

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of the Chancellor  
Swanlund Administration Building  
601 East John Street  
Champaign, IL 61820



February 3, 2011

Dear Colleagues,

We write to acknowledge our gratitude for the comprehensive work performed by the Stewarding Excellence @ Illinois Office of the Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement (OVCIA) Project Team. Their report sought to summarize a complex, and somewhat confusing, advancement landscape. We appreciate the effort to use other studies, including the Administrative Review and Restructuring Working Group Report, and the attempt to reach a wide audience through surveys geared towards measuring the effectiveness of the relationship of the OVCIA with the University of Illinois Foundation (UIF), University of Illinois Alumni Association (UIAA), Office of Corporate Relations (OCR) and unit-level operations. Comments received and our own conclusions support the Project Team's call for "changes in the structure and strategy of advancement on the Urbana campus."

Advancement success is always crucial and has taken on increasing importance in light of our state and campus financial situation. Although we acknowledge the overall success of the Brilliant Futures campaign, the comparable data with our peers continue to concern us relative to total gift income and endowment market value. The comparative data from the Big Ten universities which were cited by the Project Team are a major cause for our concern. We are reminded, however, that not all of the comparable data are as discouraging. There are additional data that indicate we are second among our peers in donors and alumni who are actively solicited, third for individual fundraising from individuals, and sixth in corporate support. In his response to the team's report, Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement (VCIA) James Schroeder agreed with the identified concerns but affirmed that actions were being taken to improve the situation. Two items of note have seen some progress. First, the UIF Regional Directors have now been redeployed for use on the Urbana campus. Second, performance metrics have been adopted and shared with units so that evaluations may proceed on a standardized basis.

As stated by the Project Team and confirmed by survey results, the advancement model in existence at the University of Illinois has not fully realized its potential. No consensus has been achieved on how to define and structure an overall advancement strategy that includes the functions of fundraising, alumni relations, corporate and foundation support, marketing, and communications. The Urbana campus has followed a more decentralized advancement model than the other two campuses, and this approach has left the campus with no one position or office that is held accountable for results.

In order to maximize the investment in and talents of the advancement staff at all levels of the organization, organizational evolution is necessary. Leadership of all the responsible organizations must coalesce around the same goals and objectives and integrate their activities. Many advancement operations in the colleges have a single, comprehensive office that engages in short- and long-term fundraising, corporate and foundation relations, and alumni relations. It is important that the advancement operations at the highest levels of our administrative organization adopt this model and carefully coordinate these same functions by integrating all of the offices engaged in these efforts. As a campus matter, we will determine where the centralized corporate relations function should reside. The VCIA will be asked to continue to include the Associate Chancellor for Alumni Affairs and the senior administrator for corporate relations on the team of chief advancement officers and the Campus Development Committee who meet regularly with the VCIA. As the VCIA has done, the Associate Chancellor for Alumni Affairs will be asked to work with the deans to establish performance metrics for unit-level staff who are involved in alumni relations activities.

Given that the UIF and UIAA also have significant roles in advancement but operate as separate entities whose activities are coordinated through the Office of the President and the Board of Trustees, the recommendations received from the Stewarding Excellence Project Team will need to be reviewed in concert with the Office of the President. We pledge our full cooperation in working on the following efforts:

- As a campus, we will support any internal or external review of the UIF and UIAA overseen by the Office of the President. Such reviews should cover reporting relationships for the various functions and determine whether there is a better structure to achieve the integration of advancement activities.
- UIF is valued for its business operations supporting fundraising activities. Those services should continue. Any review should examine the distribution of fundraising responsibilities between UIF and the campuses. Especially important is the opportunity to clarify the responsibilities and accountability of deans, department heads, and their advancement staff. All parties will benefit by having responsibilities articulated as clearly as possible.
- The integration of campus advancement activities among all three organizations must be a priority and the VCIA will be accountable for facilitating that integration. Creating a revised reporting arrangement is one possible avenue for addressing the need for greater integration. For example, we will propose that the position of the Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement should jointly report to the Chancellor and to the Presidents of the UIF and UIAA. Also, in recognition of how these functions are interconnected, the Associate Chancellor for Alumni Affairs should jointly report to the VCIA and the President of the UIAA.
- We acknowledge that the UIAA exists as a separate entity but believe the university should examine whether the UIAA should remain a separate organization. Various options should be considered to further develop and enhance the relationship between the university, the campuses and the UIAA, all with the mission of achieving our overall advancement goals.

- We are aware that confusion exists regarding the UIAA's separate fundraising efforts. There needs to be clarification of the purpose and scope of UIAA fundraising so that the UIAA's efforts do not impede or negatively affect the efforts to support financially the overall missions of the University of Illinois.
- As recommended by the Administrative Review and Restructuring Working Group, a memorandum of understanding should be developed between the campus and the UIAA regarding the services to be provided to the Urbana campus. Our intent is to pursue such an agreement during the spring semester. Such an agreement should also cover ways to encourage current and future students to become actively engaged alumni.

The University of Illinois has a strong connection with our alumni, faculty, staff, students and the general public, who care deeply about our institution and are committed to our continued excellence. An advancement model must be clearly articulated and fully implemented so that Illinois honors and realizes the full potential of these relationships. Our stakeholders expect and deserve nothing less.



Robert A. Easter  
Vice President and Chancellor (Interim)

Sincerely,



Richard P. Wheeler  
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost  
(Interim)