

## Educating Illinois seeks student opinions at forum

Written by Elizabeth Brei, Daily Vidette Senior Staff  
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Educating Illinois held an open forum Tuesday to allow students to share their opinions on the current status of ISU, as well as possible changes that could be made in the future.

Educating Illinois is ISU's strategic plan, which prioritizes the needs of the university.

It advances the Board of Trustees' vision for the university and builds on the institution's heritage and recent accomplishments, according to the Educating Illinois website.

Some of these values include the pursuit of learning and scholarship, individualized attention, public opportunity, diversity, and civic engagement.

Sheri Everts, ISU provost and Dan Layzell, vice president of Finance and Planning, were in attendance to explain Educating Illinois and its accomplishments, as well as its goals for the future.

"The guiding principles for our planning process are for it to be a very comprehensive, strategic planning process that continues to advance the mission of ISU," Layzell said. "We're going to build on the successes of previous planning efforts that Provost Everts started earlier."



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Some of these accomplishments include the renovations of the residence halls, the building of the Campus Recreation Center and McCormick Hall, and increased wireless access throughout campus.

Other accomplishments include the national recognition of ISU's academic programs, increased student aid, like the Redbird Scholarships and ISU Access Grants, increased student support services, and historic highs of graduation and student retention rates at the university.

"There's an 85 percent retention rate between freshman and sophomore year, which is really an incredibly high retention rate," Everts said. "If you watch those across the nation, it's something to be very proud of."

This is the third review of Educating Illinois since 2000.

"The reason that we're reviewing Educating Illinois is, first and foremost, because President Bowman called for a review of it in fall of 2011 in his State of the University Address.

"Good planning principles call for a review of strategic plans and their progress. We're in a period of transition of higher education in the university in general, so it's important that we review the plan now to get ready to freshen it up," Layzell explained.

The forum allowed students to share their thoughts about the university.

Attendees were asked to answer four questions. The questions concerned unique strengths and features of ISU, internal and external challenges ISU might face, internal and external

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opportunities available to the university, and what students might want people to be saying about the university in 20 years.

Layzell said students will be given many opportunities to share their opinions on the proceedings of Educating Illinois, such as similar forums and a survey available on the Educating Illinois website.

"You will have many opportunities as we move through the development of the next phase of the plan to provide input," he said.