Visioning Future Excellence at Illinois

OUTCOMES REPORT

JULY 2013

ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Visioning Future Excellence at Illinois

Chancellor Phyllis Wise embarked on a Listening and Learning Tour during her first semester at Illinois in Fall 2011. The purpose of the Tour was to hear why faculty, staff, and students come to Illinois, why they stay, and what challenges they foresee that will need to be addressed to ensure Illinois' continued excellence and relevance. To more fully refine the challenges and opportunities, the Chancellor initiated Visioning Future Excellence at Illinois.

Visioning Future Excellence at Illinois reflects the campus culture of inclusiveness and collegiality as we attempt to capture challenges the world will face in the next 20-50 years and what role our preeminent institution will play in addressing them. Visioning Future Excellence at Illinois has been both collaborative and comprehensive. It has included input from nearly 3000 individuals, including faculty, academic professionals, civil service staff, graduate students, undergraduate students, alumni, community members, and corporate leaders.

Economic Development Education
Energy and the Environment
Social Equality and Health and Wellness
Cultural Understanding Information and Technology

Initiative Phases: Assessment and Evaluation

There have been two distinct phases of this initiative. Beginning in the Spring 2012 semester, 20 groups totaling over 700 people gathered for focus group sessions. The groups were asked to address two questions:

- **What will society's greatest challenges be in 20-50 years?**

- **What is the role of Illinois, a preeminent research university, in meeting these challenges?**

Each session was divided into small groups of 8-10 people, including a facilitator. For the first question, participants spent five minutes writing their own ideas. Each idea was written on a separate small-sized note. They worked in groups to organize the ideas into as many as six categories by placing the notes on a poster board. The groups were then asked to narrow their six categories to three issues that the University could address. After each group identified their three issues, the facilitator provided time for individual reflection on the second question. As was done on the first question, each person wrote ideas on notes. The group then worked together again to compile and categorize the information.

All information gathered from the meetings was transcribed into a spreadsheet. For each session, word clouds were created. Word clouds are used as visual 'info data' to indicate frequency: words mentioned more often are larger than ones mentioned less often. Similar topics were given a standard title to better reflect the frequency within the word cloud. For example, if one group listed health and human wellness and another group listed evolving healthcare needs, both were called "health and wellness." (Results available at http://www.oc.illinois.edu/visioning/sessions.html).

Analyzing all the notes from the first question took place over the summer of 2012. Thousands of comments were collected from the first question posed. Each individual idea was given a standard title to allow for categorization of all the items and each was connected to one or two of the major categories. For instance, if someone listed Healthcare costs, this would be a Health and Wellness major issue as well as an economic development issue.

At the end, six major categories, or themes, emerged from the focus group sessions. They included: **Economic Development, Education, Energy and the Environment, Social Equality and Cultural Understanding, Health and Wellness,** and **Information and Technology**. Each of these major categories included several more detailed subcategories. Word clouds were generated for this collection of major categories as well as for each of the other categories and subcategories. (Results available at http://www.oc.illinois.edu/visioning/themes.html).

Phase Two

The second phase of the Visioning Future Excellence process began in Fall 2012 and continued through Spring 2013. In this phase, distinct groups of 20-30 faculty members, staff, and students participated in brainstorming sessions with the chancellor and other leaders. This was a two-day process in which the first day consisted of two hours of brainstorming ideas and the second day consisted of one hour of prioritizing and voting.

These brainstorming sessions produced sets of suggested priorities for each area to be considered by the campus' senior leadership including the Chancellor, Provost, Vice Chancellors, and Deans. The recommended priorities were classified as short-term (12-18 months) or mid-term (3-5 years). Results available at http://www.oc.illinois.edu/visioning/nextsteps.html.

Our Process

Over the past two years the entire campus community has been working to develop a shared vision for the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The vision will allow us to strategically focus our intellectual and financial resources to face the challenges of our state, nation, and world. Through this Visioning Future Excellence initiative, the campus and its major stakeholders identified grand societal challenges of the coming 20-50 years where Illinois can contribute solutions. Six critical multidisciplinary themes emerged.

Economic Development

Education

Energy and the Environment

VISIONING FUTURE
EXCELLENCE

Social Equality and Cultural Understanding

Health and Wellness

Information and Technology

This framework fed directly into the strategic planning process that began in fall 2012. Again, faculty, staff, students, deans, and campus administrators collaborated throughout 2012-2013 to set out the broad strategic goals, actions, and metrics for success that will guide our decisions and priorities over the next three years. With this framework and a clearer idea of where we believe we should focus, we are positioning ourselves to take actions now that will chart the course of the campus for decades to come.

Implementing Visioning Future Excellence

After reviewing suggested recommendations by the Chancellor's leadership team, the following initiatives and action steps have been identified. Some of the emerging ideas cut across the topical areas, while others are more focused. Some of the actions already have been initiated as the Visioning Future Excellence outcomes became clear during the process, while others will be initiated in the coming months.

The actions outlined in this document include a majority of the top recommendations from the Visioning Future Excellence brainstorming sections. As the next step in the process, the Chancellor and the Provost will appoint a Realizing Future Excellence Council to review progress at regular intervals, with the goal that the Council will issue regular reports to ensure that the campus makes steady progress. This Council may be combined with a group that will monitor the implementation of the campus strategic plan that is due this summer.

The recommended actions are categorized into two groups. The first set of actions is centered on continuous improvement of the existing environment of the institution. The second set is centered on breaking new ground through new investments, helping to shape the future of Illinois to position it for success for the next 20-50 years.

Some of these actions are still under development and being discussed with relevant units and stakeholders around campus. Final determination regarding their implementation will occur in the coming months.

Phase One

FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS & SURVEY

Six Visioning Future Excellence Themes and their Word Clouds

Economic Development

global economy governance
healthcare affordability politics and policy making
economic outlook
distribution of wealth
retirement wages energy costs accountability
housing and homelessness educational costs poverty
job market

Education

higher education
diversity
affordability access job training
teaching, leadership and mentoring
learning and critical thinking STEM
p-12 education quality and value
educational reform and delivery global education

Energy and the Environment

food supply, production and safety
air quality natural resources
innovative alternative energies
population growth energy availability and costs
water supply and quality sustainability
environmental security and policy
climate change and environment degradation

Social Equality & Cultural Understanding

leadership
human rights interpersonal communication social programs
justice system
understanding differences
support networks world peace governance
supporting the arts
equality global relations
democracy and personal freedom understanding and conflict
diversity ethical behavior
immigration safety and security

Health and Wellness

nutrition and hunger
disability health disparities obesity
disease prevention
and treatment
healthcare cost and quality
quality of life healthcare access
aging population global health

Information Technology

infrastructure and transportation
communication technology
innovation and discovery cyber security
education technology medical technology technology access
data management technology use

Phase Two

SMALL GROUP BRAINSTORMING SESSIONS

Recommended Potential Actions

Short-term actions
(12-18 months)

Long-term actions
(3-5 years)

Outcomes Report

Continuous Improvement
Initiatives

Breaking New Ground with
Strategic Investment Initiatives

Initiatives for Continuous Improvement

The following initiatives, developed through the Visioning Future Excellence process, focus on how best to use the resources, services, programs, ways of working, and culture of Illinois to improve the present state of the campus.

Promote Continued Excellence in our Educational Enterprise

- **Revise General Education:** Prepare students in Visioning Future Excellence topical areas to address societal challenges. Enable and encourage the teaching of courses that cross departmental and disciplinary boundaries. Design curricula around promoting leadership, encouraging critical thinking, navigating uncertainty, and enhancing information literacy.

- **Create a Single Teaching Excellence Unit:** Consolidate existing activities into a single, visible, campus-wide entity to enhance and support excellence in teaching across all modalities.

- **Expand the Charge of Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Innovation to consider Better Use of Technology:** Charge the new Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Innovation to lead an effort to harness emerging technologies and data analytics to continuously improve the way we deliver online and residential education. Develop better integration across various educational technology platforms to make teaching and learning more accessible. This effort should be integrated with the campus-wide unit to support teaching excellence described above.

- **Explore Social Innovation Project:** Consider developing a program of educational and outreach efforts to collaboratively build social innovation through engagement with local and distant communities. Efforts should be evidence-based and integrated with social science research on campus, and they should explicitly connect disparate initiatives that are being undertaken in multiple colleges.

Strategically Hire Faculty

- **Rebuild Faculty Strength:** Hire 500 faculty over the next five to seven years. This hiring will bring our faculty strength to the level appropriate for the mission of our university. Faculty hires will focus on strategic recruitments in the six Visioning Future Excellence areas and on building excellence in areas of strength across the university. The hiring process will pay close attention to increasing diversity as it is a matter of excellence and is a competitive edge for our campus.

- **Recruit and Retain Underrepresented Faculty:** Enhance recruiting and adopt best practices for retaining faculty from underrepresented groups.

- **Increase Targeted Cluster Hires:** Initiate specific targeted faculty hires in Visioning Future Excellence areas, being cognizant of trends in research funding and in areas of critical teaching need. Hiring will be incentivized by central funds and executed by committees of department heads/ senior faculty in collaborating areas. Specific areas will be determined in partnership with the colleges. Possible examples include faculty with clinical and translational expertise, expertise in data science, expertise in sustainability, energy, and the environment, and expertise in justice and social equality. Many other possibilities exist.

Build Diversity and Cultural Understanding

- **Create a Chancellor and Provost Faculty Advisory Council on Diversity and Cultural Understanding:** Charge the new council with continuing to review our institutional practices that may exclude and create social inequality, addressing social divides that exist among our students, and overseeing implementation of best practices from around the university.

- **Increase Student Support:** Coordinate and systematize the many programs on campus that support student diversity. Ensure that any student who is struggling socially, culturally, or academically will have ready access to help. Substantially increase the endowment that supports scholarships, so that an Illinois education can be available to every student of talent and commitment.

Increase Internal and External Research Support

- **Increase Seed Funding:** Create a clearinghouse web page to highlight the many seed funding programs available campus-wide, and in the colleges, as well as sources of external seed funding. Use that clearinghouse to identify specific gaps for new seed funding programs.

- **Create a Faculty Expertise Database:** Develop and implement a database with corresponding online tool to help faculty build collaborations and to help external stakeholders find Illinois faculty experts in specific areas.

- **Create Interdisciplinary Working Groups:** Form working groups of leading scholars with staff support from the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research to develop coherent communication and strategic direction in broad areas of interdisciplinary strength. Use these groups to support collaborative action and help direct resources to pursue more ambitious projects. Areas of focus could include Interdisciplinary Health Sciences; Social and Behavioral Sciences; the Humanities; Computational, Informational, and Data Science; the Arts; and the Life Sciences.

- **Create an Office for Proposal Development Support:** Create a campus-wide proposal development office to nurture and provide administrative support to faculty teams who are pursuing multidisciplinary large-scale externally funded research programs.

- **Expand External Funding Capacity:** Build capacity for better proposal support in areas that have traditionally been under-supported (e.g., the Arts and the Humanities) so that our faculty in those areas can obtain external funding to realize more ambitious agendas.

- **Reform Indirect Cost Recovery Formula:** Implement the recently approved system for indirect cost recovery that rewards and incentivizes interdisciplinary research activity.

Continuous Improvement Initiatives

Impacted Themes	Economic Development	Education	Energy and the Environment	Social Equality Cultural Understanding	Health & Wellness	Information & Technology
PROMOTE CONTINUED EXCELLENCE IN OUR EDUCATIONAL ENTERPRISE						
Revise General Education	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Create a Single Teaching Excellence Unit	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Consider Better Use of Technology in Education		✔				✔
Explore Social Innovation	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
STRATEGICALLY HIRE FACULTY						
Rebuild Faculty Strength	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Recruit and Retain Underrepresented Faculty	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Increase Cluster Hires	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
BUILD DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING						
Create Chancellor/Provost Faculty Advisory Council - Diversity & Cultural Understanding	✔	✔		✔		
Increase Student Support		✔		✔		
INCREASE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RESEARCH SUPPORT						
Increase Seed Funding	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Create Faculty Expertise Database	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Create Interdisciplinary Working Groups		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Create Proposal Development Support	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Expand External Funding Capacity		✔		✔		
Reform Indirect Cost Recovery Formula	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

Breaking Ground with New Strategic Investment Initiatives

The following specific initiatives arose from discussions of key societal challenges to address over the next 20-50 years. These require new configurations of our assets and new resources to make an impact.

- **Create the Institute for Sustainability, Energy, and the Environment (ISEE):** The new structure will coordinate and lead interdisciplinary efforts in this area that will range from fundamental research to industrial collaborations.

- **Develop Clinical and Translational Health Research Infrastructure:** Specific activities will include nurturing new clusters of excellence around emerging topics, supporting the special compliance needs of clinical research, and sustaining partnerships with external clinical organizations. This activity is anticipated to culminate in the evolution of the Division of Biomedical Sciences into an Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Institute to coordinate, promote, and guide our efforts in these areas.

- **Implement Data Sciences and Curation Initiative:** Develop a Research Data Service and accompanying research and education initiative in the curation, use, and dissemination of large amounts of data.

- **Enhance Local Economic Development:** Bring together a Chancellor's economic development team composed of community and campus leaders who have been active in public engagement and community economic development. The team will focus on making Urbana-Champaign a model for job creation, which will enhance the quality of life within the community, the diversity that these jobs bring, and the vibrancy of the university.

- **Establish the Veterans Education and Support Systems Research Initiative:** Leverage our new Center for Wounded Veterans in Higher Education, so that multiple colleges can become leaders in disability research, including topics relevant to quality of life and chronic illness. Make clear impacts on national and international policy related to disability rights and economic independence for veterans and others with disabilities.

- **Develop a Learning Science Laboratory:** Develop a learning science laboratory to understand learning mechanisms and to invent learning and educational tools, practices, and spaces for the future of teaching and learning across disciplines and professions.

Breaking Ground with New Strategic Investment Initiatives

Impacted Themes	Economic Development	Education	Energy and the Environment	Social Equality Cultural Understanding	Health & Wellness	Information & Technology
Institute for Sustainability, Energy and the Environment	✔	✔	✔			
Clinical-Translational Health Research Infrastructure	✔	✔		✔	✔	
Data Curation Initiatives		✔			✔	✔
Local Economic Development	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Center for Wounded Veterans in Higher Education	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔
Learning Science Laboratory		✔		✔		✔