Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for agreeing to serve on a committee to review the Illinois Informatics Initiative (I3). I3 was established in 2007 as a campus-wide program under the Provost's Office. It was founded as a response to a goal in the 2006 Campus Strategic Plan calling for leveraging our research strengths in IT and integrating IT across the curriculum. I3 was also tasked with developing more opportunities for students to achieve IT literacy and fluency, enhancing problem-solving capabilities with technology in various areas and disciplines, thinking critically about technology and its role in society, and promoting more participation in computing among women and minorities.

To accomplish these goals, the following curricular objectives for I3 were established in 2007:

- Launch and manage an undergraduate Informatics Minor;
- Promote, develop, and support campus undergraduate and graduate courses and programs that have strong informatics components; and
- Develop new and coordinate existing informatics graduate programs.

I3 has put in place an Informatics Minor and an Informatics Ph.D. It has also had success in securing external funding.

The intent of this review is to assess the impact of I3 and the quality of its programs and to evaluate its role within the current informatics and data science landscape on campus. We specifically ask you to address the following questions:

1. Has I3 successfully fulfilled its original mission to integrate informatics across the curriculum?
2. How does I3 dovetail with other data science and informatics initiatives on our campus? Is it fulfilling vital roles that other units cannot fulfill or do not have capacity to fulfill?
3. If I3 continues as a distinct initiative, should it remain under the Provost’s Office or it should be relocated to an academic unit? If the latter, which unit, college, school, or department would be most appropriate?

4. Should I3 continue as a distinct initiative or should its programming be absorbed by other units?

5. If I3 is to continue, at what level should it be supported financially and for what specific goals?

In conducting your review, we ask that your committee develop a process that engages relevant stakeholders on campus. To produce well-informed answers to the above questions, it will be important to gather objective insights on the mission of I3, its performance since its inception, and trends and developments in the informatics and data science fields inside and outside our campus.

Dean Jan Slater has graciously agreed to serve as chair of your committee. Staffing for your committee’s work will be provided by Staci Provezis from the Provost’s Office. Please complete your review by March 18, 2016.

We are deeply grateful that you are lending your time and expertise to this task. I look forward to your report and recommendations.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Edward Feser
Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost

c: Staci Provezis, Assistant Provost