TAKE ROOT AND RISE

The Indiana State University Strategic Plan

INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

The Indiana State University Strategic Plan reflects Indiana State University's deep commitment to a Culture of Care and to preparing every Sycamore for meaningful, career-connected futures.

Rooted in unwavering support, we help students establish strong foundations through an Exceptional Student Experience grounded in belonging, well-being, and personalized guidance. We rise by delivering an Innovative Curriculum that is agile, relevant, and closely connected to industry, ensuring our graduates are workforce-ready and future-focused. And through Unified People and Processes, we advance together—strengthening collaboration, streamlining systems, and aligning our collective efforts to remove barriers and elevate student outcomes.

STRATEGIC THREAD DEFINITIONS

Culture of Care

At Indiana State University, we strive for a Culture of Care—the heartbeat of our university community and a shared commitment to ensuring every Sycamore is seen, supported, and empowered. We meet students and their families where they are, working to remove barriers—financial, academic, and personal—and weaving care into our daily interactions, educational practices, and institutional decisions. We teach through genuine relationships, helping students build resilience, self-advocacy, and personal responsibility to prepare them for future challenges and the workforce. We prioritize the emotional and physical well-being of our entire university—students, families, faculty, staff, administration, alumni, and partners—uplifting one another through empathy, accountability, and active support.

This commitment attracts a diverse community to Indiana State, empowers our faculty and staff, and draws our alumni back home—cultivating a vibrant university dedicated to collective success, meaningful impact, and a powerful return on both individual and institutional investment.

Career-Connectedness

Career-Connectedness at Indiana State University is our commitment to ensuring every educational experience develops our students as thinking and engaged citizens, poised for career opportunities and professional success. Our dedicated faculty are leaders in their fields, producing original scholarship that contributes to the advancement of knowledge and helps define cutting-edge programs that connect to their disciplines and the needs of employers. Students can work directly with faculty thought leaders from the moment they arrive at our university, preparing them through high-impact practices, such as undergraduate research and internships, for future employment or post-graduate education. Through strategic partnerships with business, industry, and practicing professionals, we ensure that an Indiana State credential remains relevant and valuable for both today's job market and tomorrow's opportunities – offering students a clear value proposition through affordable, high-quality education, and strong career outcomes.

At Indiana State, our programs foster intellectual curiosity and lifelong learning. Every academic program, co-curricular opportunity, and student support service is designed to model and cultivate skills essential for a rapidly changing workforce, including leadership, resilience, communication, ethical and creative problem-solving, collaboration, and professional adaptability. Our students earn more than a degree: they grow as professionals, build networks, prepare for post-graduate education, gain real-world experience, and develop tools for a lifetime of meaningful contribution, personal fulfillment, and civic responsibility—all while achieving a strong financial return on their educational investment.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY VISION STATEMENTS

Innovative Curriculum

At Indiana State, we recognize the critical impact of innovative curriculum on preparing students for their futures. Our academic programming is designed and continuously improved to meet the evolving needs of 21st-century learners and the regional and global workforce. Through industry and community partnerships, we combine high-impact practices and experiential learning to help students apply their developing skill sets, gaining lifelong transferable skills and real-world opportunities in discipline-specific fields. Recognizing the diverse pathways through which today's students come to us, we incorporate stackable credentials, credit for prior learning opportunities, and completion-friendly programs. Aligning with workforce demands and prioritizing student success, we provide an accessible, future-forward curriculum that equips our graduates to make an immediate impact on Indiana, the nation, and the world.

Exceptional Student Experience

The Sycamore Experience inspires and empowers. At Indiana State, we care for the whole student—mind, body, and spirit—through an integrated network of faculty mentorship, career development, campus involvement, and coordinated support services. Students build confidence and leadership by connecting classroom learning with internships, research, community engagement, and global travel. Rooted in our Culture of Care, we break down barriers and deliver personalized advising, financial aid support, accessibility resources, and comprehensive wellness programs. By engaging in student organizations, leadership roles, athletics, cultural events, and service opportunities, students deepen their learning, accelerate personal growth, and cultivate skills that last a lifetime. From the first university connection through lifelong alumni engagement, it is joy, belonging, and impact that define the Sycamore Experience.

Unified People and Processes

Sycamores foster a university environment where systems are streamlined to promote student achievement, faculty and staff collaboration, and institutional excellence. Recognizing that people are the cornerstone of transformative educational experiences, we prioritize robust professional development and recruitment and retention strategies across all employee roles and career stages. We ensure every function inside and outside the classroom contributes meaningfully to student success and career-connectedness. To facilitate the success and coordination of units across the university, we optimize technologies and operational processes to create an agile infrastructure guided by principles of efficiency, sustainability, and responsiveness to the evolving needs of our university community and the workforce. Our institution is future-ready and is positioned to continuously adapt, collaborate, and lead, anticipating and embracing the opportunities of tomorrow.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Innovative Curriculum

Initiative 1: Comprehensive Program Innovation

Objective: Conduct a university-wide, holistic review of all academic programs. Evaluate the relevance and responsiveness of majors, minors, and certificates to student and workforce demands. Identify curricular innovations, potential collaborations, faculty expertise, and emerging resource allocation and pedagogy needs to support student success. This initiative will ensure a vibrant and future-focused array of programs, supported by high-quality instruction and sufficient resources to sustain growth and remain competitive.

Key Actions:

- Establish a cross-unit Program Review Task Force to initiate this process and collaborate with relevant areas including Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, Finance, and Career Center.

- Integrate program-level reviews of discipline-specific best practices and trends with Program Review Task Force recommendations to increase interdisciplinary offerings and enhance faculty access to relevant professional development opportunities that align with emerging workforce demands.

- Develop an implementation roadmap to increase faculty participation, update curriculum, effectively allocate resources, and establish a sustainable system for regular, innovation-focused program review.

Initiative 2: Career-Integrated Core Curriculum and Faculty Development

Objective: Review and revise Indiana State's core curriculum to respond to the intellectual needs of today's learners and embed career-aligned competencies, ensuring students develop and understand essential workplace skills and tools through applied learning experiences. This initiative fosters experiential learning in partnership with employers across industry. It supports faculty development in designing and delivering critical, career-aligned content and assessing career-aligned outcomes.

Key Actions:

- Review and revise Indiana State's core curriculum program to ensure it meets the evolving learning needs of today's students and provides a holistic education.

- Align the core curriculum with the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) standard career competencies through career-related assignments or projects. Establish a continuous review process for evaluating NACE competencies within the core curriculum.

- Continue to integrate technological innovation and responsible practice, including AI proficiency and ethical use, to prepare students for the modern world.

- Provide faculty professional development focused on innovative and integrative teaching methods that adhere to best practices and align with evolving core curricular goals.

Initiative 3: Expansion of Flexible Academic Pathways for Diverse Learners

Objective: Design and implement customizable academic pathways that incorporate stackable credentials, credit for prior learning, and flexible delivery formats (online, hybrid, in-person) and incorporate career-connected, high-impact learning experiences. This initiative enhances recruitment, retention, and outcomes for traditional, transfer, adult, and non-traditional students. It expands access to high-quality, cost-effective educational routes that shorten time to degree and enhance graduates' career readiness. It also enhances collaborative industry partnerships to design specific industry pathways through the Indiana State Preferred Partners Program.

Key Actions:

- Streamline transfer-student and Credit for Prior Learning processes at the undergraduate and graduate levels with input from Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, and Student Experience units.

- Develop, market, and launch additional undergraduate- and graduate-level stackable certificates and microcredentials tied to regional workforce needs. Expand Preferred Partner Program through industry-specific credential offerings.

- Implement accelerated program models (e.g., 8-week, 5-start) in priority fields such as Nursing, Cybersecurity, Aviation, and Construction Management.

- Enhance access to flexible delivery modalities, pathways, and reentry opportunities for all students.

EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Initiative 1: Sycamore One Stop

Objective: Assess, enhance and promote the Sycamore One Stop to ensure every student can be served across various university resources in one location. The One Stop will be staffed with responsive and capable advisors, as well as reliable guides and problem-solvers, ensuring seamless navigation through university resources and processes. This One Stop support reduces administrative barriers, clarifies communication, and provides timely intervention to prevent bottlenecks, promoting student persistence and satisfaction. This network will have integrated support checkpoints addressing academic advising, mental health, and student services across academic stages and backgrounds to foster resilience, self-advocacy, and community.

Key Actions:

- Track Sycamore One Stop usage, impact, and satisfaction via regular surveys and relevant data analysis across multiple student demographics.

- Regularly assess and report the effectiveness of the current advising model, eliciting the feedback of students and academic departments. Implement continuous, data-driven professional development for advisors to ensure a consistent and high-quality advising experience for students.

- Integrate mental health, career, and academic support modules into Sycamore One Stop staff training, including an emphasis on supporting the needs of students from the beginning to the end of their academic journey, and for underrepresented, at-risk, non-traditional, distance, and graduate students.

- Increase awareness campaigns for all students including underrepresented, at risk, non-traditional, distance, and graduate student populations, as well as faculty and staff, to ensure clarity of processes and resources to achieve success.

Initiative 2: Sustainable Expansion of High-Impact Student Experiences

Objective: Embed high-impact, experiential learning opportunities, building on the Indiana State Experience Grant, throughout every stage of a student's academic career to ensure Sycamores connect with industry experts and employers early and often. Promote the expansion of internships, research, and service-learning, reducing barriers to career development and allowing students to apply classroom learning in real-world settings.

Key Actions:

- Develop sustainable funding streams and cultivate donor relationships in collaboration with Advancement, Alumni Relations, and the Office of Sponsored Programs to ensure the long-term growth and continuity of these transformative experiences. Continue to engage community and industry partners to diversify experiential opportunities.

- Define parameters and types of qualifying Signature Experiences with Academic Affairs, Career Services, and Faculty Senate. Ensure parameters support and provide access to special student populations like student-athletes, part-time, and distance learners.

- Partner with academic departments to align experiential learning with curricular goals. Establish a method to track and link Signature Experience participation to post-graduation outcomes.

Initiative 3: Student Engagement and Access to Services

Objective:
Build an integrated, student-centered engagement experience that removes barriers, increases access, and empowers all students, including on-campus, commuter, and online learners, to participate meaningfully in experiential learning, co-curricular involvement, and essential support services. Strengthen belonging, wellness, and student success by coordinating systems, simplifying processes, and expanding access to high-impact experiences.

Key Actions:

- Conduct a comprehensive analysis of factors that limit student engagement in experiential learning, co-curricular activities, and support services across university units. Identify service gaps and at-risk areas, and work collaboratively across administrative units to address systemic obstacles and improve access.

- Sustain and expand participation in high-quality extracurricular opportunities that foster community, develop leadership, and deepen student belonging. Empower student organizations, club sports, leadership programs, and service initiatives with enhanced funding, training, accountability, and coordination to increase engagement, support inclusive involvement, and improve student retention and success.

- Assess wellness needs and gaps for all Sycamores. Respond to results through development of and funding for a comprehensive wellness program that is embedded across all units. Develop a system for sustained auditing, reporting, and quality improvement of student wellness programs.

UNIFIED PEOPLE AND PROCESSES

Initiative 1: University Systems and Process Optimization Task Force

Objective:

Convene a diverse working group to gather comprehensive data identifying inefficiencies and communication silos across university functions. This task force will pinpoint where collaboration can be strengthened to optimize employee functionality and the student experience to ultimately enhance success outcomes. It will take a critical look at paper-based and manual processes and systematically transition to efficient digital workflows. This initiative will sunset outdated technologies, consolidate platforms, and leverage underutilized systems to streamline operations-from admissions and athletic compliance through alumni stewardship—creating a more responsive and sustainable university environment.

Key actions:

- Form a cross-functional task force (including Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, Student Experience and Engagement, Finance, Athletics, General Counsel, and Alumni Relations) to gather data and analyze communication flows, processes, and service delivery points for bottlenecks, redundancies, and inefficiencies.

- Establish clear timelines and accountability measures for eliminating outdated, paper-reliant procedures, ensuring that all stakeholder processes are accessible, equitable, and mobile-friendly.

- Direct each division, department, and unit to assess current processes to address inefficiencies, remove duplicative platforms, and advance digital transformation within their respective areas.

Initiative 2: Unified Digital Platform for Student Success

Objective:

Explore, select, and implement an integrated digital platform that centralizes academic advising, career services, mental health, financial aid, and other student support data. This platform will facilitate coordinated outreach, proactive interventions, and real-time analytics to support student progression. It will integrate with selective technologies we have currently, but will allow for redundant technologies to be sunset and condensed into one system.

Key actions:

- Configure and optimize Slate's Student Success module with custom dashboards, alerts, and workflows and integrate the platform with Banner and other critical systems to provide a comprehensive student view.

- Onboard and train faculty, staff, and advisors on platform use and data privacy protocols, prioritizing processes with highest student impact for digital transformation.

- Monitor usage metrics and solicit feedback for continuous improvement. Implement new workflows by optimizing the features of existing platforms (e.g., Slate, Banner), leveraging AI for efficiency.

Initiative 3: TREE (Talent Retention, Engagement, and Empowerment) Program

Objective: Design and implement a comprehensive professional development, mentorship, and well-being program aimed at retaining, engaging, and empowering faculty and staff. TREE will support career advancement, leadership growth, faculty research, succession planning, and workplace well-being, fostering a cohesive and motivated university workforce in which each employee embraces the Culture of Care and their unique contribution to students' career preparation.

Key actions:

- Collaborate with Human Resources, Academic Affairs, and Student Experience and Engagement to develop and regularly update onboarding and training templates for each university unit. Require training focused on Culture of Care and Career-Connectedness for all new hires and current employees, with refreshers on a regular basis.

- Collaborate with Human Resources and Academic Affairs to develop customizable leadership development and career advancement training for common faculty, staff, and administrative succession pathways. Promote and incentivize participation for faculty and staff at key career transition points.

- Expand and strengthen comprehensive wellness initiatives that address the diverse needs of employees. Embed these initiatives across all units and establish a system for ongoing assessment, reporting, and continuous improvement to ensure programs remain effective and responsive.

> "At Indiana State, I found my people. There's something for everyone. It's easy to get involved on campus and make friends. It's a gorgeous campus, so I just enjoy walking around. You work one-on-one with your professors, and they care about helping you. You're able to grow at your own pace, but you're also pushed to learn more."
>
> **— DAELYN DUNSTON, '25**

INDIANA STATE
UNIVERSITY