

From the PROVOST

A NEWSLETTER FROM LINDA KATEHI

Dear Colleague,

As I near the completion of the first round of scheduled town hall meetings that have enabled me to speak with faculty and staff in all the colleges, I am eager to find new ways to broadly communicate my thoughts about key issues facing the campus. This newsletter is a communications experiment, the first of an informal series that I expect to post periodically. It will not take the form of an official report, but in it I will try to address my thinking about academic concerns of importance to you. A regular feature in the letter will be an update of actions being taken to implement the Strategic Plan. I welcome your responses both to what I say about these key issues and about whether you think this is an apt way to communicate with faculty and staff. This newsletter and a place to provide feedback can be found on the Provost Web site at www.provost.uiuc.edu. I will not persist in adding to the burgeoning inboxes of our email system unless I know that these communications are welcome and are serving a useful purpose.

Sincerely,

Linda Katehi

Strategic Plan – Our Values and Vision

In the next five years our campus will make decisions as part of our strategic plan which will define us as an institution for the next ten to twenty years. As our vision has been articulated by Chancellor Herman, our campus will strive to become preeminent among public research universities. The strategic plans developed by the units are creating goals and objectives in addition to defining the paths which will take us there. As we work toward making this vision a reality, our office wants to connect with you in as many ways as possible to learn from you and support you on your path to our future. Since there is no future we can shape for our institution without values and commitment, I would like to start our first newsletter with an effort to articulate those. This articulation comes from extensive discussions with the Deans and their leadership teams, and from faculty and students during various formal and informal events and activities.

Our aspiration to become the preeminent public institution is based on our strong legacy of excellence and of service to society. We embrace and advance our Land Grant legacy by aiming to design the Land Grant mission of the 21st century America. We are committed to an intellectual and educational environment that respects differences and values diversity both on campus and in our community. We are committed to educational programs that provide opportunity regardless of cultural, ethnic, social or economic background. We aim at learning the best ways to promote innovation, cultivate justice, enhance social mobility and to respond to local, national and global needs. We foster the creation of breakthrough knowledge and the use of that knowledge to improve quality of life.

We are one campus dedicated to comprehensive excellence and committed to transform in ways that add value to each one of us individually and all of us collectively.

Looking Ahead

In my meetings with faculty, students and staff over the course of my first year at Illinois, a number of concerns have been expressed about programs, processes, and policies that are at the very heart of the institution. I have come to believe, as do most of the people with whom I have spoken, that Illinois has fundamentally sound processes in place to ensure the integrity of our key academic policies and programs. But there are improvements to be made and initiatives to be launched. I am pleased that many of our most imaginative faculty have agreed to put their time and effort into identifying ways to strengthen how we conduct our work and define ourselves as an institution.

- Chancellor Herman and I have asked the Diversity Initiatives Committee to explore the many areas in which we strive to strengthen our efforts to provide an environment that promotes diversity. Professors Helen Neville and Feniosky Pena-Mora co-chair this committee, which will soon issue its report.
- Professor Andreas Cangellaris has agreed to chair a group to explore our promotion and tenure process. This committee will issue a report later this spring.
- I am chairing a Council of Deans Budget and Resource Allocation Advisory Committee, which has subcommittees, addressing key budgetary issues that include: ICR Distribution, State Funds and Tuition Revenue Distribution, and Guiding Principles and Processes for Resource Allocation.

I will be commenting on the work of these and other groups in subsequent issues of this newsletter.

