The story of Indiana State University is one of growth in response to increased and changing societal needs. It is also a story that is built on a sense of partnership with the local community and the state of Indiana. The institution was founded in 1865 as the Indiana State Normal School. The city of Terre Haute offered $50,000 and land valued at $25,000 to be the site of the new Normal School. When classes began on January 6, 1870, 21 students were enrolled and faculty numbered five. When fire destroyed the Normal School on April 9, 1888, Terre Haute again offered its support, appropriating $50,000 for rebuilding. In the interim, classes were held in local churches and schools.

As the Normal School developed, it began offering collegiate level course work, including a master's degree program. In recognition of this growth, the Indiana General Assembly changed the name of the School to Indiana State Teachers College in 1929.

Following World War II and into the 1950s, enrollment increased and the undergraduate and graduate curricula increased tremendously as hundreds of courses were added. Doctoral programs were added in the 1960s. Emblematic of the school's growing stature it became Indiana State College in 1961. On February 8, 1965, the institution achieved university status and became Indiana State University with the signing of a bill by Indiana's governor. At that time, the University included a School of Education, School of Nursing, School of Graduate Studies and the College of Arts and Sciences. By 1967, the School of Technology and the School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (now the School of Health and Human Performance) were added.

Today, Indiana State University is a comprehensive, residential institution offering instruction at the associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels. ISU has 650 faculty, 11,000 students, and 70,000 living alumni. Along with the more than 125 majors it offers, the University seeks to extend knowledge through research, creative and scholarly activities, and public service, which is primarily manifested through the formation of partnerships with other educational institutions, government agencies, business and industry, and individuals.

The University is located in Terre Haute, a city of 60,000. Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati, and Louisville are within a three-hour drive, and Indianapolis is only an hour and a half away. The city offers a variety of shopping areas, restaurants, and parks. Among Terre Haute's cultural attractions are the Terre Haute Symphony Orchestra, Community Theatre, the Sheldon Swope Art Museum, the Eugene V. Debs Museum, and the Vigo County Historical Society Museum.

Facts about ISU

- Small classes: Research shows that 85 percent of classes at ISU have 35 or fewer students.
- Faculty committed to teaching: At ISU, 81 percent of classes are taught by full-time faculty.
- More than 125 majors.
- Compact campus: Getting from one point to another on campus takes no more than an eight-minute walk.
- Library services: With over 800,000 books and more than 4,000 subscriptions to magazines and journals.