

TO: Lane Crothers, Chair, Academic Senate
FROM: Faculty Affairs Committee
RE: Child-Care/Family-Care Facility for ISU Employees and Students

Dear Lane,

The Faculty Affairs Committee has been charged with examining faculty recruitment and retention issues and submitting its recommendations to the Senate. The Committee believes that creating a child-care/family-care facility for ISU employees is an important step toward improved faculty recruitment and retention, and would like to forward its recommendations to the Senate for its consideration.

Attachments: Report of the Childcare Task Force, 1999
Report of the Childcare Implementation Committee, 2000
Results of the Need Assessment Survey, 2006

Child-Care/Family-Care for ISU Employees and Students

In 1998, ISU formed a Child-Care Task Force (CCTF) to investigate the child-care issues at ISU and present recommendations for action. Based on their study, the Task Force made the following recommendations:

“The CCTF recommends the implementation of an on-campus childcare center that would serve the dual purpose of supporting cross-disciplinary curricular needs while serving both students and employees. Such a center has the potential to position Illinois State on the cutting-edge of early childhood education in the state by creating the most comprehensive birth to six-years training of any university in Illinois. Moreover, an expanded center that would provide for employee childcare would enhance the sense of community on campus as well as increasing employee productivity. Finally, Illinois State University would be modeling an example of social responsibility for its own students by fostering a sense of concern and compassion for the children of its students and employees.” (CCTF, 1999, p.2)

In 1999, in response to the Task Force’s recommendations, the Child-care Implementation Committee (CIC) was formed. The CIC developed an action plan aiming at building an on-site employee child-care facility within 5-7 years. Unfortunately, the economic downturn and budget rescissions that followed prevented ISU from pursuing this goal at the time. ISU later considered a joint venture with BroMenn Hospital and Illinois Wesleyan University and, in 2006, conducted a “need assessment” survey of ISU employees for both child-care and elder-care. The survey confirmed that there is a need for both child-care and elder-care for ISU employees (see the attached survey results).

The Faculty Affairs Committee has been very impressed by the thorough and convincing reports of the CCTF and CIC and has voted unanimously to endorse their recommendations with a few modifications. The Committee strongly recommends that ISU continue to explore the possibility of a joint facility, especially with BroMenn. Such a partnership could make it possible to offer child-care/elder-care services for extended hours, including times when the University is closed. This would help faculty better take advantage of University holidays to design courses, grade student assignments, and conduct research, among other things. In addition, in our conversation with faculty, they indicated that a very important issue for them is availability of care for children with minor illnesses, which we believe will have a better chance of implementation with a partnership with BroMenn.

If the University is unable to build a joint facility, then the Committee recommends that we immediately begin working on an on-site family-care facility for the ISU community that would not only serve children, but the elderly as well. We also suggest that the facility arrange for transportation from area schools for after-school programs for school-age children.

In terms of resources, in addition to submitting budget requests and grant proposals, we believe that fundraising for a comprehensive family-care facility should remain an integral part of ISU's campaign. Many ISU employees who have contributed to the Family Campaign targeted their donations to the building of a child-care facility, and more than \$100,000 has already been collected for this cause.

If established, such a facility could become a model for other universities and an important factor in attracting and retaining faculty at ISU. A caring environment and community and how the institution values its employees and their welfare will go a long way toward employee satisfaction and loyalty.