

Christopher J. Olsen

EDUCATION:

University of Florida	1990-1996	Ph.D., United States History, Phi Beta Kappa Minors: Colonial Latin America; Political Culture Theory
University of Nebraska	1988-1990	M.A., United States History Minor: British Empire
North Dakota State University	1984-1988	B.A., History

SUMMARY:

Over twenty years of experience in higher education leadership as Provost, Dean, and Chairperson, in addition to other university service. Extensive work in broad areas of higher education leadership and management: university-level strategic planning; budgeting and organization management; enrollment management, marketing, and recruiting; executive-level hiring and development; alumni relations and fund-raising; state regulations, government, and external relationships; curriculum development, revision, and assessment; distance education (curriculum development, teaching, and assessment); faculty hiring, development, and evaluation; graduate education; student success; academic advising; multi-disciplinary programs; community engagement and experiential learning.

SELECTED ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE, Indiana State University (overview):

- Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, February 2021-present (national search)
- Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, 2016-2021 (national search)
- Chairperson, Department of History, 2002-2016 (internal search)
- Interim Chairperson, Department of African and African American Studies, 2005-2010
- Co-PI, Project Success grant, Eli Lilly Foundation, 2021-2026
- Campaign Cabinet member, “Be So Bold” capital campaign, ISU Foundation, 2021-2025
- Co-Chair, University Athletics comprehensive review, 2020-2021
- Goal Chair for Enrollment and Student Retention, University Strategic Plan, 2021-present
- Director, The Research Center for Local History and Culture, 2006-2010
- Goal Chair, Higher Learning Commission (HLC) re-accreditation review, 2017-2018
- Co-Chair, University Advising review committee, 2014-2015
- Foundational Studies (General Education) Task Force, 2008-2010
- Goal Chair, Experiential Learning, Strategic Plan, 2007-2009
- African American Culture Center Task Force, 2007-2009

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS:

Professor, History, Indiana State University, Fall 2010-present (Asst., 1999-2002; Assoc., 2002-2009)
Affiliated Faculty, African and African American Studies, Indiana State University, Fall 2008-present
Assistant Professor, United States & Latin American History, Virginia Wesleyan College, 1996-1999

ADMINISTRATIVE and PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (detail):

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, February 2021-present

The Division of Academic Affairs encompasses about three-fourths of the budget and about two-thirds of the personnel at Indiana State University. These constitute 900-1000 employees and a budget of about \$125 million. The Provost and VPAA has 20 direct reports, in addition to special projects or revolving Faculty Fellow positions. I work closely with the President and other cabinet members, the Faculty Senate, and various other campus and community leaders. I also work with the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, city, county, and state government officials, and various alumni and advisory boards and committees.

Major Units and Direct Reports:

Enrollment Management, Marketing & Communication, University website, Financial Aid, Registrar, Institutional Research, Information Technology, University Student Success and Advising Center; College of Arts and Sciences, Bayh College of Education, Scott College of Business, Bailey College of Engineering and Technology, College of Health and Human Services, Honors College, Cunningham Memorial Library; Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging; Office of Title IX and Equal Opportunity; Office of Sponsored Programs; Chief Research Officer; Director of Foundational Studies; Assessment and Accreditation

Marketing, Branding, and Enrollment:

Oversee marketing and recruiting to maximize enrollment, and enhance and develop the University brand, including work with internal staff and the University's external marketing firm; coordinated a comprehensive market study (2020-2021) to assess brand awareness and perception; oversee university website (currently completing a two-year comprehensive restructure and re-brand).

- **New student enrollment** increased the last two years, following six years of decline; increases in Freshman cohorts were 8% in 2022 and additional 2% in 2023 (nationally, four-year publics increased 3.7% in 2022 and declined 6.1% in 2023); new graduate and international student enrollment increased in 2023 for the first time in five years
- **Honors College new enrollment** increased more than 10% over the past three years; increases in our Honors Freshman cohorts have accelerated as we've positioned our brand as a combination of small college experience with the resources, faculty, and facilities of a research university
- **Faculty Fellow program** began in 2022 with efforts focused on increased recruitment of Hispanic and Latinx students as well as faculty-centered New Student Orientation program highlighting student opportunities and experiences

Philanthropy and External Relations:

Support President and VP of the University Foundation in major gift and donor relations, including annual ISU Foundation Board Meeting; helped cultivate the single largest individual gift of \$8 million to name the Bailey College of Engineering and Technology, among others; serve on the "Be So Bold" Campaign Cabinet.

- Helped secure funding from state legislature for \$66 million renovation and expansion of Bailey College of Engineering and Technology in the most recent

- legislative session
- Represented Academic Affairs at the review of architectural proposals for three major renovations of academic buildings (2016-2018, 2018-2020, 2022-2023 with design ongoing) and worked extensively with architects during project completion
- Expanded or established new relationships with universities around the world to support our priority of study abroad, including the University of Zagreb (Croatia), Edge Hill University (England), and University of Havana (Cuba), among others
- Created the Preferred Partnership program for public entities and private industry, agreements that provide opportunities for our current students (e.g. internships) and accelerated admission and tuition discount for their employees; in the first year we have signed more than 30 Preferred Partners from private industry and public entities, and enrolled nearly 100 new students

Academic Leadership:

Oversaw major administrative reorganization of Academic Affairs, which included elimination of separate University College and College of Graduate and Professional Studies, reorganization of multiple programs within the five remaining colleges, reorganization of library services and structure, and elimination of Extended Learning with functions moved to Admissions and the academic colleges.

- New program development included completion major in Leadership and Professional Development and movement of MBA online in eight-week format, among others
- University secured grants exceeding \$33 million over the past three years
- Oversee (as Co-PI) grant from Eli Lilly Foundation (\$9.6 million), “Charting the Future for Indiana’s Colleges and Universities,” to improve student success metrics for historically under-served populations
 - Overall, **student success metrics** suggest the positive impact of a combination of initiatives: one-year retention rate has increased by eight points (60.5 to 68.6%) in the past three years; four-year graduation rates increased by 3.5% in the past three years

Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, 2016-2021

Managing ISU’s largest and most diverse college was challenging but allowed me to work with every other unit on campus since the CAS teaches more than half of all Student Credit Hours. It was a demanding administrative and management experience as I met weekly with the Provost and other College deans, the Provost’s Advisory Council, and the associate deans in the CAS. I met at least once per month with 16 Department chairpersons and five program or center directors who were part of the College. We also held regular CAS staff meetings and I met with the Faculty Council each week. Reviewing untenured faculty members was also an important responsibility, with 50-60 pre-tenure (TT) faculty, 50+ FT Instructors (non-TT), and dozens of FT and PT temporary lecturers. One of the most rewarding parts of this process was meeting with all TT faculty, after their review cycles had been completed, in their offices, labs, and studios to hear about their work at length. As Dean I also participated in the post-tenure review process for all tenured faculty.

Philanthropy and External Relations:

- Secured donations to establish the William J. Brett Center for Science Research (\$500,000), the Don Dudine Marching Sycamores scholarship program (\$1,000,000), and the Rich and Robin Porter Center for Cancer Research (\$250,000); secured donations to name the Yang Family University Art Gallery (\$300,000) and Margaret Boyce Performance Hall and School of Music Development Fund (\$1,000,000), among others
- Established Alumni Mentors program to connect current students with alumni for career and professional advice and support; used outreach through Alumni Mentors program to identify new donor prospects for University capital campaign
- Participated in selection of architects for two major renovations: Fine Arts Building (\$17 million) and Dreiser Hall (\$18 million), which included ongoing work during the design process and throughout renovation

Academic Leadership:

- Managed faculty development, review, and evaluation, oversaw budget and faculty resources of ISU's largest college with annual budget of about \$25 million
- Strategic planning for the College, including enrollment; ensured that the CAS advances the mission and strategic goals of the University and help to meet the goals and priorities of the university's administration
- New program development included degree programs in Data Science and Data Analytics, Middle School Math Education, Cyber-Criminology, Intelligence Analysis, and Forensic Anthropology, among others; helped review and oversee new BS in Engineering, housed in the Bailey College of Engineering and Technology but with about 40% of the curriculum delivered from the CAS
- College secured grants exceeding \$7.4 million over these five years

Department Chairperson, History, 2002-2016

During my fifteen years as chairperson the Department of History faculty amassed an enviable record in terms of faculty scholarship, teaching, and service, earning a reputation as one of the university's most successful and collegial departments. I remain very proud that the faculty recommended me four times, unanimously, for reappointment as chairperson. The Department faculty teach a great number of students as either History, Social Studies Education, or African and African American Studies majors, through the Foundational Studies and Honors programs, and through our substantial participation in a range of multi-disciplinary majors and minors. The Department's annual enrollment is normally among the most at ISU, making it one of the largest departments. The Department became known as one of the university's most accomplished due to faculty publication of more than two dozen books and one hundred articles, NEH, Fulbright, and ACLS fellowships, and countless other honors and distinctions for scholarship, teaching, and service; integration of African and African American Studies program and faculty into the Department; creation of one of ISU's first distance master's degree program; and expanded alumni and external relations through an annual newsletter, leading to successful fund-raising.

- Represent the Department to the University and broader local and state constituencies

- Day-to-day management, including: faculty hiring, development, and review; curriculum development, review, and assessment; and student recruiting, relations, and academic advising
- Dual enrollment (in High Schools), Advanced Placement, and transfer credit evaluation
- Programming and community engagement
- Alumni relations and fund-raising

Interim Department Chairperson, African and African American Studies, 2005-2010

After five years as their Interim Chairperson the faculty in African and African American Studies voted to join the History Department. It functions as a semi-autonomous unit with the Department, and has grown since its inclusion. This transition required about two years of meetings, curriculum review, new bylaws, and so forth. This is a complicated and time-consuming program to administer, despite its relatively low number of majors, because affiliated faculty are housed in many other academic departments and most students are double majors. The program has a critical, historic legacy at I.S.U., and I was honored when the program faculty voted unanimously to join the Department of History on a permanent basis. Among many other projects we also coordinated a biennial reunion of program alumni, many of whom helped transform the university during the Civil Rights Movement.

- Represent the Department to the rest of the University
- Day-to-day management, including faculty hiring, development, and review; curriculum development, review, and UG assessment; student recruiting, relations, and academic advising; programming and community engagement

Director, The Research Center for Local History and Culture, 2006-2010

- Expansion of History Internship program and Public and Applied History concentration
- Community outreach to new public history sites and the Wabash Valley community
- Student-faculty research on a wide range of local history topics; poster sessions for dissemination of scholarship

Selected Major Task Forces and Initiatives, 1999-present

- **University Strategic Plan**, Goal chair for Strategic Enrollment Management and Student Retention, 2021-present. This large goal encompasses all aspects of student enrollment and retention.
- **Campaign Cabinet** member, “Be So Bold” campaign for Indiana State. I serve on the campaign cabinet and am active with corporate and large-donor relations as part of our comprehensive capital campaign. The goal was \$100 million (surpassed in December, 2023) but the campaign continues until June, 2025. I have been active since its beginning, including the silent phase, goal setting, and cabinet strategy sessions; I also meet with the Foundation board at its regular meetings and yearly retreat, and attend the annual week-long series of events with alumni in Florida, among other philanthropy activities.
- **Co-PI** (took over for the previous Provost) for a **\$9.6 million grant focusing on improved student success**, particularly retention and graduation rates for historically

under-served populations, to be achieved through enhanced professional advising and curriculum pathways. The grant, from the Eli Lilly Foundation, began in 2021 and continues through 2026.

- **Provosts' Research Advisory Council**, Regional Colleges and Universities, EAB
- **New Provosts Advisory Council**, EAB
- **University Athletics** Task Force (co-chair). Working with an outside firm I helped lead a comprehensive review of Indiana State Athletics, focusing on student academic performance and budgets for individual athletic programs/sports. This project allowed deep, critical insight into the role of athletics in the university and student life, but also the need to balance costs with revenue for the overall health of the university.
- **Academic Advising** Task Force (co-chair). Helped lead a year-long study of the issues and opportunities for improving student success through improved faculty and professional advising; co-wrote the task force report.
- **Department Success** Task Force. We studied the elements of Department success, including students and faculty, and how to prioritize workload and responsibilities.
- **Strategic Plan**, Goal Two: Experiential Learning (co-chair). (This was the University's previous strategic plan.) We studied the university's EL activities and then established several of the university's signature programs for EL. These include the Center for Student Research and Creativity (and selection of its first Director) and the domestic and international travel study grant programs, which evolved into faculty-led study abroad. Since their inception these programs have supported undergraduate research and travel for hundreds of students.
- **University College** Task Force. I participated in the creation and definition of ISU's University College, including creation of bylaws and basic policy documents, defining relationships with other academic colleges, and foundational staffing.
- **Faculty Senate and Senate Executive** committee. I served for six years on the Faculty Senate and Executive Committee, reviewing curriculum, revising the University Handbook, and oversight of all other areas that fall within the faculty's primary authority. While on the Executive committee I also served on Graduate Council and Student Affairs Committee.
- **General Education** (Foundational Studies) Task Force. As a member of the FS Task Force I participated in a year-long discussion of the University-wide curriculum that forms the foundation of all programs at I.S.U. We successfully created the new program, wrote outcomes and skills objectives, and led its passage through the University governance system.
- **African American Cultural Center** Task Force. We reviewed the mission, goals, and operations of the university's most visible and significant cultural center, dating back to 1972. This work included expanded community and alumni relations.

OTHER SELECTED INSTITUTIONAL SERVICE:

at Indiana State University:

University, chaired or participated in Executive-level searches for several Deans, Executive Directors, the Associate Vice President for Inclusive Excellence, and the Vice President for Advancement and CEO of the ISU Foundation

	2017-2023
University, African American Cultural Center Director Search Committees	2009, 2016
University, goal co-chair for HLC review and re-accreditation	2017-2018
University, Theodore Dreiser Research and Creativity Award Committee	2014
University, Department Success Task Force	2013-2014
University, Strategic Plan, Goal Two (Experiential Learning) co-chair	2009-2012
University, University College Task Force	2012
University, Faculty Senate	2011-2015
University, Faculty Senate Executive Committee	2012-2014
University, Graduate Council liaison	2012-2014
University, Faculty Senate, Administrative Affairs Committee	2009-2011
University, General Education (Foundational Studies) Task Force	2008-2010
University, African American Cultural Center Task Force	2007-2009
University, Faculty Performance Review Task Force	2008-2009
University, Corrections Education Program Academic Advisory Committee	2009-2011
College of Arts & Sciences, Dean's Teaching Load Task Force	2011
College of Arts & Sciences, Interdisciplinary Programs Task Force	2007-2008
College of Arts & Sciences, Associate Deans Screening Committee, Chair	2007
University, Director of Honors Screening Committee, Chair	2006
University, Project PRE Planning Task Force for Elementary Education Curriculum	2004-2005
University, Friends of Cunningham Memorial Library, Board of Directors	2005-2007
University, Eugene V. Debs Fellowship Committee, Chair	2003-2017
College of Arts & Sciences, Council of Academic Advisors, Dept. Rep.	2003-2004
History Dept., Internship Coordinator	2005-2007
History Dept., about 25 faculty search committees	2000-2016
History Dept., undergraduate academic advisor	1999-2017
African and African American Studies, undergraduate academic advisor	2007-2017
College of Arts & Sciences, Faculty Council, Dept. Representative	2001-2003
University, Faculty & Employee Benefits Committee, Secretary	2001-2002
University, Special Program Grant, Dept. Representative: "Integrating Technology into Standards-Based Teaching"	2001-2003

at Virginia Wesleyan College:

History Dept., Internship Coordinator	1996-1999
College, Rhodes Scholarship Advisor and Coordinator	1998-1999
College, Representative, Virginia History Day	1996-1999

OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICE:

<i>Journal of the Early Republic</i> , Editorial Board	2012-2015
The College Board, Advanced Placement Exam, Development Committee, U. S. History	2005-2012
<i>Indiana Magazine of History</i> , Editorial Board	2008-2011
<i>Civil War Historian</i> , Editorial Board	2008-2011
Indiana Crossroads 200, Planning Committee	2008-2012

Ivy Tech Community College, Liberal Arts Advisory Committee	2009-2016
The College Board, Advanced Placement Exam, U. S. History Exam Reader	2003-2006
The College Board, Advanced Placement U. S. History Syllabus Review, Senior Reviewer	2007-2008
Terre Haute Landmarks, Board of Directors	2006-2007
Phi Alpha Theta, Faculty Advisor, Indiana State University	1999-2005
Hosted Indiana Regional Conference, April 20, 2002	
Friends of Ferry Farm, historic preservation project,	1997-1999
Member of the Board of Directors and Historical Advisor	

ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP

BOOKS and other SELECTED PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS:

- “The Politics of Honor and Masculinity,” in *Southern Identities: New Essays in the History of an American Region*, eds., Daniel Kilbride and Lisa Tendrich Frank, “Southern Dissent” series, eds. Randall Miller and Stanley Harrold (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2011).
- “White Families and Political Culture in the Old South,” in *Family Values in the Old South*, eds. Craig Thompson Friend and Anya Jabour (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2010).
- “Eliza Frances Andrews: ‘I Will Have to Say ‘Damn!’ Yet, Before I Am Done with Them’,” in *Georgia Women: Their Lives and Times*, Volume I, eds. Betty Wood and Ann Short Chirhart (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2009).
- Nominated for:
- A. Elizabeth Taylor Award (Southern Association for Women Historians)
- The American Civil War: A Hands-On History* (New York: Hill & Wang [Farrar, Strauss, & Giroux], 2006).
- Nominated for:
- The Lincoln Prize
- Political Culture and Secession in Mississippi: Honor, Masculinity, and the Antiparty Tradition, 1830-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- Nominated for:
- Frederick Jackson Turner Prize (Organization of American Historians)
 - Avery Craven Award (Organization of American Historians)
 - Ellis Hawley Prize (Organization of American Historians)
 - Frank L. and Harriet C. Owsley Award (Southern Historical Association)
 - Francis B. Simkins Award (Southern Historical Association)
 - Social Science History Prize (Social Science History Association)
 - Richard Aubrey McLemore Prize (Mississippi Historical Society)
 - Eugene D. Genovese Book Prize (The Historical Society)
- “Women and Party Politics in the Old South: Mississippi in the 1840s and 1850s,” *Journal of Women’s History*, 11:2 (Autumn 1999): 104-125.
- “‘Molly Pitcher’ of the Mississippi Whigs: The Editorial Career of Mrs. Harriet N. Prewett,” *The Journal of Mississippi History*, LVIII (Fall 1996), 237-254.

SELECTED OTHER PUBLICATIONS since 2005

- “Poor Whites, Democracy, and Disenfranchisement,” review essay for the *Civil War Book Review*, Summer, 2017
- “Secessionist Movement,” in *The Mississippi Encyclopedia*, Ted Ownby and Charles Reagan Wilson, eds., Ann J. Abadie, Odie Lindsey, and James G. Thomas, associate eds. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2017).
- “Sectionalism and Regionalism,” in *American Centuries: The Ideas, Issues, and Trends that Made U. S. History, Volume II: The 17th Century*, ed. John Demos (New York: MTM Publishing, Inc., 2011).
- “Paternalism,” in *The New Encyclopedia of Southern History, Volume 13: Gender*, eds. Ted Ownby and Nancy

Bercaw (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 201-205.
“Sectionalism,” in *The Encyclopedia of United States Political History, Vol. II*, ed. Michael Morrison (New York: MTM Publishing, 2010).
“Politics,” “Secession,” “Election of 1860,” and “Election of 1864,” in *Women in the Civil War*, ed. Lisa Tendrich Frank (New York: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2007), 54-60, 234-235, 236-237, 489-492.

RECENT CONFERENCE PAPERS and PANELS:

“Democracy and the Suffrage in the Antebellum United States: Voter Mobilization and Voter Turnout on Election Day,” Electocracy in America & the Atlantic World, Kinder Institute on Constitutional Democracy Spring 2024 Conference, Columbia, Missouri, March 15-16, 2024 (paper).
“Death, Crime, and Punishment in New York City during the Long Nineteenth Century,” British American Nineteenth-Century Historians Annual Conference, Oxford University, United Kingdom, September 22-24, 2023 (chair).
“Sectionalism, Abolitionism, and Elections in the Civil War Era,” The Society of Civil War Historians Biennial Conference, virtual, June 17-18, 2021 (comment).
“The New History: Revising General Education Strategically,” AAC&U, San Francisco, February 14-16, 2019 (poster session), with Christopher Fischer and Linda Maule.
“‘The Woman Reputed to be his Mother’: Race and Suffrage in Antebellum America,” British American Nineteenth-Century Historians Annual Conference, Cambridge University, United Kingdom, October 5-7, 2018 (paper).

Additional papers at the American Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians, Society for Historians of the Early American Republic, Social Science Historical Association, Southern Historical Association, and others.

Book reviews in the *Journal of American History*, the *American Historical Review*, the *Journal of Southern History*, the *Journal of the Early Republic*, the *Journal of Social History*, *American Nineteenth-Century History*, the *Journal of Military History*, *Civil War History*, and others.

HONORARY and PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

British American Nineteenth Century Historians
Southern Historical Association
Society for Historians of the Early American Republic
Phi Beta Kappa
Phi Alpha Theta
AAUP

SELECTED FACULTY GRANTS, AWARDS, and FELLOWSHIPS:

University Research and Writing Grant, Indiana State University	2016-2017
Experiential Learning & Community Engagement Grant, Indiana State University Underground Railroad Museum and Freedom Center	2015
Experiential Learning & Community Engagement Grant, Indiana State University Organization of American Historians Annual Conference	2015
Experiential Learning & Community Engagement Grant, Indiana State University Dick Gregory and Civil Rights	2014
Center for Global Engagement, Indiana State University Faculty International Travel Grant	2013
American Library Association Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War (traveling exhibit, host institution)	2013
Experiential Learning & Community Engagement Grant, Indiana State University Thavolia Glymph, Women and the U. S. Civil War & Reconstruction	2013
Experiential Learning & Community Engagement Grant, Indiana State University Carl Wilkens and Genocide in Rwanda	2012
Experiential Learning & Community Engagement Grant, Indiana State University Bernard Woma, African Drumming and Dance Workshop	2012
National Library of Medicine Binding Wounds, Pushing Boundaries: African Americans in Civil War Medicine (traveling exhibit, host institution)	2012
Experiential Learning & Community Engagement Grant, Indiana State University African American History at I. S. U.	2012
Liberal Learning in Action Grant, Indiana State University and the Lilly Foundation Slavery in American History and the World Today	2009
Alliance for Excellence through Engagement & Experiential Learning Grant Indiana State University and the Lilly Foundation Civil War and Reconstruction in Indiana	2008
Program of Promise Grant, Indiana State University and the Lilly Foundation The Research Center for Local History and Culture	2006-2010
Focus Indiana Grant, Community-Based Learning Initiative Internships in Public History	2005-2008
Community Engagement Teaching Grants (various) Indiana State University	2005-2016
International Travel Grants (several) Indiana State University	2013-2016
Alliance for Excellence through Engagement & Experiential Learning Grant Indiana State University and the Lilly Foundation, Internships in Public History and Oral Histories of the Wabash Valley	2005-2006
Liberal Learning in Action Grant, Indiana State University Preserving the Past, Engaging the Present: Oral Histories of the Wabash Valley	2004-2005
Experiential Learning Planning Grant, Indiana State University and the Lilly Foundation Developing Internships for History Majors	2004
University Research Grant, University Research Council, Indiana State University Antebellum Political Culture	2001-2003