

November 19, 2019

Mr. Ted Maple
Vice President for Education
Lilly Endowment Inc.
2801 N. Meridian St.
P.O. Box 88068
Indianapolis, IN 46208-0068

Dear Ted,

I write on behalf of Indiana State University to apply for the Phase 1 planning grant as part of the Lilly Endowment's Charting the Future for Indiana's Colleges and Universities. We intend to use this opportunity to address the persistent challenge of closing the graduation gaps for students of color and for Pell grant recipients.

Indiana State University (ISU) is well-positioned and has a long history of serving Hoosiers, especially those from diverse and economically-challenged backgrounds. Funds from the Lilly Endowment's Charting the Future for Indiana's Colleges and Universities (CTF) will allow us to more fully live our mission by closing the gaps in graduation rates among our ethnic and racial minorities, as well as our first generation and working class students. By closing these gaps, we will not only meet our moral and fiduciary obligations to these students, but we also will meet the workforce needs of the state of Indiana.

The importance of this initiative for ISU is underscored by the data below:

- African-American students are 20 percentage points behind White students and African-American males are even further behind
- Students receiving the Pell grant are 15 percentage points behind non-Pell eligible students
- Twenty-First Century Scholar recipients are 5 percentage points behind their peers, although African-American Scholars lag further behind their White peers.

The establishment of the University College with its emphasis on intrusive, mandatory, holistic and developmental advising for all students transitioning to the university from high school has improved the university's first year retention rate, as well as its graduation rate. However, we must do more for our historically underserved and economically disadvantaged students.

Thus, we are requesting \$250,000.00 for the Phase 1-Planning. We intend to use these funds for two purposes, as follows:

(1) Visits to other colleges and universities to learn about how to:

- Establish a cohort based scholarship and academic support program for African-American males (e.g., University of Arizona, Kennesaw State)
- Develop a supportive infrastructure for our growing Latin X community (e.g. UT-Austin)

(2) Conduct pilots in fall 2020:

- Academic and resilience coaching for 30 academically at-risk students
- Academic support program for 21st Century Scholars which includes year-round housing and enrollment in face-to-face summer courses, as well as summer employment and internship opportunities
- A collaboration with the local Ivy Tech campus where 30 students ineligible for admission at ISU will take courses at Ivy Tech but live on ISU's campus and be afforded all associated privileges

Other potential collaborations are possible, such as using the statewide relationships with K-12 school corporations established by our College of Education and the Indiana Principle Leadership Institute. Locally, ISU is helping develop an alliance among the K-20 education providers in Terre Haute; this may also serve as an opportunity to collaborate on improving the success of our diverse student body.

In addition to campus visits and the implementation and evaluation of several pilots, we also will hold focus groups and evaluate our student success data, further disaggregating it to determine the institutional barriers to the success of ethnic and racial minorities, as well as the economically disadvantaged at ISU.

In closing, ISU is proud of its mission to serve its diverse populations and the state. Thirty-one percent of our total student body is diverse. We have defined student success as graduating in four years, and so it is imperative that our students, regardless of their backgrounds, walk across the commencement stage in a timely fashion. The Lilly Endowment's CTF planning funds will enable us to begin to close these disconcerting graduation gaps.

Sincerely,



Deborah J. Curtis
President, Indiana State University