

Part 4: People



The heart of UIC is its people. The university’s vision, mission and values—its core identity—reside in its students, faculty and staff, its alumni, external collaborators and partners. Our vision for 2010 is the product of a year-long strategic conversation with the people of UIC, and it can only be achieved if each one of us works to make it a reality.

The unique mix of cultures and experience found on our campus invests UIC with a stimulating intellectual and social environment. The culture of diversity is a key element of the excellence we demand for 2010, and we will ensure that our students, faculty and staff continue to reflect the broad diversity of Chicago. At the same time, access to excellence requires that we expand and strengthen a culture of collegiality and civility; we must foster an understanding that each person uniquely contributes to the institution’s mission, that each is equally worthy of respect, and that working together—as a truly integrated university of students, faculty, staff, academic professionals, alumni and external constituencies—we can realize the vision of 2010 expressed in this report.

Students
In 2010, recruitment, mentoring and teaching will support students who reflect the diverse and global nature of our Great Cities and who seek the excellence of a major research university.

Our student population comprises some 16,000 undergraduate students, 9,000 graduate and professional students. These students differ widely in their courses of study. Yet we hold one expectation of them all: that they learn not as passive recipients of information but as active participants in generating, imparting and applying knowledge. In turn, our students expect the university to provide the courses, classrooms and active “learning by doing” environments of research and professional training, along with the administrative structures that support their learning.

If we are to provide access to excellence, as our vision demands, all levels of a UIC education must be affordable to the broadest range of students. Declines in state appropriations in recent years have threatened this historical affordability. We need to make every effort to support accessibility—by improving academic preparation and access to required courses so that students can graduate more quickly; by fighting to reverse the decline in state appropriations; and by increasing the availability of financial aid for students in all disciplines and professions, especially those coming from lower income environments.



Critical Issue: UIC's Historic Commitment to Student Financial Access

UIC must create new ways to maintain and advance its historic commitment to student financial access to higher education, such that by 2010 the university will have adjusted its profile of financial support (in all programs, from, for example, MAP Supplemental Financial Aid to fifth year funding) to respond to (i) the changes in state funding that require increases in tuition and raise barriers to access, (ii) cuts in funding that have the potential to negatively impact sustained excellence in every quarter—students, faculty and their learning environment, and (iii) requirements to garner external resources which bring additional responsibilities and controls.

Student Recruitment and Retention

Our recruitment and retention process must indicate to students that we care about them as individuals. A “one size fits all” orientation, advising, or counseling program will not do. A customized approach is needed to ensure the academic success and community engagement of each student. To be successful, this cannot be delegated to a small cadre of advisors. Instead, we must develop processes and an ethos of caring that involves faculty and staff across the institution. We already have a successful model to emulate. Graduate students typically develop relationships with individual faculty based on research interests. Indeed, many graduate students are actively recruited by faculty seeking students with particular strengths and experiences. The kind of personal relationships that develop between graduate students and faculty are needed for all students.

It's time to transform our relationships with students. It's time to move from the old mode of the admission office as gatekeeper to a model where we actively seek out students we want. It's time to make real commitments to prospective students and to honor those commitments through graduation and beyond. If we begin this transformation now, by 2010 we will truly be a resource and destination accessible to all who share our ambitions and have the desire to excel.

Undergraduate Students

Undergraduate education at UIC is an entry point for access to excellence, a commitment that begins with the recruitment process. UIC must not rely solely on class rank and standardized testing as measures for acceptance. Rather, we need to evaluate each student's potential, based on his or her promise for contributing to the intellectual community at UIC and to the larger world after graduation. As such, admission to UIC is not an end in itself, but rather a milestone along a student's intellectual and professional journey—one that commenced many years before college, during their K-12 education.

UIC's role in this journey requires that we develop strong relationships with the schools and two-year colleges of Chicago and Illinois, so that we can meaningfully evaluate the accomplishments and potential of students from all backgrounds. This will require new levels of communication with those schools and a new understanding and programmatic articulation of exactly what is required for success at UIC. We must create and participate in co-institutional programs that offer our students pathways of success, including outreach and tutoring programs in the city schools and on our campus, and co-admission partnerships with community colleges. Preparation programs like these will ensure that our students achieve their potential and meet their academic goals within the traditional four-year time frame.

UIC already has good experience in building such successful pathways to student success. The university attracts, and will continue to actively seek out, academically outstanding undergraduate students through the Honors College and the Guaranteed Professional Program Admissions Initiative (GPPA), which provides guaranteed admission to graduate or professional school. These programs are another facet of our commitment to "access to excellence" and examples of the most ambitious educational pathways a research university can offer.

When we accept students into the UIC community, regardless of the pathway to admission, we make a commitment to support them in their journey. That means we should seek to match our new admissions efforts with equally responsive programs for student retention and for the transition to life after graduation. Currently—whether for educational, financial or other reasons—many students who begin at UIC do not stay to graduate. Our six-year graduation rate for transfer students is under 60 per cent; for four-year students it is even lower, just over 44 percent. We must understand and improve our retention rates, as these student losses undermine the mission of the university. As our students near the completion of their degree programs and approach graduation, we need to help them move into their new roles as alumni and professionals, with innovative programs that offer strategies for employment, graduate study and professional development.

Finally, we should expand our research and service learning programs in undergraduate education. A hallmark of the UIC student will be the way he or she "learns by doing"—not simply writing papers, but doing research and training with faculty, in the lab or online, or doing community-based work and engaged research in Chicago and beyond.



Graduate Students

Graduate students are vital to the success of a research university, not only because they require the highest level of advanced instruction, but also because they play essential roles in teaching and research. In all these roles, the students gain experience in building knowledge and opening doors to their academic careers. As we push the boundaries of disciplines at UIC, graduate students should become even more central to our mission of creating, sharing and applying knowledge. Finding new ways to integrate teaching, research and learning in graduate-level programs will help us recruit and retain the most qualified students.

Scholarly activities at UIC cross international as well as interdisciplinary boundaries. Our graduate students come from more than 100 different countries and are a significant part of UIC's global network. However, new restrictions on U.S. visas are raising barriers to students who wish to come here, curtailing scholarly growth at home and abroad. We recognize that this problem is not unique to UIC; it affects universities throughout the U.S., depriving our nation of valuable scholars and scientists, and the world of well-trained professionals who understand American values. UIC must work to overcome these barriers and to bring to our campus the best-qualified graduate students, regardless of nationality.

The principles of diversity and access to excellence are as important in graduate as in undergraduate programs. They require us to increase our efforts to recruit qualified graduate students from underrepresented groups. We need to encourage students from our own minority undergraduate programs to consider careers in academia and to take advantage of the research opportunities we offer. In all these efforts, we will work to expand the range of characteristics that can predict student success, including, for example, intelligence, personality and drive. In this way we will ensure a talented, diverse and global student body at UIC.

The recruitment of the best faculty is closely linked to the recruitment and retention of the best graduate students. Top faculty require top students—who can contribute to their research endeavors and to teaching. While UIC graduate students start out as students and assistants, ideally they should emerge as junior colleagues in the research laboratory, the classroom and in sites of engaged research. Employing this graduate level version of “learning by doing,” UIC will help students develop their own pathways to excellence, in their disciplines and in new interdisciplinary areas of knowledge.

Graduate students require a supportive environment at UIC, in the research settings of their faculty mentors, in their disciplinary units and throughout the campus. We should ensure that our graduate students receive fair compensation, benefits and quality student services. Additionally, we need to provide instruction in methods of teaching and effective writing, as

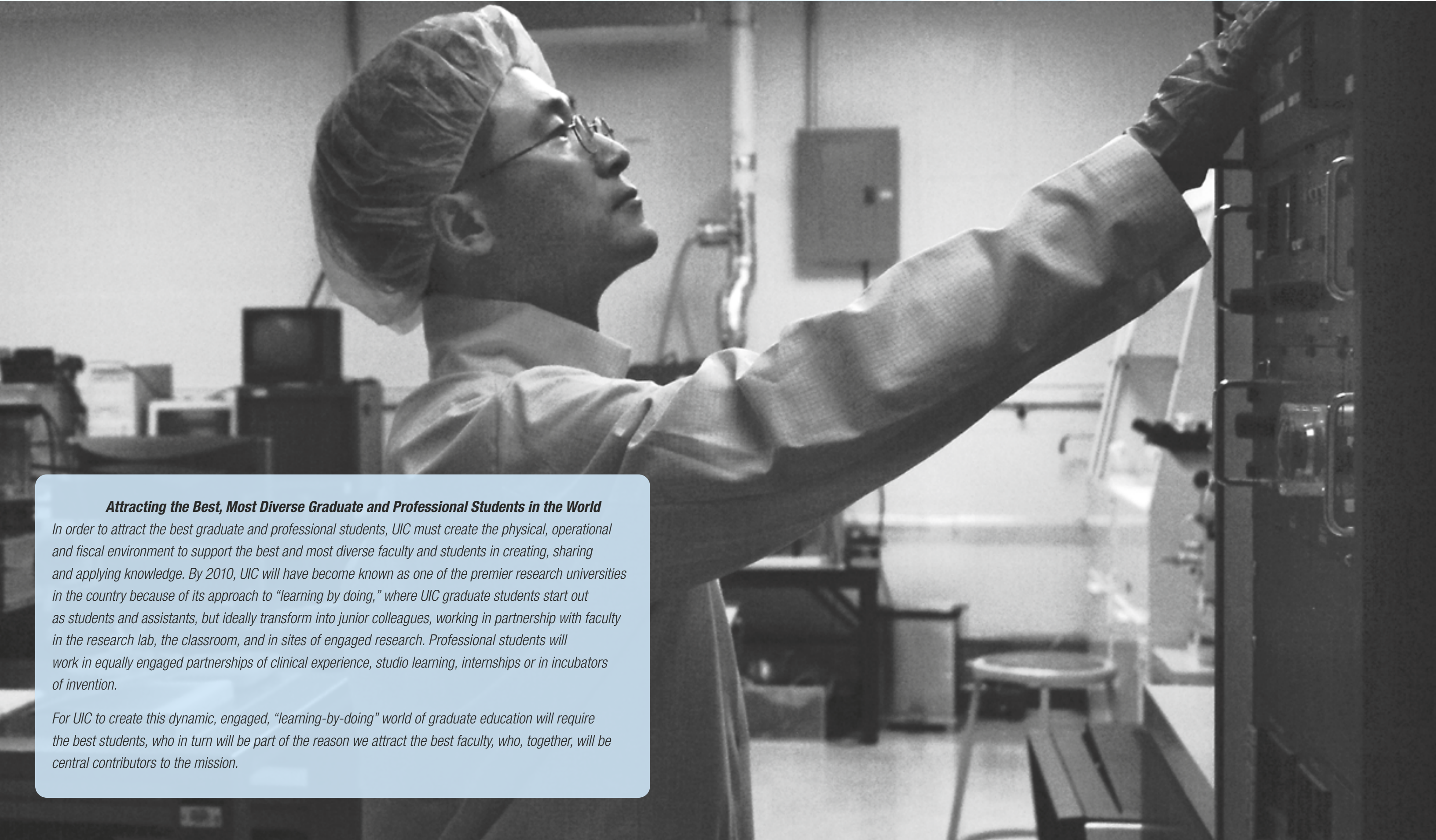
well as seminars and services to help students develop careers in the academic, public and private sectors. With implementation of such efforts, graduate students can become central contributors to the mission of creating, sharing and applying knowledge. Once again, the quality of those we graduate will define UIC.

Professional Students

The professions at UIC include architecture, business, education, engineering, social work, urban planning and public administration, as well as the health fields of medicine, nursing, pharmacy, public health, dentistry and applied health sciences. Many of these schools and programs—including the colleges of Pharmacy, Nursing, and Urban Planning and Public Affairs, and some key programs in the colleges of Medicine and Public Health—rank among the top in the United States. In keeping with the quality of the programs, UIC professional students will be selected based not only on academic criteria, but also on their potential to serve as leaders in their profession and their community.

UIC's professional students have much in common with other graduate students, though their training often focuses more directly on the clients they will serve. The concepts of learning by doing and engaged research—of scholarship combined with practice and issues-based application—are especially important in the professions. Wherever they work—from design studios to clinical and community settings—our professional students must do more than learn and create knowledge. We must ensure that they participate in research, as their training requires, and that they understand the impact of research in their chosen field. Equally important, they must understand the value of professional practice and the importance of adhering to the codes of ethics in their respective fields.





Attracting the Best, Most Diverse Graduate and Professional Students in the World

In order to attract the best graduate and professional students, UIC must create the physical, operational and fiscal environment to support the best and most diverse faculty and students in creating, sharing and applying knowledge. By 2010, UIC will have become known as one of the premier research universities in the country because of its approach to “learning by doing,” where UIC graduate students start out as students and assistants, but ideally transform into junior colleagues, working in partnership with faculty in the research lab, the classroom, and in sites of engaged research. Professional students will work in equally engaged partnerships of clinical experience, studio learning, internships or in incubators of invention.

For UIC to create this dynamic, engaged, “learning-by-doing” world of graduate education will require the best students, who in turn will be part of the reason we attract the best faculty, who, together, will be central contributors to the mission.



Faculty

In 2010, faculty will be recruited, supported, recognized and rewarded according to clearly articulated assessments of achievement and in accordance with their contributions to the vision, mission and values of UIC.

UIC is home to a distinguished faculty, comprised of 1,000 tenured, 300 tenure track and 650 research and clinical faculty members. Their research excellence is matched by their excellence in the teaching and the mentorship of students. Maintaining and enhancing the quality of the faculty, the productivity and contributions of its members and the stability and growth of its numbers in key disciplinary and multi-disciplinary areas are paramount goals for 2010.

UIC faculty must be more than distinguished researchers; they must integrate their passion and highest ambition for research with a commitment to teach a diverse, urban student body, including students whose life experiences may challenge traditional ways of thinking in the academy. Our faculty must be aware of the particular challenges and opportunities of our cultural, social and physical environment, and must look forward to transforming and being transformed by these elements.

UIC faculty must share a commitment to making knowledge available to all who desire to learn. By creating a culture around scholarship—whether through public conversations and forums, through applications in medicine, engineering and science, or through teacher education programs across the university—UIC faculty members will give life to the motto “access to excellence.” They will put knowledge to work in order to transform our world.

Realizing this vision will require interactions between different faculty cultures on campus, institutional support of interdisciplinary research, and the creation of new centers and institutes. These changes will require historic decisions by academic units that have long functioned in isolation. Faculty must play an active part, looking beyond traditional roles and disciplines to help build the 21st-century public research university.

No great urban research university can grow without attracting and retaining new faculty who will develop and embody the intellectual projects that define the institution. It is essential that we assemble the major leaders in the fields of UIC’s academic excellence—educators who are at once passionate about teaching our students and eager to contribute to the particular projects that make UIC a great research institution.

UIC must be adept at attracting, supporting and retaining the very best of its faculty. University resources should be organized to make UIC the most competitive and attractive environment for faculty who contribute distinctively to UIC’s mission and to its fields of excellence. Not only should we provide strong mentoring and faculty development programs for junior faculty members as they progress toward tenure, we also need to ensure a structure for promotion and tenure that is commensurate with the vision, mission and values of UIC. The measures of success must be clearly defined, and should recognize contributions in teaching, scholarship (including research and creative work), service and economic development. While requirements will differ among disciplines, we should ensure that the respective criteria are communicated to all concerned.

UIC must continue to expand its current efforts to ensure equity and promote racial, cultural and gender diversity in its faculty and administration. We must work to ensure the success of women and minority faculty as they seek tenure, promotion and leadership opportunities. This will enhance the learning experience for all our students and ensure diverse contributions to the intellectual community. Finally, if we are to keep talented faculty at UIC, we need to address compensation inequities brought on by factors such as salary compression, and investigate the feasibility of options for more flexible workloads and career paths.



Faculty Excellence in Light of the Intellectual Programs that Define UIC

UIC is an academic community that is at once diverse, comprehensive and distinct. By 2010 it will be important for UIC to have attracted and retained the major intellectual leaders in the rich array of fields of that comprise UIC's diversity of academic excellence in scholarship, sponsored research and creative enterprise. By 2010 we will have made clear the particular intellectual projects that define the institution and will have committed our resources and programmatic initiatives to attracting, retaining and rewarding those faculty who are equally committed to teaching our students and contributing to the new and foundational intellectual efforts that will make UIC a great research institution.



Academic Professionals and Staff

In 2010, UIC's academic professionals and staff will be clear partners in the mission of UIC, sustaining a culture of mutual support with students and faculty.

The range of positions held by staff and academic professionals at UIC is about as broad as one can find in a modern organization. These groups have very different professional goals, job structures, pay scales, satisfaction and turnover levels. Yet they are fundamentally linked to one another and to faculty and students: philosophically, by the overarching identity and mission of UIC, and functionally, by sets of institutional needs and responsibilities. They are linked, too, by their shared dissatisfaction with the split between the “academic community” and the “administrative community.” To create an integrated, cohesive university, this tension must be addressed.

We need to continue current efforts to examine the reward and recognition system for staff and academic professionals, to address issues of long term salary compression and inequalities among administrative units and between the east and west side of campus. We should make continuing professional development and training—access to excellence—an expected element of every employee's career at UIC. With such a new level of support and community, staff and academic professionals will have the opportunity to realize their important roles within the university through the highest standards of skill development and service orientation.

The university community also needs to recognize that some current institutional structures and processes are daily impediments to the work of staff and academic professionals. While these issues are specifically addressed in the “Institution” section, we note here that systems, processes and administrative structures deeply affect the roles and activities of these individuals. The issues involved are complex, and efforts to address them need to be serious and deliberate.

Academic Professionals

Academic professionals have earned a full range of college and advanced degrees and have acquired a high level of expertise. They hold positions in every sector of the University, from business managers and administrators to technology support. They play central roles in teaching, research, service administration, and they often provide links between the university and industrial, commercial and public services and voluntary organizations.

To enhance the career opportunities of academic professionals and enable them to reach new levels of excellence, UIC needs to develop specific opportunities for professional development and advancement, including guidelines that clearly define responsibilities and rewards for all positions, and resolve questions of salary inequities across the campus. For example, increased responsibilities often are not accompanied by a commensurate increase in compensation, a situation that invites real or perceived exploitation. Underlying all these efforts is the need to improve the lines of communication between academic professionals and upper-level administration and faculty.

Staff

UIC could not operate without a large staff of full-time, part-time and temporary employees, trainees (residents, interns and externs) and student workers. These staff members support UIC's teaching, research and service missions, and the quality of their service plays a central role in the satisfaction of people within and outside the university.

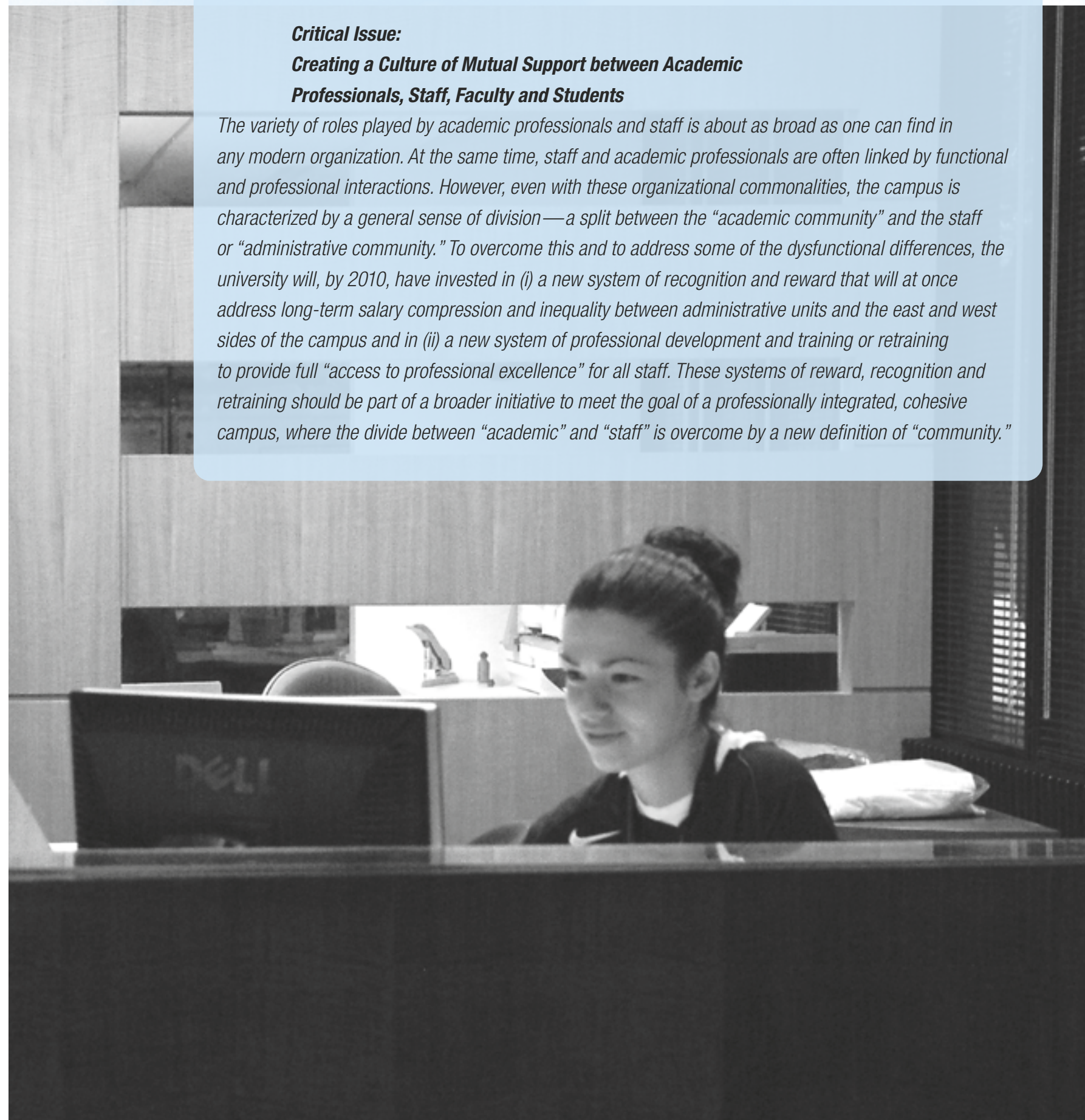
While the staff overall is committed to UIC and its welfare, different subgroups are driven by different expectations and incentives. Some staff are civil service employees, while others are not. Compensation, benefits and training vary widely. While reliance on large numbers of non-permanent and student staff is an essential part of the university, it also imposes the burden of repetitive training; training must be improved and work processes simplified to enhance service quality. The training and interpersonal professionalism of staff is especially important because they are often the first point of contact with UIC for people inside and outside the university.

To improve the quality of staff services, we need to make UIC a place where people choose to work throughout their professional life with pride, ownership and the knowledge that they are appreciated. To do that, we need to reexamine and reengineer our staffing systems and structures, and create effective avenues of communication between staff and other constituents of the university. Staff should be a part of the development and implementation of new policies and procedures. Additionally, all units should encourage staff to grow and develop, providing opportunities such as access to classes for professional development.

Critical Issue:

Creating a Culture of Mutual Support between Academic Professionals, Staff, Faculty and Students

The variety of roles played by academic professionals and staff is about as broad as one can find in any modern organization. At the same time, staff and academic professionals are often linked by functional and professional interactions. However, even with these organizational commonalities, the campus is characterized by a general sense of division—a split between the “academic community” and the staff or “administrative community.” To overcome this and to address some of the dysfunctional differences, the university will, by 2010, have invested in (i) a new system of recognition and reward that will at once address long-term salary compression and inequality between administrative units and the east and west sides of the campus and in (ii) a new system of professional development and training or retraining to provide full “access to professional excellence” for all staff. These systems of reward, recognition and retraining should be part of a broader initiative to meet the goal of a professionally integrated, cohesive campus, where the divide between “academic” and “staff” is overcome by a new definition of “community.”



Alumni

In 2010, UIC's alumni will be more involved as partners in the university community, sharing in efforts leading to UIC development and success, and benefiting from increased interactions.

The number of UIC graduates now exceeds 160,000 and grows by 5,000 every year. While 30,000 UIC graduates live in Chicago and 85,000 live in the greater Chicago area, fewer than 18,000 have signed on as members of the Alumni Association. This is not enough. Alumni are important resources for the UIC community—key partners and contributors to the university's future development and success. Alumni are older siblings and parents of prospective and current students, they are potential employers, they are mentors, and they provide connections and networks that can ensure a student's future success or a researcher's access to resources. They have the potential to extend the reach of UIC farther into the community.

For all these reasons and more, by 2010, we should make efforts to dramatically increase the number of alumni involved in the Alumni Association. We should nurture them while they are still students as well as after graduation. For example, students and alumni should be invited to share experiences in a comprehensive career counseling program. Making alumni a part of the overall educational experience of our students will produce positive and memorable encounters for all concerned. Reminding alumni that the continued strength of UIC has a direct impact on the value of their degree may provide additional motivation for them to stay involved with the university.

We should also increase the number of ways we give back to our alumni. Along with gaining their active involvement and support in entertainment, sporting and cultural events at their alma mater, UIC should offer them a full array of innovative programs to help them build on their degrees with continuing education and professional development. In short, we should aim to establish UIC as a leader in life-long learning, with our alumni at the center of such extended educational pathways.

Just as the university builds its community of alumni, students and friends through academic programs and civic activities, it will also need to celebrate the accomplishments of this extended community. We need to publicize the national and international accomplishments of our alumni along with those of faculty, students and staff, thus expanding our collective understanding of and commitment to the intellectual and creative excellence of all of us at UIC.

These relationships are particularly relevant in the context of private fundraising. In 2010 we will be concluding a seven-year, campus-wide fundraising campaign, having raised as much as \$750 million. This would be more than double the funds raised in the last such campaign. To achieve this level, we must be aggressive in our contacts with potential funders and in our messages about the importance of giving to UIC. Campus leaders, including senior administrators and deans, must consider fundraising to be a key component of their responsibilities, and a culture of philanthropy, both understanding its importance and valuing time spent in pursuit of contributions, must be created at all levels of the university.

A successful campaign of this magnitude will have positive effects beyond 2010.

The fundraising infrastructure that will be built during the campaign can remain in place, ensuring a larger and more reliable income stream from private giving on an ongoing basis. Endowments established during the campaign will provide income in perpetuity, provided additional financial stability and offsetting fluctuations in state funding.

By fostering “relationships for life” with alumni, UIC will have the opportunity to develop both academic and philanthropic relationships; alumni will become valued participants in the UIC community, and in turn, UIC will be a sustained presence in their lives.



External Constituencies

In 2010, UIC's friends and supporters, along with extensive networks of government, business, community and research organizations, will be key partners in the university's development and success.

At one level this entire strategic thinking exercise is about the building and rebuilding of community at UIC. Yet we are also a key part of a larger community, in our role as a great urban institution contributing to the growth and development of Chicago. We are ultimately part of the global community, a network of Great Cities around the world.

Our community should finally embrace all people who are related to UIC, directly and indirectly, individually and institutionally. This includes people within UIC and its neighborhood, people who are affiliated now and have been in the past, people who are interested in UIC's well-being and in whom we are interested. We need to consciously seek members of our broad community and cultivate their loyalty.

UIC should work harder to make itself well known to all its constituencies, including prospective students and employees, neighbors and local and global businesses.

Once these relationships are formed, they need to be nurtured and sustained. We should ensure that individuals see the value of a relationship with UIC even if they are not a student, an employee, a patient or a partner, and we should continue to provide value to sustain these relationships; this is particularly important for cultivating partnerships with businesses, community organizations and government agencies. Such community building requires communication, so it is necessary that we keep all members of the community informed about one another's achievements.

To welcome and support our partners, we are also required to make the campus accessible and vibrant—a secure, 24-hour environment for learning, teaching and the exchange of ideas. The university must be served by public transportation during weekends and evenings and be fully accessible to all who wish to use the campus and its resources. We need to build a set of programs that include attractive and exciting entertainment, sporting, cultural and educational events that can draw the full range of communities in the city to our campus, and we should offer targeted activities, such as summer camps, workshops and visits by high school and community college students.





The key element of our approach to external constituencies is partnership. As UIC moves to establish itself as a model of a 21st-century public university, relationships between the faculty, students and programs of UIC on the one hand, and external public, private and academic entities on the other, will be increasingly important. We need to become ever more cognizant of the mutual benefits that come from combining the resources of the university and outside agencies to meet shared goals in the creation, sharing and application of information. We will need to seek these partnerships aggressively, in accordance with our mission, particularly where our reach and impact are limited by fiscal constraints.

Every facet of the basic university mission—teaching, research, service and economic development—holds the potential for partnerships. UIC is uniquely positioned to find partners committed to access to excellence and to the goals of the Great Cities Commitment. By building on our strengths and vision, and communicating them clearly to the broader community, UIC can develop and strengthen its network of collaborators and expand its contributions as a leading public research institution.

To maintain and expand a position of leadership, UIC will have to develop and advance programs of creative entrepreneurship by building on our tradition of collaborative and engaged research, taking advantage of the skills and talent available in Chicago and establishing sustained external investment and philanthropic support. Development of donors willing to invest in our mission is crucial, especially as state dollars become a smaller fraction of our budget. Increased financial support will make possible a wide range of activities, including traditional and innovative programs of scholarship and research; programs to increase the diversity and excellence of faculty and students through a fully realized program of fellowships, scholarships and endowed chairs; and enhancement of the university's architectural preeminence through the funding of new laboratories, teaching and residential facilities.

In summary, public-private collaboration will bring entrepreneurial energy to the development of new information and invention. University-community partnerships will identify new resources and new knowledge needed to help UIC meet all aspects of its mission with renewed institutional vitality.

Private Support of the Public Mission

Today, deficits in state budgets across the country require creative partnerships to assure the public's interest can still be served through higher education. Recognizing that higher education will determine our collective future, industries, corporations and foundations are increasingly partnering with universities in preparing the citizenry of the 21st century for a knowledge-based society. We must seek partners to invest—financially, programmatically and substantively—in UIC's promise of assuring that the knowledge the 21st century demands is made available. We must create optimal conditions for personal discovery enjoyed by students, faculty and staff from all sectors of society. Support from these partners will be based on recognition of UIC's capacity to not only generate new knowledge, but also in recognition of UIC's unique opportunity to translate that knowledge into comprehensive solutions to address current and emerging issues confronting the city, state and nation. While we readily admit there are obvious dangers inherent in private support of public education, we must carefully weigh both opportunities and risks.

The creative interdisciplinary knowledge required to address 21st century issues necessitates cooperation and collaboration between existing and emerging disciplines. Engagement with outside constituencies in the city, nation and the world is absolutely critical. The knowledge derived from these collaborations and engagements is a key driving force in addressing 21st century societal needs and a decisive value of UIC.

