

**OFFICE OF THE PROVOST
AND VICE CHANCELLOR FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

COUNCIL OF DEANS RETREAT SUMMARY

Re-Envisioning Our Institution

June 8- 10, 2008



I L L I N O I S
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

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I. Preface

The Council of Deans (CoD) for the Urbana Champaign Campus has played a key role in the development and execution of the Campus' strategic plan. Since the initial development of the plan, the CoD, as a team, coordinates efforts and assesses the results of our decisions and strategies to ensure successful implementation and make appropriate adjustments. Since 2006, the CoD has engaged in annual retreats that take place in the early part of the summer with a semiannual review six months after each retreat. The CoD annual retreats have focused on various aspects of the plan with emphasis on the goals and strategies needed to advance the plan's objectives.

Since inception of the strategic plan in Spring 2006, we have had three annual retreats. The first two retreats took place in the summers of 2006 and 2007 and focused on refining the objectives of the plan and ensuring that our goals were ambitious but realistic and consistent with the efforts of the individual colleges and units. The efforts of the CoD during the first two years of the plan provided a substantive foundation on which to build future initiatives that have the potential to move our campus forward with success and a sense of optimism for our future. Specifically, the 2006 summer retreat and the subsequent academic year focused on building the team to lead the campus towards the directions specified by the strategic plan. The 2007 summer retreat outlined a year-long effort to understand the financial challenges of our campus and create shared awareness of the opportunities that exist looking forward, which, if addressed, will transform our institution and create a unique identity and a vibrant national and international presence.

Our work during the past two years has revealed that transformation within the institution is imperative for advancement. The socio-economic changes of the past 20 years and the global collaboration and competition for improving quality of life are changing the way the public thinks about higher education. The two most recent conferences on the *Higher Education Summit*¹ and the *Summit on Developing a Regional View of the Midwest Economy: Breaking down Barriers that Impede Regional Progress*² have summarized the challenges facing higher education in the state of Illinois, in the Midwest and in US. These two recent conferences made it clear that issues of higher education are not temporary but signify broader national and global trends.

Our retreat this year was influenced by our campus-wide challenges and also by the national trends described above. As we do annually, we identified a theme to focus our discussions and, ultimately, to create a list of actions for next year that help us respond to our challenges in a way that gives us a leading edge over our peers. As a result we selected *Re-envisioning the Institution* as the theme of the 2008 CoD retreat.

We have come to believe that reacting to the present financial and intellectual challenges will not help our campus achieve its goals. The *typical methods* of addressing such

¹ Higher Education Summit, Organized by IGPA, Chicago, IL, June 22 2008

² Summit on Developing a Regional View of the Midwest Economy, CIC and the Federal Reserve Bank, Minneapolis, MN, June 27, 2008

challenges lead to loss of quality and deceleration in progress toward critical goals and objectives. Most efforts to protect and defend lead to compromise and are not appropriate for an institution that wants to achieve beyond traditional boundaries. We recognize that we need new methods to help us

- re-invigorate ourselves, rather than withdrawing,
- redefine our identity instead of trying to protect what the past has created for us and,
- move ahead aggressively in place of retrenching until better times are restored.

During the two-day retreat, the CoD members shared individual concept papers to generate discussion and identify priorities for the 2008- 2009 academic year. The specific goals of the retreat were to:

- Understand the institutional context for the 2008- 2009 academic year
- Create specific model(s) for re-envisioning the institution
- Refine priorities for 2008- 2009 academic year and
- Develop *new methods* for moving forward aggressively on priorities for 2008- 2009

This report contains a summary of the discussions related to each of the concept papers and the specific action steps to be implemented in 2008- 2009.

The Council of Deans

July 2008

II. CoD Membership-Meeting Attendees

Name	Campus Unit
Ilesanmi Adesida	Dean, College of Engineering
Mike Andrechak	Associate Provost, Budget and Resource Planning
Ralph Brubaker	Dean, College of Law
William Brustein	Associate Provost, International Studies and Programs
Larry DeBrock	Interim Dean, College of Business
Bob Easter	Dean, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences
Tom Emmanuel	Director, Institute of Aviation
Tanya Gallagher	Dean, College of Applied Health Sciences
Gennifer Gilbert	Staff, Office of the Provost
Ron Gill	RTG
Bob Graves	Dean, College of Fine and Applied Arts
Sally Jackson	Chief Information Officer and Associate Provost
Mary Kalantzis	Dean, College of Education
Linda Katehi	Provost
Paula Kaufman	University Librarian and Dean of Libraries
Wynne Korr	Dean, School of Social Work
Jason Kosovski	Staff, Office of the Provost
Stig Lanesskog	Assistant Provost for Strategic Planning and Assessment
Sarah Mangelsdorf	Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Feniosky Pena-Mora	Associate Provost for Institutional Programs
Brad Schwartz	Dean, College of Medicine
Matthew Tomaszewski	Assistant Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Science
John Unsworth	Dean, Graduate School of Library and Information Science
Ruth Watkins	Vice Provost
Herb Whiteley	Dean, College of Veterinary Medicine
Pierre Wiltzius	Director, Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology
Ron Yates	Dean, College of Media

III. Executive Summary

1. Context for Re-envisioning the University

In the past 20 years, the research public university is losing ground in private and public opinion. Affordability, access and accountability have been key issues facing public higher education in the United States. While states have steadily reduced financial support to institutions of higher education, the expectations for public institutions have increased, with a growing pressure to provide education that is comparable to private institutions in terms of personal attention to students, quality of the teaching and learning environments and state of the art research facilities.

Public concerns about the ability to access low-cost, high-quality education have intensified in response to recent trends of economic downturn and the outsourcing of US manufacturing. At the same time, we have seen an increased intensity in the national dialogue about American competitiveness and the US workforce's ability to adjust to global economic pressures and technology shifts. The question of accountability has received so much attention in recent years that it has been transformed into a national movement. Most recently, a national committee appointed by Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings emphasized the importance of measuring educational impact, demanded that public institutions accept and meet their responsibility to provide quality education, and called for standards of accountability across institutions of higher education .

Looming on the near horizon, however, is a new national debate concerning the growing financial gap between US public and private institutions of higher education. This debate focuses on the perceived or real impact of this gap on the ability of public institutions to educate the citizenry. What intensifies the national dialogue is the fact that public and private institutions compete in the same arena to recruit talent and to set national standards and norms. At the same time, these institutions conform to entirely different budgetary models, financial constraints, and models of accountability, rendering the competition imbalanced. Complicating this dialogue even more is the fact that public and private academic enterprises enact the dialectic relationship between collective action and private goals in any society and most importantly in the American context. As a result, the widening gap between private and public universities points to the struggle within our society to reconcile our values as a citizenry and our commitment to our social contract with our goals to increase personal wealth and promote private interests.

In the past few years, public higher education has been under attack to an extent unprecedented in American history, both from the states that view higher education as a secondary level concern, and as a consumer of valuable and limited resources, and by the public that sees access of quality higher education as a right for the average citizen and not as a privilege to a few wealthy social groups. The growing gap in resources might be seen as the result of a remarkable wealth accumulated in many private institutions at a time when the publics face serious financial challenges. In reality, however, this rift is the

symptom of a deeper crisis facing the nation. The widening gap between the funding base of private and public universities belongs to a dense constellation of political, economic, social, and educational concerns basic to American society.

Decreasing state support and increasing public misunderstanding of the mission, goals and purpose of the Research Public University present a problem of national importance. This problem is too large—and too important—to be solved by adhering to old models and solutions. Such an adherence to old paradigms will accelerate the decline in quality and reduced ability to meet our mission.

2. Addressing the Challenge: the old approach

With reduced state funds and the public scrutiny of tuition increases, public research universities must confront their financial challenges in new ways. Typically, during times of financial distress, public institutions retrench and become more conservative, protecting the status-quo and discouraging risk-taking and entrepreneurialism, ultimately disempowering employees to enact meaningful change that will benefit the institution.

3. Addressing the Challenge: taking control

Public research universities must instead take control of their future. They must take action, support excellence and question mediocrity. These institutions must increase flexibility and, where necessary, reconsider their structure and self-imposed constraints. Employees must be empowered and rewarded to make meaningful change, by enacting new approaches, removing barriers, and focusing on increasing customer service.

4. Key Areas of Focus for the University of Illinois in AY 2008- 2009

During this retreat, the Council of Deans considered thirty concept papers, which have the potential to revitalize our campus, and assessed the potential of each proposed concept to significantly impact the institution. The papers were grouped into four major categories:

- A. Efficiency and Process Improvement
- B. Improving Academic Quality
- C. Sustaining Excellence in Human Capital
- D. Research and Infrastructure Improvement

A brief description of the papers in each thematic area is given below. A summary of each paper is provided at the end of the report.

A. Efficiency and Process Improvement

The discussions in this area focused on the financial strength of our campus and on methods and approaches to achieve efficiency and a strong financial base. The concept papers which were approved under this category provided guidance for the following agreed-upon actions:

- The Campus will be more rigorous and proactive in identifying departmental deficits while the Colleges will accept responsibility for these deficits and will take immediate actions to correct them
- The Campus and Colleges will institute *Shared Data Centers* in cases where cost and service benefits are clear
- The Campus will explore the integration of student services (i.e., the coordination of admissions, new student registration and enrollment management) in order to improve service to the students and increase efficiency
- The Campus and Colleges will rely on the use of small teams (4-6 people) with short timelines (4- 8 weeks) for implementing process improvement initiatives in place of bigger and less effective committees

B. Improving Academic Quality

The ideas proposed and discussed under this category focused on improving academic quality both by focusing on hiring talented faculty and by improving the quality of student programs. The discussions led to the following agreed-upon actions:

- We will initiate the development and use of a streamlined and metric-driven program review process for thematically clustered units: this program will be piloted in AY 2008- 2009
- We will achieve greater curriculum coordination across colleges and units to assist with the inter-college transfer process and overall course availability
- We will provide discretionary funds for the professional development activities of faculty. These funds will be generated by setting aside a portion of the funding for faculty positions
- We will use student mentors and blending learning models in General Education classes: the first efforts will be piloted in AY 2008- 2009
- We will develop a certificate program in *Entrepreneurship and Management* in response to perceived gaps in the preparation of students, especially in the hard sciences, in the areas of professional responsibility and business skills: this program will be piloted in AY 2008- 2009

C. Sustaining Excellence in Human Capital

In this area, the goals for this year are to understand the optimal size of the campus and develop a plan and processes that will help us achieve it. Furthermore, we discussed extensively the need to provide leadership training to middle level administrators and appropriate training opportunities for the employees:

- The Faculty Excellence program will be reviewed to assess impact. The outcomes of this review will be used to make improvements in this program. A new process for selection will be implemented to include the use of selection panels as per NSF review process models
- The campus will analyze historical hiring patterns of all employee groups and through surveys and internal and external benchmarking will determine the appropriate size and staff demographics of each college/unit. The results of this review will be used to guide future staff hiring decisions
- The campus will develop a tool to help the formation of the various intellectual communities and improve collaboration and communication between them (Informatics, Biomedical Sciences, E-Learning, etc.)
- The campus and each college/unit will document and communicate unique contributions, programs and efforts to enable consistent branding and continue to improve the perception of the university

D. Research and Infrastructure Improvement

In this area we made the following decisions:

- The campus will use an external consultant to identify the best practices for space usage and each college/unit will develop appropriate policies to manage their space allocation practices
- An increased level of coordination between F&S (Facilities and Services) and college/unit level activities regarding sustainability will be achieved through a higher level of dialogue on this topic. This dialogue will be initiated this year through the development of a detailed plan
- The campus will develop a plan for an increased presence in Chicago and will identify a number of options
- The Library will create a digitization strategy for dissertations and signature collection items
- The campus will develop an e-science strategy

- The campus will initiate a dialogue to identify intellectual directions we would like to pursue in the next 20- 30 years. This will be combined with a similar activity to be developed by the Beckman Institute
- The Library will digitize Illinois' dissertations and theses and provide controlled access through a unique arrangement with an outside vendor