



# **CORNERSTONE OF STUDENT SUCCESS**

THE STUDENT LIFE STRATEGIC PLAN



## Dear Hoosier Community,

It is my privilege to introduce *The Cornerstone of Student Success* strategic plan. This plan represents our shared vision for the future of student life at IU Bloomington and reflects our unwavering commitment to ensuring that every student thrives academically, personally, and socially.

The development of our strategic plan was a deeply collaborative effort, shaped by the voices of students, staff, faculty, and community partners. Each perspective has been vital in identifying both our challenges and our opportunities, and together we have crafted a framework that reflects the richness of our campus community. This process underscored what we know to be true: that Student Life is at its strongest when we listen, learn, and lead together.

The definition of “cornerstone” is “an important quality or feature on which a particular thing depends or is based.” Grounded in the university’s mission and aligned with the IUB 2030 strategic plan, this document is more than a roadmap—it is a call to action. It invites each of us to contribute to a culture of care, belonging, and innovation, ensuring that our work elevates the Hoosier experience and enables student success.

We are poised to chart a bold course—one that turns our aspirations into tangible progress and empowers each of us to shape the future of our campus community. What follows is *The Cornerstone of Student Success*, our shared guide to advancing student life at Indiana University Bloomington.

Dr. Lamar Hylton  
Vice Chancellor for the Office of Student Life  
Indiana University Bloomington



## INTRODUCTION

The Office of Student Life Strategic Plan provides a staff-, student-, and faculty-informed list of recommendations to serve as the roadmap for how we will achieve the goals outlined in the IUB 2030 Strategic Plan.

Throughout the 2024–25 school year, an Office of Student Life Strategic Plan was developed that will help us actualize our mission, vision, and values and guide us to achieve our goals for the next five years.

The plan is data informed, not data driven, and has considered the voices of students we serve, Student Life staff, and faculty. This plan is a guiding document that has been collaboratively constructed. It will not simply sit on a shelf, and it is not a pre-determined list of things.

# CHARGE FROM THE VICE CHANCELLOR FOR STUDENT LIFE

The Office of Student Life is committed to creating an environment where every student feels supported and empowered to thrive academically, personally, and socially. The Student Life Strategic Plan is a crucial part of our goal to enhance student experiences and support the university's mission.

This goal is only achieved through intentional partnerships and collaborations with students, faculty, staff, and university community members. We benefit from the wisdom of our campus partners through their service on the Student Life Strategic Planning Committee. This committee, led by Brian Richardson Jr. and Libby Spotts, is working diligently to identify core questions, gather information, and develop a data-informed plan that will guide our work in actualizing our mission, vision, and values—while aligning us with the IUB 2030 Strategic Plan.

Gathering input from our entire campus community will assist us in creating a shared, student-centered vision for the future. Student Life is dedicated to collaboratively building a campus culture where everyone feels valued and included, regardless of background or identity.

During our planning process, we will continue advancing our work across all three Student Life pillars:<sup>\*</sup> Care and Advocacy, Health and Well-Being, and Involvement and Belonging. Today's students face ever-evolving challenges and opportunities, and it is important that our efforts to support a premier and thriving student experience remain adaptable and forward-thinking.

Our plan must be bold and center innovative ideas that reflect the changing landscape of higher education. Stay connected with the process through updates and opportunities for involvement. We invite you to join us in this journey—whether by sharing feedback, engaging with new initiatives, or supporting Student Life's mission. With your help, we can continue envisioning and enriching a supportive and inclusive Student Life experience for all.

## Dr. Lamar Hylton

Vice Chancellor for the Office of Student Life

*\*A fourth pillar, Administration and Community, was added to the Office of Student Life in June 2025.*

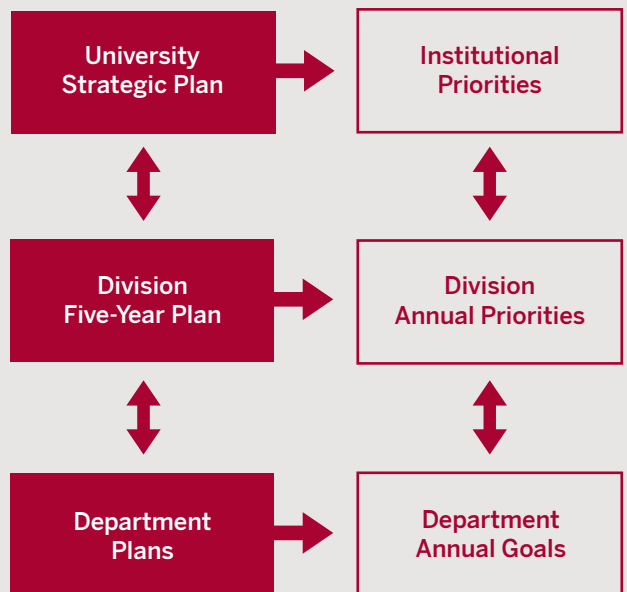
## OUR VISION

To create a premier and thriving student experience.

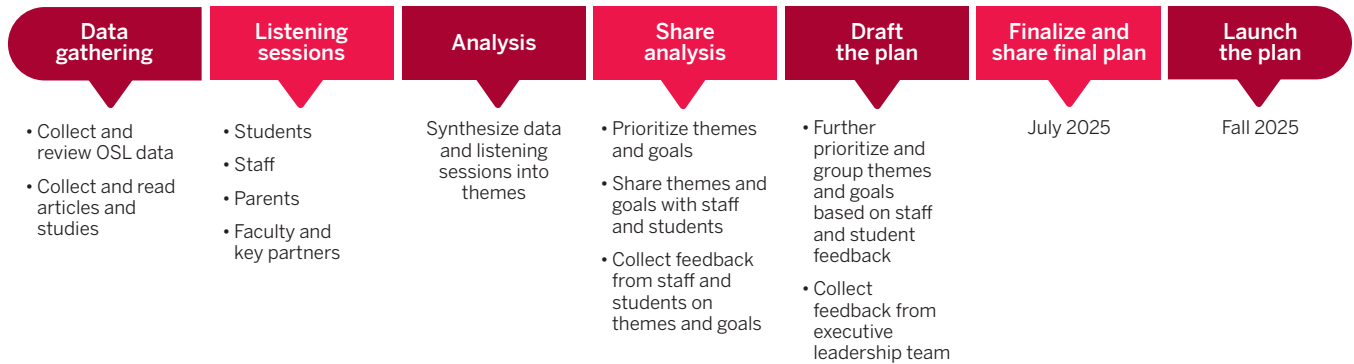
## OUR MISSION

The Office of Student Life champions student success at IU Bloomington by creating and supporting transformative experiences through amplifying care, belonging, and well-being.

## CONNECTION TO INSTITUTIONAL EFFORTS



# THE PROCESS



## May 2024

Faculty, student, and staff committee members identified and offered/accepted their roles.

## October 2024

Two Crimson Conversations were held for Student Life staff where staff feedback was collected, and questions were answered. The feedback we gathered through small-group work will help further guide the process.

## November 2024

Our Strategic Planning Committee convened and introduced sub-committees. The sub-committees began developing questions, outlining data and the role data will play in this process, and identifying role descriptors.

## December 2024

Through thorough data collection related to key areas of the Office of Student Life mission, vision, and values, the Strategic Planning Committee developed core questions for student, faculty, and staff feedback. The committee met and shared updates from sub-committee work that has begun. Sub-committees are currently looking at all three pillars of the Office of Student Life to hone their work and tailor it toward the targeted outreach that is upcoming with specific stakeholders. The core questions will be presented in upcoming listening sessions in January and February, in person and online. The committee will also be going to key partners to collect additional perspectives.

## January 2025

The Office of Student Life made significant strides in its strategic planning efforts by engaging key stakeholders in meaningful discussions. We hosted two focus groups that featured representatives from across the entire Student Life portfolio and student organization leaders to gather insights on priorities and opportunities for growth. Following these sessions, the committee carefully reviewed focus group notes, began analyzing the data, and identified emerging themes and potential strategic outcomes. To ensure a well-rounded understanding, the committee also distributed post-focus group surveys, allowing participants to provide additional feedback. These efforts set a solid foundation for shaping a strategic plan that reflects the needs and aspirations of our campus community.



## THE PROCESS

### February 2025

The focus this month was on continuing to seek broadening stakeholder input and refining our data analysis. The committee was invited to speak to the Parent Advisory Board and hosted a dedicated focus group with them, incorporating the perspectives of families who play a critical role in student success. Notes from this session were reviewed alongside data from the previous focus groups to identify recurring themes and align key insights.

### March 2025

Throughout March, the Strategic Planning Committee co-chairs engaged with colleagues from peer institutions to exchange insights and best practices for developing and implementing effective strategic plans. These conversations provided valuable perspectives to inform the planning process. On campus, data from the Parent Advisory Board focus group was analyzed to identify key themes that would help shape strategic priorities. In preparation for the upcoming strategic planning retreat, committee members began identifying core goals and assessed which stakeholder voices were not included. This led to the identification of additional groups to engage in future focus groups and an updated timeline being introduced. A focus group session was conducted with leadership from the Bloomington Faculty Council, which offered meaningful input to the Office of Student Life's priorities from the faculty perspective. Additionally, committee members reviewed and refined the focus group questions to ensure they were aligned with the goal of eliciting thoughtful, actionable feedback.

### April 2025

The Strategic Planning Committee focused intensely on facilitating listening sessions with graduate and undergraduate students and student leaders on campus, including but not limited to students and leaders from residence life, student organizations, cultural centers, and employees. The committee gathered information during these sessions and assessed the data for themes, priorities, and student needs.

### May 2025

The Strategic Planning Committee compiled all the themes and priorities shared across constituents in the preceding months and grouped them into broad, mission-based statements reflecting the work we do in the Office of Student Life. The committee then facilitated in-person check-ins with each pillar and its leadership team. The committee also shared a survey with the same mission-based statements across all undergraduate and graduate students and all Office of Student Life staff to assess what our priorities should be for the next five years and to collect any additional feedback. The in-person check-ins included information about how the themes were identified.

### June 2025

The committee has been hard at work taking the broad, mission-based statements and operationalizing them into priorities and measurable objectives. This process has incorporated the invaluable feedback from the in-person check-ins with staff, and the staff and student survey, to identify the work that will be the most important to the Office of Student Life for the next five years and to fine-tune how we talk about our goals. The committee has been working closely with the OSL Communications and Marketing team.

### August 2025

Co-chairs Brian Richardson Jr. and Libby Spotts presented the Goals and Priorities to the Student Life Executive Council to answer any final questions and make any minor adjustments prior to publication.

### September 2025

The Strategic Plan was shared with the Office of Student Life staff during the annual new school year kickoff.



## Definitions

- **Community:** We believe in creating a sense of belonging and purpose where all individuals feel included, cared for, and valued. When Hoosiers find their people, the everyday moments become lasting memories.
- **Integrity:** We believe in striving for excellence and innovation through honesty, accountability, and ethical work.
- **Learning:** We believe in providing diverse educational experiences. We do this through leadership development, event participation, campus employment, and experiential learning opportunities.
- **Partnership:** We believe we are stronger together. Through collaboration with students, faculty, staff, campus partners, families, and alums, our work is more meaningful and has a greater collective impact.
- **People-first:** We believe it all starts with people. While there is work to be done, we must prioritize the well-being of all Hoosiers through respect, civility, and inclusion.
- **Well-being:** We define well-being as an optimal and dynamic state that allows people to achieve their full potential.
- **Advocacy:** We define advocacy as supporting and empowering all students to take their own action, particularly when they're facing challenges. Advocacy can also mean acting on our students' behalf to ensure they have access to the resources and information they need to thrive academically and personally. Ultimately, advocacy is about giving voice to those who might not be heard, teaching students how to advocate for themselves, assisting in navigating complex systems, and working toward fair outcomes.
- **Organizational Excellence:** We define organizational excellence as creating a high-performing, adaptable, and sustainable organization that delivers exceptional value to all its stakeholders through a commitment to continuous improvement and best practices.

## The Committee

- **Brian Richardson Jr.**  
Associate Vice Chancellor for Administration and Community, Co-Chair
- **Libby Spotts**  
Senior Associate Dean of Students, Co-Chair
- **Dr. Nicky Belle**  
Associate Director, Student Involvement and Leadership Center
- **Terri Hill**  
Senior Director of Development, Scholarships, and Student Experience
- **Tammy Ostroski**  
Medical Director, Student Health Center
- **Brandon Ice**  
Associate Director, Residence Life
- **Dr. Gloria Howell**  
Director, Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center
- **Molly Murphy**  
Student Services Coordinator, Dean of Students Office
- **Dr. Leonard Taylor Jr.**  
Associate Professor, School of Education, Director, National Survey of Student Engagement
- **Aissatou Mbengue**  
Student Representative
- **Cooper Tinsley**  
Student Representative
- **Jadeyn Hammes**  
Student Representative
- **Jessie Schuster**  
Student Representative
- **Brayden Tanner**  
Student Representative
- **Victoria Ford**  
Student Representative
- **Kamryn Horne**  
Graduate Student Representative
- **Ramir D'juan Williams**  
Graduate Student Representative
- **Penny Dillon**  
Ex Officio

# GOALS AND PRIORITIES

## WE PROMOTE STUDENT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

We know transformative learning occurs outside of the classroom through intentional experiences and in primed environments. We promote student personal and professional learning, growth, and development through a comprehensive set of skills. We empower students to step into their own learning journey with self-agency. Consistent with the IUB 2030 Plan and strategies, student degree and career attainment are at the forefront of our work as we partner to prioritize co-curricular high-impact practices and career competencies.

### Support a thriving student experience through personal and professional skill attainment

1. Assess needs and implement programming and experiential opportunities aimed at interpersonal relationships, efficacy, resiliency, empathy, communication, conflict management, civil discourse, critical-thinking, and help-seeking/self-advocacy skills.
2. Enhance and expand targeted services to support learning outcomes and foster personal development skills to support the graduate student experience.
3. Promote student health and well-being outcomes through skill development, raising student awareness, and impacting related metrics.
4. Enhance leadership development learning opportunities.
5. Integrate professional skill development competencies into student-employment opportunities.

### Offer transformative curricular and co-curricular student learning experiences

1. Expand curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities for personal growth, academic success, and career success.
2. Implement and assess student learning outcomes.
3. Collaborate to bridge the gap between academic affairs and student life through intentional partnerships.

### Facilitate environments for student learning, growth, and development

1. Cultivate a welcoming campus environment where students are empowered and able to take accountability for their learning.
2. Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate agency in self-reflection and understanding of themselves and others.
3. Support students through challenges in ways that foster personal growth and build resilience.



# GOALS AND PRIORITIES

## WE SUPPORT STUDENTS HOLISTICALLY

We put students at the center of our work and provide comprehensive support outside the classroom so students can be successful inside the classroom. We invest in the holistic support of students and create innovative spaces and opportunities for students to practice healthy skill development that will last them a lifetime. We develop and maintain partnerships so student needs are met seamlessly, and resources are made readily available through our programs and services.

### Invest in the support of student academic success

1. Address the physical, emotional, intellectual, social, cultural, vocational, economic, and environmental (including systemic governance) needs of students in support of increasing student retention and graduation.
2. Aid students in developing agency to address physical, psychological/intellectual, social, cultural, economic, and environmental (including systemic governance) needs for themselves.
3. Reduce student risk of interpersonal violence through education, prevention, early intervention, and community engagement.
4. Invest resources to address student food and housing insecurity.

### Re-imagine programmatic engagement and student support services

1. Implement data-informed decision making for staffing models, funding support, service offerings, and programmatic decisions.
2. Assess and track student usage trends to align programs with needs.
3. Remove barriers to access of services through assessment, re-imagining access, and the promotion of resources.



## GOALS AND PRIORITIES

### WE CULTIVATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY AND PURPOSE

We respect the dignity of others, treat them with civility and understanding, and we support students in their efforts to fulfill the Indiana Promise and do the same. Through this, we create shared experiences and co-create engaged and welcoming communities that promote belonging and wellness. We support a Hoosier identity that transcends a student's time on campus.

#### Invest in holistic campus engagement of students

1. Develop transformative engagement opportunities and spaces that promote physical, emotional, intellectual, social, cultural, vocational, economic, and environmental (including systemic governance) well-being.
2. Implement innovative and emerging tools to boost engagement and facilitate community belonging. (i.e., platforms, apps, building a pathway).
3. Support shared community where students engage frequently with active participation, work toward shared goals, and experience deeper belonging.

#### Innovate and support community development

1. Facilitate opportunities for students to understand themselves in relation to others.
2. Assess and address the health and well-being of existing communities.
3. Understand student needs and reimagine the campus residential community experiences through assessment and best practices (i.e., res life, apartments, Greek life, university properties).
4. Innovate pathways for student agency in developing their own communities through residence hall communities, academic communities, joining an organization, being involved in civic engagement, or student employment.

#### Prioritize student belonging

1. Reimagine and center a culture of respect, dignity, civility, understanding, integrity, and responsibility via the Indiana Promise and IUB 2030 Student Success and Opportunity plan in engagement and belonging strategies.
2. Design environments, programs, and communications that support a culture where students feel seen, valued, included, and connected—across all departments, touchpoints, and experiences.
3. Enhance belonging efforts for undergraduate, graduate/professional, transfer, and international students.
4. Empower and equip students to have agency in their own sense of belonging.

#### Support a shared Hoosier identity

1. Partner across campus to define and promote a shared IUB Hoosier identity that will permeate the student's experience before, during, and after their time at IU by connecting students with each other, with the university, with resources, and by demonstrating that IU has their back along the way.
2. Promote peer-led opportunities consistent with research and national best practices to enhance engagement and leadership skills, and support belonging through peer-to-peer interactions.
3. Educate and engage community members, campus community members, and family members on the importance of their support role in student belonging and success, and on identifying and using campus resources.



## GOALS AND PRIORITIES

### WE INVEST IN OUR PEOPLE

We believe staff are the most valuable resources in our shared goal of a thriving student experience; as a people-first organization, we collaborate seamlessly to be a place they want to work. This means we invest in the holistic support, development, and retention of staff. We commit to a purposeful staff experience and opportunity for belonging by focusing on learning and development, removing barriers, and retaining talent.

#### Advance staff through learning, leadership, professional growth, and career development

1. Implement leadership training programs tailored to early, mid, and senior career stages that empower staff to set their own learning and professional stretch goals.
2. Create mentorship and coaching initiatives pairing experienced leaders with emerging talent.
3. Host regular leadership forums and workshops focused on skill-building and innovation.
4. Encourage cross-departmental projects to develop leadership skills through collaboration.
5. Advocate for policies that encourage well-being for staff.

#### Operate as one Office of Student Life by building partnerships that drive student success

1. Further develop the Office of Student Life shared identity to represent who we are today and tomorrow.
2. Identify and remove barriers to student and staff success.
3. Maximize collaboration to increase resources, information, and operations and reduce duplication to meet student and staff needs.

#### Focus on retaining staff by recognizing individual contributions and supporting their growth

1. Align people, goals, and systems for impact.
2. Create space for growth through smart alignment.
3. Strengthen staffing, strategy, and support systems by optimizing people, processes, and performance.
4. Strive to ensure staffing levels meet the department needs.
5. Partner with HR to grow future leaders.



## GOALS AND PRIORITIES

### WE EXEMPLIFY ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

We are committed to demonstrating organizational excellence by living our values and showing our work. By streamlining policies, processes and procedures, growing a culture of assessment, maximizing resources, fostering collaboration, and telling the Office of Student Life's story, we are building a foundation from which to grow in the years to come.

#### Grow a culture of assessment

1. Prioritize unit-level goals aligned with IUB 2030, the OSL strategic plan, and area best practices that use assessment to inform programmatic, human resource, and financial decision making.
2. Demonstrate transparency in operational excellence through the sharing of metrics, data, and best practices locally and nationally.
3. Inventory and expand operational systems for assessment and transparency, and educate staff on common language, metrics, goals, expectations, and systems.
4. Practice identifying and addressing data gaps to improve student learning and success and use data to inform decision making and to set priorities.

#### Align budgets with strategic plan priorities

1. Use data to inform financial and human resources allocation.
2. Identify existing gaps and inefficiencies to guide financial decisions.
3. Explore other revenue and income streams to achieve goals (i.e., grants, external partnerships).



#### Review and advocate for field-leading policies and practices that encourage student well-being and are grounded in our values, research, best practice, ethics, and the law where applicable

1. Identify and define policies and procedures for review.
2. Develop a framework to evaluate operational excellence, including other definitions for consistency, timelines for review, and connections to values, research, best practice, ethics, and the law.
3. Systematically review policies and procedures with staff and student feedback.
4. Make policy and practices accessible to those who need them or those who should know about them.



INDIANA UNIVERSITY BLOOMINGTON  
**OFFICE OF STUDENT LIFE**

An implementation team will be introduced  
to ensure progress is made toward plan  
completion over the next five years.

**For updates, visit our website.**

**[go.iu.edu/oslplan](https://go.iu.edu/oslplan)**