Convocations are an integral part of the General Education program and are tied to the mission and vision of the college. The Convocation Committee works with the Illinois College community to create proposals for convocations on a wide range of topics from many different perspectives. Decisions on convocation speakers are guided by the college’s goals. We want to prepare students for lives of leadership and service. The Convocation Program helps Illinois College to build an academic environment marked by concern for the intellectual, moral, creative, and spiritual development of our students.

A primary goal of the Convocation Program is to bring the full range of arguments on significant public issues to our campus as an educational experience for our students, faculty staff, and community. Individual faculty and staff members, departments, and student organizations all contribute ideas and resources to create each year’s combined schedule of events. Each semester, the college generally offers about twenty-to-twenty-five convocations. These presentations often are the result of efforts to bring special, non-local organizations or speakers to campus to present programs or persons that students might not otherwise have the opportunity to experience, but not to the exclusion of quality programs or presentations from the local IC community.

The Committee strives to select high-quality performers and presenters, promoting the same principles that Cicero, the Roman leader and orator, established so long ago in On the Orator.

“[B]y speaking badly men very easily succeed in becoming bad speakers . . . if an extempore and casual speech is easily beaten by one prepared and thought out, this latter in turn will assuredly be surpassed by what has been written with care and diligence” (I.33)

“What at last must our Oratory be conducted out of this sheltered training-ground at home, right into action, into dust and uproar, into the camp and the fighting-line of public debate; she must face putting everything to the proof and test the strength of her talent, and her secluded preparation must be brought forth into the daylight of reality” (I.34).

The Convocation Program includes artistic performances (concerts, plays, and others), which are opportunities for students and community members to witness how learned, practiced skill can trigger an emotional response from or a sense of awe and wonder within an audience.