Office of the Provost
And Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Campus Conversation on Undergraduate Education

First-Round Report
February 14, 2014
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I. BACKGROUND AND GOALS

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has good reason to be proud of the education our campus affords its undergraduates, and to be optimistic about prospects for future improvements. Our Visioning Future Excellence process called for “continued excellence in our educational enterprise,” and the current campus strategic plan makes “provid[ing] transformative learning experiences” one of its four main goals. Our campus commitment to undergraduate students and their education is clear.

At the same time, however, there is broad national concern about the value of higher education. In the United States, the cost of a four-year degree has risen steadily while state and federal support has declined, leading students and their families to take on mounting levels of debt. Some in our society have begun to question the value of higher education. While students and parents seek assurance of an economic return on their investment, businesses want a competitive workforce, and federal and state governments call for accurate assessment of student learning.

College educators are also exploring what higher education does well and what can be improved. As the authors of a recent study remark, “there is widespread agreement” that “critical thinking and complex reasoning” are “the foundation for effective democratic citizenship and economic productivity.”

What kind of undergraduate experience will cultivate our students’ capacities for critical thinking and complex reasoning? How can Illinois, a public institution with a land-grant mission and global reputation, help its students develop into leaders who can address the many challenges of the future? What does our campus understand the value of an Illinois education to be and how do we articulate that value to the public?

These questions provided the motivation for the Campus Conversation on Undergraduate Education, organized by the Office of the Provost. This report describes the first round of conversations, held in Fall 2013.

The goal of these first-round Conversations was to engage a representative group of campus stakeholders in substantive, open-ended discussion about undergraduate education and goals for the Illinois undergraduate experience. We set out to consider what it means to be an educated person at this moment in history, and how the University of Illinois—a public research institution with a land-grant mission and an international reputation for excellence—should prepare students to live and lead in the twenty-first century.

In this opening round, the Campus Conversations did not ask discussants for specific proposals about how to educate our students but, rather, what the ends of a residential education for Illinois undergraduates should be. The answers, individually and as a whole, identified a powerful vision of undergraduate education which is broadly held by faculty, staff, and students. The Conversations also provided a sense of how different parts of the campus and different dimensions of the student experience might contribute to the learning and development of every Illinois student.

In what follows we detail the process we laid out, outline the Conversations that took place, and describe what we learned through a series of composites and synthetic analyses. The concluding section outlines a plan for the next steps of this important endeavor.
II. FALL 2013 CAMPUS CONVERSATION PROCESS

During the Fall 2013 semester, 590 individuals participated in the Campus Conversations (264 faculty members, 133 academic professionals, 62 civil service staff, 67 graduate students, and 96 undergraduate students). Fifty different lists were used to generate more than a thousand invitations across these categories (see Appendix A for details). Participants were invited with a personal e-mail and special effort was made to include people from many different parts of campus. The Council of Deans, the Illinois Leadership Coordinating Committee, and the Council of Undergraduate Deans held conversations within their groups; in addition, the Humanities Council was consulted on an early draft of this report.

Twelve different sessions were held (see Appendix B), with each 90-minute session typically drawing 30 to 50 participants. The Provost attended most of the sessions, welcoming the group and describing the importance of the process to the campus. Participants then worked with others at their table to answer two core questions.

The discussion at each table was guided by one of the 60 members of the campus community who helped as facilitators and recorders (see Appendix C). Appendix D contains samples of the instructions to facilitators and the template distributed to recorders for their notes. The poster boards, sticky notes, and recorder notes from all tables were collected and provided the main basis for the summary and synthesis that follows.

A first sketch of the synthesis was discussed with the team of facilitators at the end of the fall semester. Then a small group of volunteers produced a draft of this report. That draft was again reviewed by the facilitation team in January 2014 and their suggestions were incorporated to produce this report.

III. WHAT DID WE LEARN?

A. Vision of the Illinois Student

The first question for discussants centered on the Illinois student. It asked:

*What should every Illinois graduate know, be able to do, and hold as principles, goals, or attitudes?*

A thorough review of the responses provided on recorder notes and poster boards produced the following composite reply, which distills hundreds of individual answers into a single comprehensive vision. (Note that the ordering of individual points in this composite does not intend to reflect or propose priorities).

*After four years at Illinois, a student should achieve*

1. core competence in a broad matrix of skills and knowledges including writing; math, science and technology; literature, art and the humanities; visual, aesthetic and digital literacy; familiarity with at least one foreign language; history; civics; geography; economic and financial literacy,
2. deep and interdisciplinary learning in a selected major or field,
3. strong critical thinking skills and readiness to innovate, create, and think outside the box,
4. commitment to lifelong learning and to one’s own emotional, physical, and intellectual health, integrity and well-being (“know who you are”),
5. ability to secure meaningful and gainful employment and achieve professional and/or entrepreneurial success,
6. ability to lead as well as collaborate and work as a member of a team,
7. strong ethical orientation including respect for difference, appreciation of cultural diversity, historical consciousness, responsibility for self and care for others,
8. responsible citizenship at local, state, national, and global scales,
9. understanding of major social and global issues including inequality and environmental sustainability,
10. ability to begin one’s professional life unburdened by crushing levels of debt,
11. an openness to beauty and wonder,
12. an enduring connection to the University of Illinois as an alum who helps his or her alma mater to thrive to the extent of his or her abilities.

This composite offers an aspirational picture of the ideal Illinois graduate, a vision that is all the more compelling for having emerged from campus-wide discussion.

In addition to this list of attributes, the Campus Conversations also conveyed a strong impression of the dynamism involved in student learning. Using the notes and posters from the fall conversations, we designed a template for Question 1 (see Figure 1) to capture this sense of education as a process. As the template shows, rather than a static acquisition of any specific

![Figure 1. Template for Question 1.](image-url)
knowledge set, *transformative learning experiences* occur through the interaction of a holistic set of *foundations* and particular *actions and practices*. Although a four-year undergraduate education should catalyze this transformative relation between strong foundations and ideal actions/practices, in the best scenario the effect continues and creates the basis for lifelong learning.

The key *foundations* for learning fall into the three categories depicted on the left side of Figure 1:

- **a)** *skills/knowledge* (including core competencies and specialized learning);
- **b)** *material conditions* (including the necessary health and economic support to be able to make the most of one’s education); and
- **c)** *ethical, intellectual, and aesthetic orientations* (for example, critical awareness, respect for difference, and commitment to citizenship).

The key *actions and practices* for learning fell into the three categories depicted on the right of Figure 1. These are:

- **a)** *civic* (for example, participation in one’s community and democracy);
- **b)** *practical/professional* (including effective leadership and the ability to work as part of a team) and
- **c)** *creative/productive* (the creation of new ideas, objects, designs, or strategies).

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**Figure 2.** Results of a faculty conversation that took place on November 5, 2013.
Figure 2 uses the template to illustrate the actual results of a single conversation among faculty. Like many other discussants, this group included strong listening and communication among the skills and knowledges that undergraduate education should cultivate. Although this group did not mention any particular aesthetic orientation, one imagines that the specified ability to “Seek the core of humanity in all experiences” entails an understanding of the arts. Likewise, while this group was one of several that did not touch directly on the category of “Material Conditions,” one imagines that the recommended awareness of the “global human condition” includes recognizing the importance of physical health and economic security.

The group recommended practical and professional activities such as “effective leadership” and “good team-building”; but it also singled out creative problem-solving and “giving back” as part of an exemplary learning outcome. In a recommendation that seemed to transcend all of these categories, the group offered “Seeks to lead a meaningful life” as the signature of a successful undergraduate education. (As with other memorable catchphrases, this sentence was placed on the bottom right quadrant of the template.)

If one key insight drawn out by the template was the dynamism of the campus’s vision of education, another was the strong commonality within and across different constituencies.
Figure 3 captures the results for a mixed group of students, faculty, and staff. Unlike the faculty-only group in Figure 2, this group specified the importance of being “unburdened by student debt,” while saying less about professional activities. But the overall picture is still quite comparable. On the left-hand side the group called for a balance of broad and specialized knowledge and a wide variety of skills and literacies in conjunction with strong ethical and intellectual orientations. These foundations work to support a “citizen of the world” who “applies broad/critical thinking to a changing world” while “generating new ideas.”

The vision of undergraduates themselves was similar to that of other groups, as Figure 4 demonstrates. Although the subject of student debt did not come up for this group, the importance of employability did. The students resembled other discussants in envisioning a range of skills, literacies, and orientations as key foundations for a person who “initiates change/impact” and “helps others” in addition to being gainfully employed. As one student wrote, in a catchphrase that speaks to the aspirational qualities envisioned by so many participants, “Not everyone necessarily does these things, but if they do, then their time won’t be wasted and they [will] have the potential to achieve anything.”

The conversations of groups composed only of graduate students, civil service staff, or academic professional staff called forth these same themes. Appendices E, F, and G show examples of such conversations, and how they map onto this template.

Figure 4. Results of an undergraduate conversation that took place on November 20, 2013.
B. Vision of the Illinois Experience

The second question for discussants centered on the Illinois experience. It asked:

_Ten years from now, what should be distinctive and valuable about the experience of Illinois undergraduates?_

The distinctly futural and campus-oriented focus of Question 2 meant that discussants worked at a level of specificity which does not lend itself to compact distillation. Thus, to do justice to the range of responses it was necessary to construct a more elaborate composite reply. The composite, shown in Table 1, breaks down into four major categories (with instances of significant overlap between categories noted in parentheses). Once again, in organizing this list of categories there was no intention to reflect or propose any priorities.

**Table 1. Composite response to Question 2**

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1) WORLD-CLASS RESOURCES AND REPUTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Faculty researchers are world leaders in their fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• First-rate campus leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A campus known not only for outstanding research and strong majors but also for powerful and transformative core curricula (including meaningful and well-articulated “gen ed” programs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A holistic as well as diverse liberal education integrated into specific studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Resources distributed widely (“not so STEM-focused”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Smallest class sizes in the Big Ten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teaching by tenure-stream faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong and diverse student population; selectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parity in graduation rates across ethnicity, gender, income and nationality; 90% graduation rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High national rankings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High value consistently placed on education and academic excellence and rigor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Value of degree/education translates into high economic value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Stanford of the Midwest”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Liberal arts college within a Research 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Land grant institution with strong civic commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Residential campus with fully-integrated array of high-quality online learning resources and options (see also below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Access to high-quality research resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• State-of-the-art facilities/classrooms and collaborative learning spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Excellent library (best in the world)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cutting-edge in sustainable as well as technologically high-end dorms, food services, classrooms, labs, library, social space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sustainable transportation including better bike lanes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Beautiful campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• World-class health and mental care services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Better airport and/or better transportation to and from Chicago O’Hare</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```
2) **INTERACTIVE, INTERDISCIPLINARY, AND EXPERIENTIAL CURRICULA AND LEARNING**

(Note: this category is divided into two sub-groups: responses that *do not* and those that *do* involve the global and international dimensions of campus life and learning)

- Interdisciplinary: achieving mastery without conducing toward over-specialized narrowness
- Team-oriented learning
- Learning with impact on the student inside and outside classrooms
- Undergraduate teaching is a priority w/ more teaching incentives for professors and grad students
- Strong connection to faculty and to faculty research
- Support for student experiment and creativity ("safe place to fail and rebound")
- Curricula that adapt to particular needs of diverse and multi-faceted student body (empowering learner-focused versus content-focused education)
- Independent plans of study for intersectional knowledge/more flexibility about when and what to take
- Dorms as learning communities
- More programs like IEFX (first-year learning experience in Engineering)
- "Seamless" and integrated use of technology
- Innovations in face-to-face and online instruction
- Less reliance on multiple choice exams
- Unconventional and creative curricula
- Multidisciplinary gen ed curriculum
- IU system (and any other barriers) modified to encourage more collaborative and interdisciplinary curricula and pedagogy
- Team-teaching/LAS blockbuster model
- Distance and community learning (for grads, professors, staff, retirees and alumni as well as students) (see also below)
- Focus on leadership and/or entrepreneurship and/or vision
- Pre-professional experiences/internships for every student
- Corporate partnerships
- Socially engaged/community learning/service learning
- "Think of student experience collectively, not as competing for resources"
- LGBT friendly campus
- Explore a 3-semester academic year
- Continuing opportunities after graduation/"network of learners (students past/present/future)"

- Global experiences (study abroad opportunities but also intellectual explorations beyond usual "comfort zones"; "deep and meaningful experiences beyond the Chicago suburbs and superficial knowledge of other people and cultures"; friendships between US and international students)
- Concerted programs to integrate a diverse, global student body
- "no boundaries" campus with connection to national and international forms of engagement
### 3) RELATIONSHIPS, COMMUNITIES, AND NETWORKS

- Strong connections to faculty, world-class researchers, staff and grad students as well as peer and alumni networks, resources, and relationships
- Access to high-quality advice and mentorship at all stages of the education
- Strong communication between different communities on campus (“north/south divide erased”)
- Strong campus community that feels safe and “home”-like (“make a big school small”)
- Improved “town/gown” relationship
- Distance and community learning (for grads, professors, staff, retirees and alumni as well as students)
- Participation in campus clubs and registered student organizations (see also below)

### 4) STUDENT LIFE/WORLDS

- Affordable tuition/broad access
- Scholarships, fellowships and other forms of educational funding available to an economically diverse student body (including for international study)
- Teaching beyond the top 2% of earners
- More support for transfer students and those likely to drop out
- Pride in community that is not (or is less) oriented around sports
- Artist in residence program at Allen Hall
- Vibrant Greek life
- Preparation for “real world” interviewing, resume-design and other professional skills as well as long-range career planning, jobshadowing
- Opportunities for community service
- Access to advice on diet, exercise, physical therapy et al.

Like the composite reply to Question 1, the above list offers an aspirational vision for the campus experience, albeit one that oscillates between the general and the specific and between greater and lesser relevance to undergraduate education. Thus, in response to feedback we received from our facilitators, we produced a template that consolidates and schematizes the responses to Question 2 (see Figure 5). The template organizes campus experience into four inter-related quadrants, two of which center on the interpersonal dimensions of undergraduate experience and two of which center on the infrastructural dimensions. Figure 5 also aims to capture the dynamism of the education process by placing the student’s transformative learning (and the relay between foundations and actions/practices) at the center of the frame.

As Figure 5 suggests, the campus vision of the Illinois undergraduate experience in the years ahead places students’ transformational learning at the center of a rich field of infrastructural and interpersonal resources, unified by the University of Illinois’ core mission as a world-class university with a land-grant mission and global impact.
The four quadrants of Figure 5 (beginning top-left and moving counter-clockwise) propose that, as an institution of higher learning, the campus will excel in providing four-year undergraduate degree programs that offer

a) **Interactive, Interdisciplinary, and Experiential Curricula** including innovative and transformative face-to-face learning enhanced by the most effective online options and alternatives; and interdisciplinary curricula that cross disciplines, programs, and campus units while facilitating student choice and experience;

b) **World-Class Infrastructural Resources** including internationally renowned and accessible faculty; first-rate instructional, advising, student affairs, and support staff; as well as cutting-edge classrooms, labs, libraries, technology, and health and wellness services;

c) **Student Life/Worlds** including a motivated, diverse, and well-supported student body able to undertake transformative learning experiences, pursue professional goals, and build life-long relationships inside and outside of classrooms, labs, residences, clubs, study abroad and other world-enlarging and life-enriching programs and resources; and

d) **Relationships, Communities, and Networks** including with faculty and other instructors, advising and other staff members, grad student mentors, peers, on- and off-campus community groups, internship and career services, alumni and other Illinois networks nationally and internationally.
The majority of the specific recommendations listed in Table 1’s composite reply fit into one or more of these quadrants. Some of the recommendations, however, express underlying values that support the excellence of the university’s mission as a whole (e.g., “High value consistently placed on education and academic excellence and rigor”) while others articulate measurable outcomes of the educational experience (e.g., “Parity in graduation rates across ethnicity, gender, income and nationality/90% graduation rate”).

The Conversations also produced a number of excellent suggestions for pilot projects or programs. These are valuable ideas to consider as we move toward concrete actions, and they are listed in Appendix H.

IV. FROM ASPIRATIONS TO TARGETS FOR STRATEGIC THINKING

Our next step in this process is to identify target areas that translate the first-round Conversations’ aspirational vision of the Illinois student and experience into areas that might become (or already are) the object of concrete strategy. As the descriptive parts of this report came together in December 2013 and January 2014, we began to identify potential targets. The Campus Conversation facilitators discussed next steps and provided important direction in their January meeting. We also received helpful suggestions from the LAS Humanities Council and the campus Committee on Race and Ethnicity. The planning team used that input to shape the plan below.

For Spring 2014, five working groups and a steering committee will continue the Campus Conversation on Undergraduate Education. Each group will be charged to consider a specific aspect of the Illinois undergraduate experience. Central tasks for each group will be to recommend initiatives or actions the campus could take to move forward in that area, and to provide a sense of priorities among those initiatives.

Because the many aspects of undergraduate education are highly interconnected, overlaps and interactions between the different working groups are inevitable. Thus, we will charge the steering committee to facilitate cross-connections between the working groups and to integrate their recommendations.

Another concern that emerged during synthesis was the need to articulate campus goals for student learning and for the Illinois undergraduate experience, and consider how to assess our progress toward those goals. In fact, the campus strategic plan explicitly asks us to provide “a new set of institutional-level learning outcomes, appropriate for a university whose graduates will contribute to solving 21st-century challenges of global and local significance.” Our facilitator team thus advised that each working group recommend goals and assessment strategies related to its specific charge. The steering committee will be charged to produce a draft set of campus-wide learning goals, and recommend a process by which the campus could finalize and adopt those goals.

The targets for strategic thinking, each one corresponding to a working group or the steering committee, are as follows:

A. Accessibility and Affordability. The need to be accessible and affordable even while maintaining excellence was consistently articulated as a key area of concern; respondents stressed the need for affordable tuition (and/or generous scholarship support) for a diverse body of students including students from all income levels.
Specific recommendations included stepping up recruitment of and support for under-represented minority, low-income, and first-generation college students as well as increased financial aid support for the student body at large. We also recognize that an inclusive campus environment is a critical element of access, and students’ contribution to this environment is connected to our learning goals for them.

Since the campus already has several initiatives underway for achieving these goals, the steering committee will be charged to review ongoing efforts on access and affordability through the lens of the Campus Conversations on Undergraduate Education, and to ask:

1. What campus-wide learning goals should we have around access and inclusion and how can we measure them?
2. What information and ideas from the Campus Conversation project should be shared with those involved in access and affordability initiatives?
3. Are there any additional actions around access, affordability, and inclusion that the campus should take?

B. Integrative, Interdisciplinary, and Experiential Curricula. The Campus Conversations pointed strongly to the importance of students integrating knowledge from different disciplines. Discussants also emphasized transformative learning through active experiences that invite students to apply and deepen their knowledge and skills in practical arenas both inside and outside the classroom. This dynamic interplay between foundational knowledge and orientations on the one hand, and actions and practices on the other, was a central current in the responses to Question 1. Participants also expressed a strong sense that campus policies and practices are more likely to inhibit interdisciplinary teaching and other kinds of integrative or experiential learning than to promote them. With this in mind, we propose a working group charged to ask:

1. What kinds of integrative, interdisciplinary, and/or experiential learning do we want our students to have? What do we expect our students to gain from these experiences?
2. What kinds of integrative, interdisciplinary, and/or experiential learning is our campus already successfully fostering? Which of these models would be suitable for “scaling up” to the other parts of the campus?
3. How do we need to adjust campus policies and procedures to facilitate integrative, interdisciplinary, and experiential learning?
4. How do we measure students’ experience so as to gauge our success in creating these opportunities?

C. Student Passion and Transformation. Our campus strategic plan calls for us to provide transformative learning experiences, and the Campus Conversations pointed to many elements that make a student’s experience transformative. These include classes, teachers and modes of study that prompt a student to think in new ways or see from new perspectives; faculty, staff, and graduate student mentors who know the student as an individual and care about his or her welfare and progress;
opportunities to learn about/work on/create something about which the student is passionate; and connection with fellow students who support one another while pursuing common goals.

Our most engaged students are very good at taking advantage of all that our campus has to offer. But other students do not readily find their way to these rich opportunities and can easily narrow their educational focus to “checking the boxes” of degree requirements. Also, while both Student Affairs staff and academic units shape student experience in many ways, the two groups are seldom aware of each other’s efforts, and rarely collaborate. We need a concerted and coordinated effort to help all Illinois students engage substantively with their education and experience.

We propose to ask this working group:

1. What should our campus goals be for students’ transformative learning experiences—both within and outside the curricula?
2. What do we expect our students to gain from these transformative experiences?
3. What kinds of experiences are already valuable components of the undergraduate student world? How can faculty, instructors, academic affairs, student affairs, student organizations, and others collaborate to make the highest quality experiences more accessible and available?
4. What expectations should we have for faculty and staff around engagement with undergraduate students?
5. How can we make transformative experience the norm by deepening the engagement of all Illinois undergraduates?
6. How can we measure our success in creating these experiences for students?

D. Growing the Professional Kernel. Students and many others in the Campus Conversations spoke of employability and the importance of access to meaningful work as vital educational goals. Our conversants expressed the desire for graduates who are prepared to thrive professionally and economically, and who become so by developing strong communication skills; critical thinking, ethics, integrity, citizenship, creativity, and appreciation for diversity; willingness to adapt, experiment and take risk; the capacity to work with others and the ability to lead.

This holistic approach to “growing the professional kernel” asks us to examine the Illinois student experience through multiple lenses, exploring how our efforts to make students into leaders and innovators will also help them to become engaged thinkers, citizens, family members, and community members. We propose asking this working group:

1. What skills, knowledge, orientations, and experiences should our students have to prepare them for meaningful work and participation in professional life, communities and the larger world?
2. How do we help our students to build confidence in their abilities to contribute to future challenges as citizens, professionals, leaders and critical thinkers?
3. How can we develop each student’s “professional kernel” through vibrant learning experiences that strengthen the student’s capacities and make the
value of an Illinois undergraduate education palpable to all stakeholders? Should we invite alumni and community partners to help us achieve these goals?

4. What kinds of campus programs are already working to achieve these goals? What kinds of new, improved or more integrated programs and practices can we develop to help us do better?

5. How can we gauge our success by providing evidence that shows students are successfully developing these abilities?

E. *An International Campus in a Global World.* The Conversations were infused with a strong sense that Illinois students need to be prepared to thrive in a globally-connected world. This involves knowledge (e.g., history, cultures, languages) as well as experiences (including travel, study abroad, and contact with the global dimensions of one’s own community). It also involves personal connections and interpersonal skills. There was considerable interest in international undergraduates on our campus – what we need to do to provide them with a quality educational experience, how they can connect with domestic students to build their knowledge and fluency in US culture, and also how domestic students can benefit and learn from their international classmates—and vice versa. We propose a working group that asks:

1. What are our campus goals for student learning around globalization, writ both large and small?
2. What are appropriate goals for on-campus interactions between domestic and international undergraduates, and how can we foster those interactions?
3. How do we make global knowledge, perspective, and competency a hallmark of all Illinois graduates? What programs and practices are already working to help us do that?
4. How do we know that we have been successful in this area? How do we measure our success and that of our students?

F. *Education for Society’s Grand Challenges.* Visioning Future Excellence identified six multidisciplinary themes as grand societal challenges for the next 20-50 years¹, and the campus strategic plan points to students organizing their undergraduate experience around one of these themes. Many of our students (and not a few faculty and staff members!) are passionate about one of these grand challenges, which offer powerful motivation for student engagement as well as a context for integrating disciplinary knowledge and learning experiences. Two themes—sustainability, energy and the environment and social equality and cultural understanding—were frequently mentioned in the conversations. Using these two themes as examples, this group will be charged to think about how a student might use a societal grand challenge as an organizing theme for his or her education, as well as ways in which

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¹ The six themes are: Economic Development, Education, Energy and the Environment, Social Equality and Cultural Understanding, Health and Wellness, Information and Technology (http://www.oc.illinois.edu/visioning/reports/VFE_outcomesreport.pdf)
these grand challenges should touch every Illinois student. We propose charging a working group that asks:

1. What should our campus goals be for all students’ learning and engagement around societal grand challenge issues? Specifically, what should all students know about sustainability, the environment, social equality, diversity, and US minority populations?
2. If some students were to focus their education on any one grand challenge as an integrating theme, to what extent could they meet the learning goals we expect of all students?
3. What pilot program or programs—organized either around sustainability, energy and the environment, or around social equality and cultural understanding—could we develop to explore the effectiveness of education based on grand challenges? How could these programs include active engagement with the challenge?
4. How could a grand-challenge educational initiative select a meaningful range of issues for students to choose from, both now and over time?

V. NEXT STEPS

During February, 2014 the Office of the Provost will solicit nominations from deans, the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, and the campus at large for faculty, staff, and students to serve on the Campus Conversation working groups. The plan is for the working groups to be formed by the end of February, to work during March and April, and to present a preliminary report for discussion at the May 9 campus strategic planning retreat. A full report should be ready for presentation to the campus by the start of the Fall, 2014 semester.

This first phase of the Campus Conversation on Undergraduate Education was met with enthusiasm and energy. It has produced a compelling vision for the Illinois undergraduate experience that is shared widely across campus. The task for the next phase of the Conversation is to maintain that vision as we map out concrete actions to make undergraduate education at Illinois even better than it is today.

See also Appendix H for some suggestions for pilots that emerged during the first-round of Conversations.
APPENDICES

Appendix A. Lists used to generate invitations to Fall 2013 Campus Conversations

Invitations to participate in the Campus Conversation on Undergraduate Education were drawn from 50 different lists. Our goal was to engage a diverse group of participants from all corners of the campus, including academic units and Student Affairs units. Invitations were sent to 351 faculty, 132 academic professionals, 62 civil service staff, 253 graduate students and 283 undergraduate students. These totals do not include the Council of Deans, the Council of Undergraduate Deans, or the Illinois Leadership Coordination Community.

Groups marked with * were invited in their entirety. Groups marked with ** had a session as a group.

Advising and academic program staff recommended by college undergraduate offices*
Asian American Cultural Center
Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural House
Campus Center for Advising and Academic Services
Campus General Education Board*
Campus Honors Program (faculty and students)
Campus Recreation
Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning
Chancellor/Provost Faculty Consultation Group*
CITES Academic Technology Services
Council of Deans**
Council of Undergraduate Deans**
Deans’ nominations from all academic colleges (faculty and graduate/professional students)*
Dean’s nominations from the University Library
Faculty holding campus-level chairs (Swanlund, Gutgsell, Walgreen, Aiken )* Faculty promoted to Associate Professor or Professor in 2013-2014*
Fraternity and Sorority Affairs
Graduate students holding fellowships
Graduate students earning teaching certificates from CITL
Illini Union (CS)
Illini Union Bookstore
Illinois Leadership Center
Illinois Leadership Coordinating Committee**
Illinois Student Admissions Representatives (I-STARS)
Illinois Student Senate
International Programs and Studies
International undergraduate students recommended by college offices and ISSS
La Casa Cultural Latina
LAS General Education Committee*
LGBT Resource Center
McKinley Health Center
Native American Cultural House
Office of Minority Student Affairs
Office of the Dean of Students
Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
Office of Undergraduate Admissions
Provost’s Graduate Student Advisory Board*
Provost’s Undergraduate Student Advisory Board*
Senate Educational Policy Committee*
Senate Executive Committee*
State Farm Center
Study Abroad Coordinating Committee
Teaching Advancement Board*
The Career Center
Undergraduate students holding Illinois Promise, Stamps, and/or PAP Honors scholarships
University Housing (includes Dining, Facilities, Family & Graduate Housing)
University Library
Vice Chancellor Student Affairs Lunch Bunch
Winners of campus awards for excellence in teaching, advising, mentoring,
or guiding undergraduate research
Winners of college and department awards for instructional excellence

Appendix B. Dates of sessions for Fall 2013 Campus Conversations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Session Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>September 4</td>
<td>Council of Deans preview</td>
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<td>October 23</td>
<td>Facilitator Training</td>
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<td>October 28</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 30</td>
<td>Faculty/Undergraduates/Graduate Students/Academic Professionals</td>
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<td>November 5</td>
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<td>November 8</td>
<td>Faculty/Undergraduates/Graduate Students/Academic Professionals</td>
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<td>November 12</td>
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<td>November 14</td>
<td>Faculty/Undergraduates/Graduate Students/Academic Professionals</td>
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<td>November 18</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
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<td>November 20</td>
<td>Undergraduate Students</td>
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<td>December 5</td>
<td>Council of Undergraduate Deans</td>
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<td>December 6</td>
<td>Civil Service Staff</td>
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<td>December 11</td>
<td>Illinois Leadership Coordinating Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 12</td>
<td>Academic Professionals</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C. Planning Team and Facilitators

Planning Team

Nan Goggin, Art and Design
Lauren Goodlad, English and Office of the Provost (co-chair)
Megan Lindgren, Economics; Campus Honors Program
Romana Nowak, Animal Sciences
Ray Price, Industrial and Enterprise Systems Engineering
Staci Provesis, Office of the Provost
Gail Rooney, The Career Center
Charles Tucker, Office of the Provost (co-chair)

Faculty Facilitators

Jayadev Athreya, Mathematics
Carolyn Beck, Industrial and Enterprise Systems Engineering
Doug Beck, Physics
Pascal Bellon, Materials Science and Engineering
Tami Bond, Civil and Environmental Engineering
Jeff Brown, Finance
Susan Cole, Social Work
Mary-Grace Danao, Agricultural and Biological Engineering
Ryan Dilger, Animal Sciences
Aaron Ebata, Human and Community Development
Bruce Elliott-Litchfield, College of Engineering
Carol Emmerling-DiNovo, Landscape Architecture
Lynford Goddard, Electrical and Computer Engineering
Jennifer Greenhill, Art History
Chris Higgins, Education Policy, Organization and Leadership
Sara Hook, Dance
Walter Hurley, Animal Sciences
Prasanta Kalita, Agricultural and Biological Engineering
David Lange, Civil and Environmental Engineering
Susan Larson, College of Engineering
Soo Lee, Food Science and Human Nutrition
Michael Loui, Electrical and Computer Engineering
Cris Mayo, Education Policy, Organization and Leadership
Isabel Molina, Media and Cinema Studies
Safiya Noble, Media and Cinema Studies
Kevin Pitts, Physics
Markus Schulz, Sociology
Kim Shinew, Recreation, Sport and Tourism
Gabriel Solis, Music
Jacob Sosnoff, Kinesiology and Human Health
John Stallmeyer, Architecture
Andrea Stevens, English
David Tewksbury, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Angharad Valdivia, Media and Cinema Studies
Michelle Wander, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences
Charles Werth, Civil and Environmental Engineering
Matthew West, Mechanical Science and Engineering

Graduate Student Facilitators

Daniel Wong, English/The Graduate College
Julius Riles, Communication
Keilin Deahl, Industrial and Enterprise Systems Engineering
John Moore, English
Jaclyn Saltzman, Social Work; Kinesiology and Community Health
Samuel Byndom, Education Policy, Organization and Leadership
Brian Hunt, French
Marilyn Holguin, English
Jenelle Davis, Art History
Saturnino Rodriguez, Education Policy, Organization and Leadership
Andrew Hunte, Mathematics
Aimee Rickman, Human and Community Development
Crystal Allen, Animal Sciences
Meadow Jones, Art Education

Academic Professional Facilitators

Nathan Sanden, Residential Life, University Housing
Nicole Tami, International Programs and Studies
Keri Pipkins, The Career Center
Karen Hyman, iFoundry
Jennifer Bechtel, Innovation LLC
Gina Lee-Olukoya, Office of the Dean of Students
Kenneth Importante, Asian American Cultural Center
Emad Jassim, Mechanical Science and Engineering
Rhiannon Clifton, Advertising
Jerrod Henderson, Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering
Jewell White, College of Business
Appendix D. Sample Instructions to Table Facilitators

Campus Conversation on Undergraduate Education Discussion Groups

ACTIVITY #1 HANDOUT

There are two main group activities in the session. Below are table facilitator instructions for each activity and reproductions of the handouts and posters that accompany Discussion Activities #1 and #2. Larger versions of the handouts and posters will be provided. A short facilitator orientation with the opportunity to ask questions will take place during the first part of each meeting.

In addition to the facilitator, each table will have a Recorder. The recorder will take notes during the session and save it on a USB drive that will be turned in at the end of the session. The USB drive has a form loaded on to it for this session that the recorder will use to take notes.

Thank you for your help in facilitating these discussions and collecting valuable input.

ARRIVAL (first 10 minutes)

Participants arrive, get their name tags (which have their table number and lunch preference), find their tables, and begin eating.

INTRODUCTIONS (begin 10 minutes into the session, and take about 10 minutes)

Facilitators ask each person at their table to introduce themselves and tell briefly how they contribute to the undergraduate experience at Illinois.

PROVOST’S WELCOME AND ROOM INSTRUCTIONS (start 20 minutes in, takes 10 minutes)

The Provost will provide a welcome, then the Room Facilitator will give the following instructions and turn your table back over to you:

Thank you and welcome. Here are some brief instructions and guidelines:

You will work as a group with others at your table. Each table has a facilitator and a person pre-designated as a recorder.

Tables will NOT report back to the whole room today. The team of Campus Conversation facilitators will summarize and synthesize the results from all sessions this fall, and we will report that back to you in writing early in the Spring semester.

As you work with the questions your facilitator will provide, please remember:

- We ask you to think about the educational experience of all Illinois undergraduates – not just students in a specific major or program.
• We are talking about goals for the Illinois student experience. You should work on what those goals should be, but do not have to specify how we achieve those goals. We will have a second round of conversations in the Spring to dig deeper into that and other questions.
• Education happens in formal settings – classrooms, labs, studios – but also in many other places, both on-campus and off. Please think about the whole student experience – curricular, co-curricular, campus life – and how all of those pieces might fit together.

Now, turn your attention to your table’s facilitator, and let’s get started.

PART 1: DISCUSSION (30 minutes) — Describing the Illinois Graduate

1. INTRODUCE PART 1 WITHOUT ALLUDING TO PART 2. This will allow your group to better focus on identifying what Illinois graduates should know rather than thinking ahead to the second question.

2. READ THE DISCUSSION QUESTION ALOUD. Re-read the question and place the handouts with the discussion question in large font around the table for participants to refer to during the discussion.

Q: What should every Illinois graduate know, be able to do, and hold as principles, goals, or attitudes?

OPTIONAL, AT FACILITATOR’S DISCRETION, ASK: Should we be thinking about preparing our students to be engaged citizens who contribute to their communities, their nations, and the world?

3. PARTICIPANTS WRITE ANSWERS LEGIBLY ON YELLOW POST-IT NOTES. (5 min) Distribute the small pads of Post-It notes and pens or pencils, if needed. Ask your table-mates to take 5 minutes to silently jot down their answers to the question on the Post-It notes provided. Please stress to write one idea per Post-It note.

4. SHARE, DISCUSS & GROUP POST-ITS. (15 min) Ask the first person to share one example of what they wrote with the group. Ask if any others in the group have produced similar ideas. Place related Post-Its together on the poster. Encourage elaboration and add Post-Its if new ideas emerge. Move on and ask the next person to share a new idea. Continue with sharing, discussion and grouping until you are out of Post-Its. Feel free to add more Post-Its if new ideas come up in discussion or make other adjustments—for example, if ideas are too lengthy to be jotted down on a Post-It, use the Post-It to encapsulate the idea in short form and ask the Recorder to capture the lengthier version.

5. READ THE FOLLOW UP QUESTION ALOUD. Re-read the question and place the handouts with the discussion question in large font around the table for participants to refer to during the discussion.

Q: Is there a useful way to arrange your group’s responses into categories?

6. IDENTIFY MAJOR CATEGORIES. (10 min) When all Post-It notes have been arranged, discuss how these groupings might fall under comprehensive rubrics. For example, “collaboration” and “working in teams” could fall under the rubric of “Teamwork.” Write these categories on the note-taking sheet. Feel free to re-group and move Post-Its, as needed. Please try to move Post-Its that are not related to the circle outside of the collection of Post-Its, so as to assure that they do not become grouped with the main categories when the information is being recorded and analyzed.
IF YOU FINISH EARLY.

- Ask if there are any obvious gaps. Add new Post-Its, accordingly.

- Ask if there are any other comments that group members would like to add. Have them write them on new Post-Its and add them to the note-taking sheet and label them as “Comments.”

- Please write your name (not the group’s names) on the poster board, so those who are recording the information can contact you with questions.

PART 2: DISCUSSION (20 minutes)—Envisioning Distinctive Undergraduate Education

1. READ THE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ALOUD. Re-read the discussion question and place the handouts with the discussion questions in large font around the table so that participants can refer to them.

   Q: Ten years from now, what should be distinctive and valuable about the experience of Illinois undergraduates?

2. PARTICIPANTS WRITE ANSWERS LEGIBLY ON PINK POST-IT NOTES. (5 min) Distribute the small pads of Post-It notes and pens or pencils, if needed. Ask your table-mates to take 5 minutes to silently jot down their answers to the question on the Post-It notes provided. Please stress to write one idea per Post-It note.

3. SHARE, DISCUSS & GROUP POST-ITS. (10 min) Ask the first person to share one example of what they wrote with the group. Ask if any others at the table have produced a similar idea. Place related Post-Its on the poster. Encourage elaboration and add Post-Its if new ideas emerge. Move on and ask the next person to share a new idea. Continue with sharing, discussion and grouping until you run out of time. Feel free to add more Post-Its if new ideas come up in discussion or make other adjustments.

   Q: Is there a useful way to arrange your group’s responses into categories?

4. IDENTIFY MAJOR CATEGORIES. (5 min) When all Post-It notes are placed, discuss what to call the groupings. For example, “collaboration” and “working in teams” could fall under the rubric of “Teamwork.” Write these categories on the note-taking sheet. Feel free to re-group and move Post-Its, as needed. Please try to move Post-Its that are not related to the outside of the collection of Post-Its, so as to assure that they do not become grouped with the main categories when the information is being recorded and analyzed.

IF YOU FINISH EARLY.

- Ask if there are any obvious gaps. Add new Post-Its, accordingly.

- Ask if there are any other comments that group members would like to add. Have them write them on new Post-It’s and add them to the note-taking sheet & label them as “Comments.”
Please write your name (not the group’s names) on the poster board, so those who are recording the information can contact you with questions.

PART 3: WRAPPING UP (10 Minutes)

Ask the participants:

What have we not talked about that we should?

Allow for responses to flow for ten minutes. When you have concluded this part, thank your table and let them know that their work for today is done and they can leave when they are ready.

There will not be any reporting back to the whole room at the end of the session. Once your table has completed Part 4, your group is done. You can tell your group that the team of facilitators will be working together to synthesize the results of all the fall-semester meetings, and that they can expect a report early in the spring semester.
Appendix E. Graduate Student Example of Q1 Template

Appendix F. Civil Service Example of Q1 Template
Appendix G. Academic Professional Example of Q1 Template

Appendix H. Ideas for Pilot Course Drawn from the First-Round Campus Conversations

Many discussants recommended the use of “pilot” courses and other pedagogical experiments to try out new ideas for interdisciplinary, interactive, and experiential teaching and learning. Pilots of various kinds could be one way of developing and testing ideas that might achieve several goals at once. For example, a pilot course co-organized by faculty in several disciplines on a wide-ranging topic such as sustainability or social inequality could be designed to:

A. Involve undergraduate learning in an area of interest identified in the Visioning Future Excellence initiative;
B. Create a gateway course to bring freshman and sophomores into contact with faculty in several disciplines;
C. Enable faculty across disciplines and campus units to devise a team-teaching structure that combines larger lectures and small seminars (as in a “module” system) and which potentially experiments with “flipped” classroom techniques;
D. Develop the interdisciplinary, faculty-taught gateway course as a signature of the undergraduate experience at the University of Illinois.
E. Enable faculty across disciplines and campus units to use the pilot gateway course as a “lab” or launching point for related experiments such as an undergraduate capstone course to complement the gateway; the creation of minors, certificates, or special projects anchored to interdisciplinary topics; or the creation of additional pilot courses or programs.