative leadership experience in dynamic academic organizations, with a record of accomplishments in roles such as dean, associate dean, department chair, or school director, or comparable full-time leadership role.
4. A record of aligning fiscal resources with strategic priorities and demonstrated innovative fiscal management accomplishments in prior administrative roles.

Additional qualifications

1. Experience in developing and implementing strategic initiatives and leading continuous improvement efforts, especially in times of organizational change.
2. Expertise in institutional effectiveness, including accreditation, assessment, academic program review, or strategic planning.
3. Exceptional communication skills, with the ability to represent the provost effectively and build relationships across stakeholder groups.
4. Experience managing sensitive situations, maintaining confidentiality, addressing emergent challenges.
5. Demonstrated commitment to shared governance, transparency, and fostering an inclusive and collegial environment.
6. Demonstrated commitment to advancing Illinois State University's core values of Excellence in Teaching, Learning and Scholarship; Individualized Attention; Equity, Diversity, Access, and Belonging; Collaboration; Community and Civic Engagement; Respect; and Integrity.

Procedure

FOR CANDIDACY

Inquiries, nominations, and applications are invited. Initial review of applications will begin on March 3, 2025, and continue until the position is filled. Candidates should provide a curriculum vitae, a cover letter that discusses how their experiences align with the opportunities and expectations for leadership to address a university-wide perspective, a leadership/administrative philosophy statement (limit to two pages), and the name and contact information for three references. References will not be contacted without prior knowledge and approval from candidates. These materials should be submitted electronically via Illinois State University's application portal.

The direct link to apply is

<https://jobsearch.illinoisstate.edu/en-us/job/519774/associate-provost>

Questions and nominations may be directed to Cindy Lotz, director for executive search services, at

(309) 438-7487.

LEADERSHIP

Dr. Aondover Tarhule, President



Dr. Aondover Tarhule joined Illinois State University in 2020 as vice president for academic affairs and provost and currently serves as president. His immediate prior administrative appointment was vice provost and dean of the Graduate School at Binghamton University (State University of New York). Before that, he was executive associate dean and department chair in the College of Atmospheric and Geographic Sciences at the University of Oklahoma. In these positions, he worked on creating new academic programs, increasing student enrollment, increasing diversity, faculty retention, shared governance, and international partnerships and linkages.

Having earned master's degrees and a doctoral degree in geography from McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, Tarhule received a postdoctoral fellowship from the Canadian Science Advisory Council to conduct research at Queens University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. Tarhule earned an additional master's degree in environmental resources planning and a bachelor's degree in geography, both from the University of Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria.

A broadly trained physical geographer, Tarhule has wide-ranging research interests in hydroclimatic variability, droughts, water resources scarcity, and climate information dissemination and use. His scholarly research has appeared in prestigious international journals, including *Nature (Scientific Reports, Climate Perspectives)*, *Journal of Hydrology*, *Remote Sensing*, and *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society*, and book chapters. His efforts as principal investigator (PI) or co-PI have resulted in more than \$5 million in grants from such agencies as the National Science Foundation, the United States Agency for International Development, the National Institutes of Health, and the United States Geological Survey. He has served on the editorial board of the *Scientific World Journal* and the *African Geographical Review*, and as guest editor on several journals including *Remote Sensing*, *Atmosphere*, and *Climate Research*.

Tarhule has served on committees of prominent national and international organizations, including as consultant to the World Bank (Climate Risk Assessment of the Niger River Basin Sustainable Development Action Plan) and member of the Executive Committee of the Board on Oceans, Atmosphere, and Climate, and Association of Public and Land Grant Universities. He is a member of the College of Mentors of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) and an executive board member of the Walker Institute, University of Reading, in England.

LEADERSHIP

Dr. Ani Yazedjian, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost



Dr. Ani Yazedjian, University Professor, joined the Office of the Provost in 2019 as associate provost and currently serves as vice president for academic affairs and provost. In her role as associate provost, Yazedjian oversaw new program development through the Illinois Board of Higher Education and institutional accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission, and was actively involved in the creation of the new College of Engineering. On campus, she supervised the Center for Civic Engagement, the Office of International Education, and University Assessment Services. Yazedjian served on the University strategic planning steering team and the COVID-19 steering team.

Yazedjian has also served as chair of the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences at Illinois State. As chair, she led the increase in the number of degree programs in the department, developed the first accelerated master's degree programs on campus, created a new online dietetic internship certificate, increased student enrollment, oversaw over \$1 million in equipment and facilities upgrades, and secured donor contributions for five new scholarships. She was named a University Professor in 2013 and received the University's Distinguished Service Award in 2023.

Over the last two decades, Yazedjian has received over \$7 million to support her scholarly interests in delivering evidence-based programs to support adolescent development. Most recently, between 2015 and 2020, she directed the *CARE4U* program which provided over 1,100 primarily African American and Hispanic youth with relationship education, job readiness, and financial management skills in order to support their successful transition to adulthood. In 2021, she received the Marie F. Peters Award from the National Council on Family Relations, a biennial recognition given to a distinguished scholar, researcher, or practitioner who has made significant contributions to the area of racial and ethnic diversity in families.

Prior to her time at Illinois State, Yazedjian was a faculty member in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences at Texas State University. In 2010, she was appointed as presidential fellow where she served on the president's cabinet and focused on developing and implementing internationalization efforts across campus. She earned a doctorate and master's degree in human and community development from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and a bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of Florida.

Nationally, Yazedjian has served in leadership roles with the National Council on Family Relations, the Council for Accreditation of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, and the Council for Administrators in Family and Consumer Sciences. She was selected by the Higher Education Resource Services for the Wellesley Institute, which develops women leaders in higher education.

In the local community, she has been involved with the Family and Consumer Science Professionals of McLean County and volunteered with Junior Achievement. She also served for six years on the board of the Multicultural Leadership Institute and continues to serve as a mentor.



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Illinois State University, as an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding affirmative action, nondiscrimination, and anti-harassment. Illinois State University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, order of protection, gender identity and expression, ancestry, age, marital status, disability, genetic information, unfavorable military discharge, or status as a veteran in employment, educational programs and activities, or admissions. Inquiries or complaints may be addressed by contacting the director of the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access by email at EqualOpportunity@IllinoisState.edu, by calling (309) 438-3383, or by mail at Illinois State University, Campus Box 1280, Normal, IL 61790.