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**Excellence in Physics Education Award Talk: Initiating and Sustaining Reform in Introductory  
Physics Instruction: The Illinois Experience**  
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Almost fifteen years ago the Department of Physics at the University of Illinois embarked on a program to systematically reform all of its introductory courses. I will describe the evolution of this program to the present day. In particular, I will discuss how this reform was initiated and how we have been able to sustain this change over the years, leading to the developments that will be discussed in the next two talks. I will first discuss how and why the decision was made to undertake this program. Both external and internal forces were at play. I will then describe the initial implementation which was guided by the then current physics education research. We made changes to all of the course components; we introduced just in time teaching and peer instruction into the lectures, collaborative group learning into the discussion sections and predict-observe-explain activities into the labs. I will then discuss the more difficult problem of sustaining these reforms. I believe there were two keys to our success. First, an infrastructure was created that supported the participation of the majority of our faculty in the teaching of these courses. Second, we established our own physics education research group which has become the source of continued developments in our instruction.