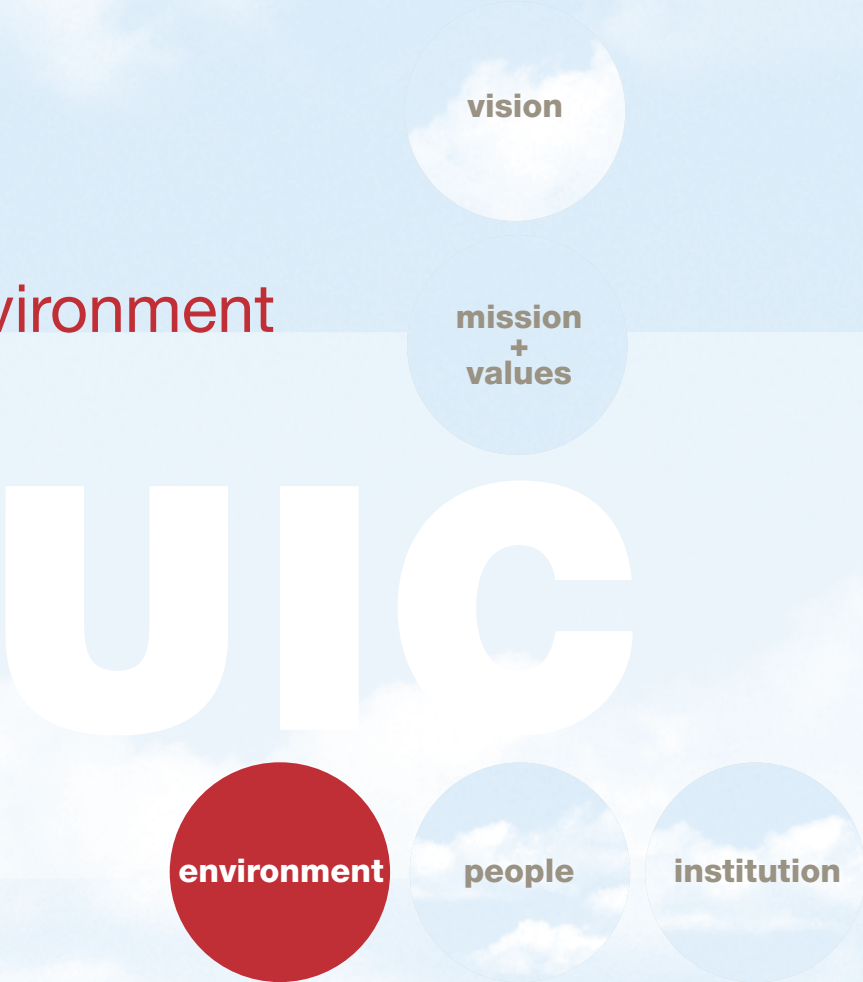


Part 3: Environment



As the most visible aspect of the institution, the campus environment has a crucial role to play in defining UIC as a great university and a great urban institution. The physical and technological structures of our campus drive and shape the interactions of our people, and they must actively support our core values and intellectual activities. We therefore require an environment that reflects access and excellence at all levels.

UIC is located close to the heart of a city known throughout the world for its innovative architecture and urban planning. The site of the campus and the history of its planning and design reflect broader conditions of urban change, and do not today present a coherent whole. But the complex mix of purpose and promise seen on the east and west sides of our campus offers opportunities for UIC to re-align itself with the architectural innovation of Chicago. With foresight, UIC can become at once an exceptional university campus and a new kind of urban institution.

UIC can and should be a world leader in architecture, landscape and planning and this leadership should be evidenced in ongoing and progressive attention to the campus and its surroundings. We envision a physical campus that meets the highest standards of design excellence and supports active, accessible engagement within the UIC community and with the life of the city. This includes, importantly, physical and programmatic access to and within the campus for people with disabilities. UIC must live up to its commitment to universal access. As the campus addresses accessibility and adopts an innovative and sustainable model of contemporary urban design, it will become a source of pride and support for the university community and a destination for the residents of Chicago.

The opportunities presented by the makeup and the location of UIC are evident. The steps required to realize these opportunities are, however, much more dramatic and far-reaching. To begin to understand this we must look at the current state of the UIC campus, its characteristics, its needs and the processes by which it is planned, operated and maintained.

UIC is located in a rapidly gentrifying area near downtown Chicago. The campus is made up of east and west portions, separated by a gap nearly a mile in width, plus a new, and largely residential, south portion. The west campus is primarily home to the medical fields, the east campus to a broader range of disciplines. The university buildings comprise an area of approximately 13 million gross square feet. They represent a spectrum of architectural styles, reflecting their different ages and functions and the dramatic growth of externally funded research at UIC.



Despite regular planning efforts through the years, the physical campus has no apparent coherent vision. Two major factors are to blame: the lack of involvement of campus users in the planning process, and the piecemeal and opportunistic funding of renovation and construction. Because of the chronic lack of state funding, new construction and renovation are largely driven by the availability of alternate funding sources, including research funds and student fees. As a result, new construction is determined by what can be done, rather than what should be done. The university is currently beginning a new master planning exercise. For it to succeed, the process should be inclusive, innovative and long term.

This master plan must also address renovation and maintenance needs, which have reached crisis proportions. The cost of deferred maintenance is now estimated to be \$525 million. The day-to-day maintenance of UIC buildings is at the lowest industry-defined standard. In almost every meeting the committee had with faculty, students and staff, the most passionate statements concerned the physical state of the campus and the impediments it imposed on productive work.

This is not to deny the significant progress that has been made. We have seen improvements in the overall campus environment and its impact on day-to-day activities. Examples include Project Oasis, new student housing and the new research and clinical buildings on the west campus. But the successes have been too few and not tied to an overall vision.

Any future vision of UIC depends on innovative, comprehensive and long-term efforts in construction and renovation. These efforts should respond to clearly articulated needs of the campus, and be driven by a planning process that is reflective of the strategic goals of the institution. While the work will certainly extend beyond 2010, planning for these changes has to begin immediately. The process must be representative, logical and on-going. Above all, it must reflect our values and the vision for 2010.

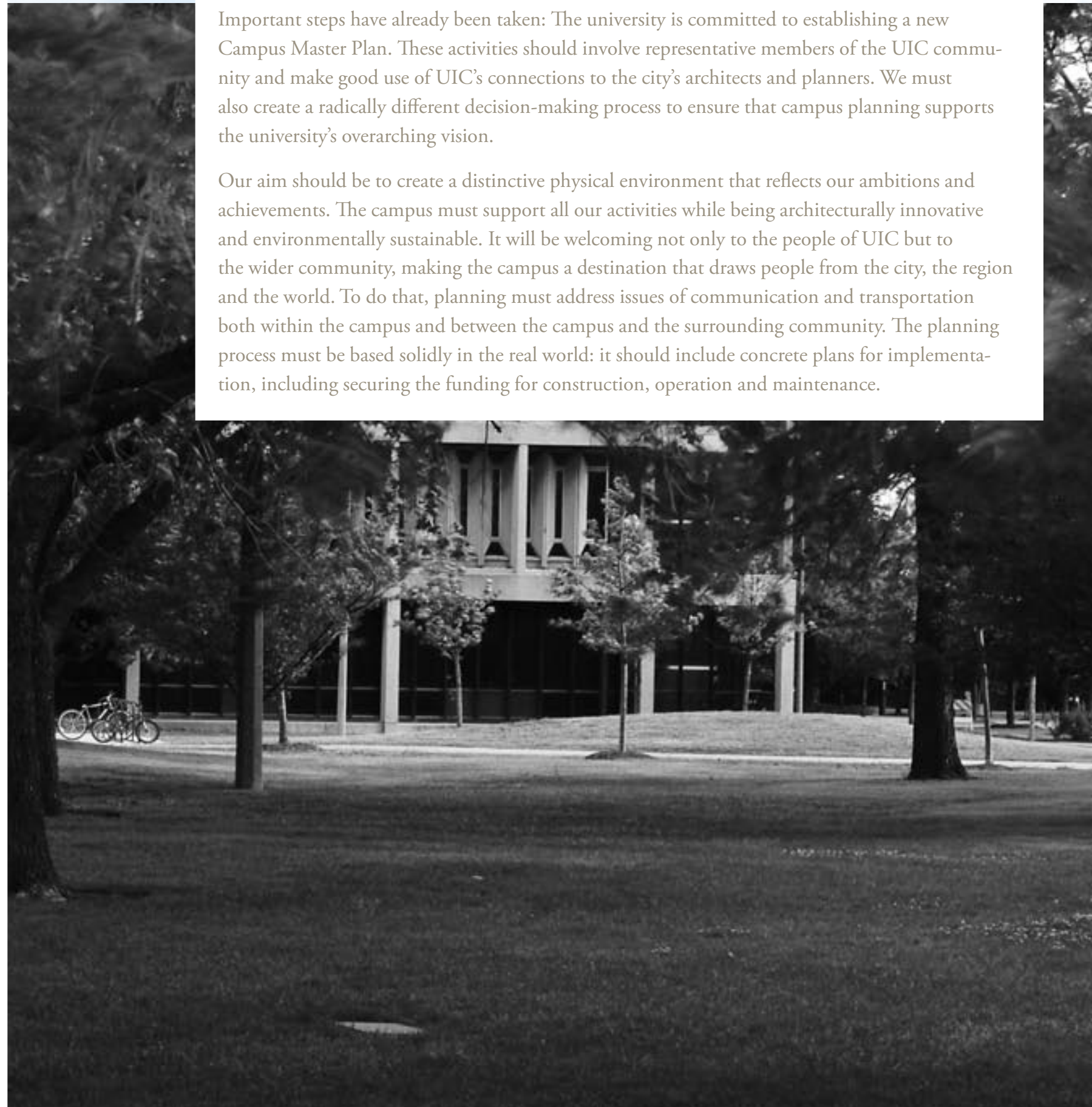
Campus Aesthetic

In 2010, the UIC campus will be recognized as a premier site of urban architecture.

UIC can and should be a part of the architectural imperative that is Chicago. This leadership should be evidenced in a renewed commitment to aesthetics that encourages ongoing comprehensive and progressive attention to the campus and its surroundings. As the campus adopts an innovative and sustainable model of contemporary urban design, it will become a source of pride and support for our students, faculty and staff, as well as a potential destination for the residents of Chicago. Implied in this is the parallel development of access through strong and integrated transportation and communication systems. Nothing can more strongly embody our vision of UIC—the highest standards of excellence manifest in our physical campus and an active, accessible engagement with each other and the life of the city.

Important steps have already been taken: The university is committed to establishing a new Campus Master Plan. These activities should involve representative members of the UIC community and make good use of UIC's connections to the city's architects and planners. We must also create a radically different decision-making process to ensure that campus planning supports the university's overarching vision.

Our aim should be to create a distinctive physical environment that reflects our ambitions and achievements. The campus must support all our activities while being architecturally innovative and environmentally sustainable. It will be welcoming not only to the people of UIC but to the wider community, making the campus a destination that draws people from the city, the region and the world. To do that, planning must address issues of communication and transportation both within the campus and between the campus and the surrounding community. The planning process must be based solidly in the real world: it should include concrete plans for implementation, including securing the funding for construction, operation and maintenance.



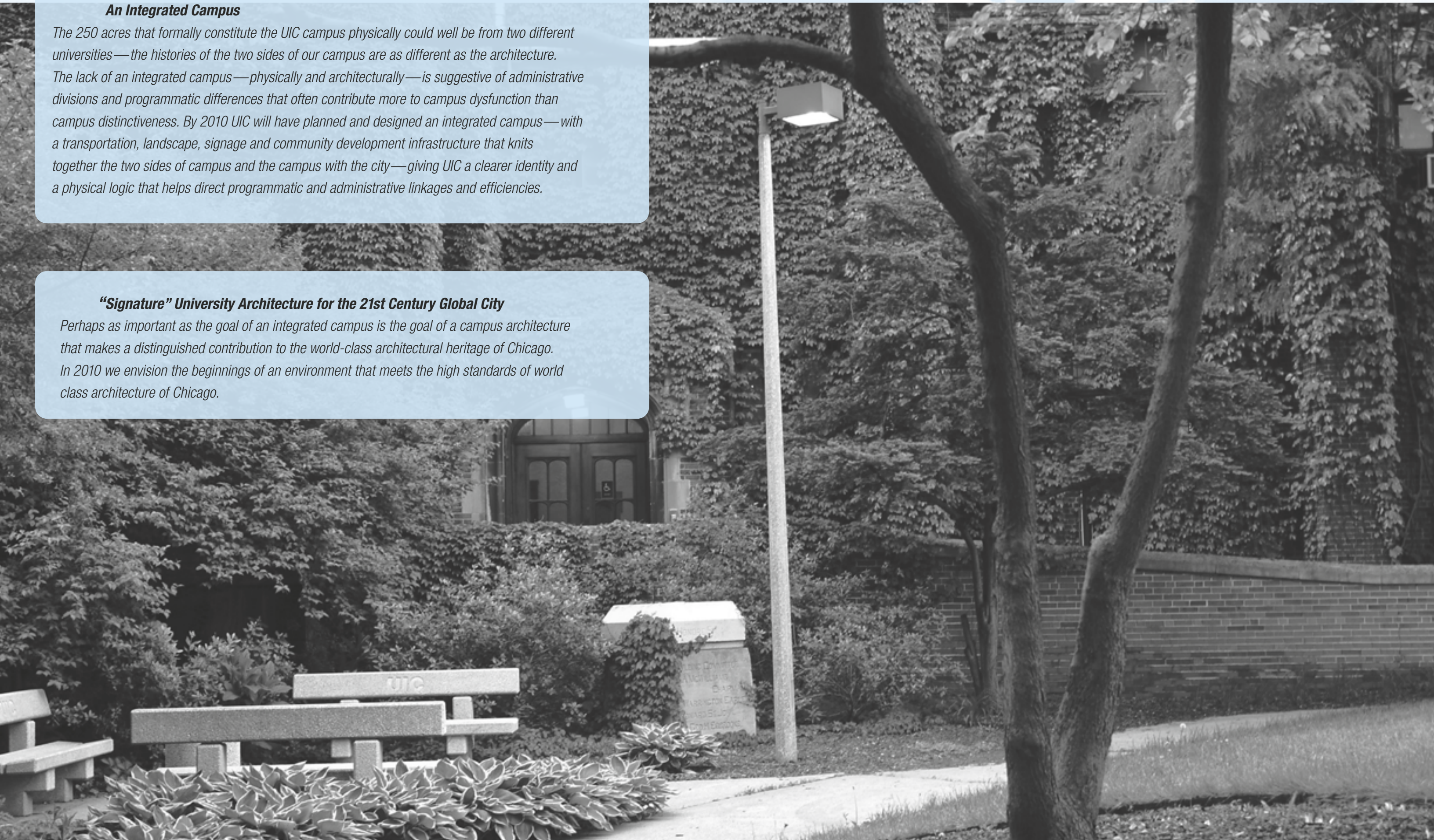


An Integrated Campus

The 250 acres that formally constitute the UIC campus physically could well be from two different universities—the histories of the two sides of our campus are as different as the architecture. The lack of an integrated campus—physically and architecturally—is suggestive of administrative divisions and programmatic differences that often contribute more to campus dysfunction than campus distinctiveness. By 2010 UIC will have planned and designed an integrated campus—with a transportation, landscape, signage and community development infrastructure that knits together the two sides of campus and the campus with the city—giving UIC a clearer identity and a physical logic that helps direct programmatic and administrative linkages and efficiencies.

“Signature” University Architecture for the 21st Century Global City

Perhaps as important as the goal of an integrated campus is the goal of a campus architecture that makes a distinguished contribution to the world-class architectural heritage of Chicago. In 2010 we envision the beginnings of an environment that meets the high standards of world class architecture of Chicago.





City as Campus, Campus as City

In 2010, UIC's activities will continue to extend beyond its conventional boundaries into the surrounding community.

The university of the 21st century will interact with its environment at all levels. For UIC, we speak of a broader “Great Cities Commitment”—one that defines Great Cities as the physical, social and intellectual communities of the modern world. We must extend the boundaries of the university in both the physical and virtual worlds, to establish relationships between UIC and its many communities. We should be cognizant that the decisions we make and the actions we take will resonate most strongly in the communities closest to us. This “broadening” begins on our own campus: by softening the boundaries between the traditional divisions of scholarship, research and practice and by developing processes, facilities and technology infrastructure that encourage interaction and exchange across disciplines and functions. The key is fostering communication—physically, through transportation and use of space and time, and virtually, through electronic media and administrative processes.

Attracting more of the public to our campus will enhance life both at the university and in the neighborhood. To make the UIC campus a destination for local residents, we need to strengthen and further develop programs and facilities—from libraries and collections to concerts and public forums—that attract people from outside the university community. Certain buildings that support scholarly and research activities could also serve as cultural centers and magnets for the wider community. These “signature buildings” would symbolize UIC's engagement in creating, sharing and applying knowledge and culture.

As the physical boundaries continue to blur and as the surrounding area gentrifies, the university must ensure that the UIC community has access to affordable housing, and equally importantly, that affordable housing and quality community life abound for neighbors not connected with the university. Such policies acknowledge that the quality of university life for all is greatly enhanced when faculty, staff and students live close to the campus in communities that are historic and diverse.

For the interactions of UIC with the outside world, we have alluded to the many “Great Cities” represented by our scholarship, research and practice. Our faculty are engaged with scholarly communities that know no institutional or national boundaries; their interactions with these communities enrich and broaden our university, giving students and faculty access to the wider world. Of course, these activities depend on communication. For UIC to develop fully as a world university, we must enhance virtual and physical access: of our faculty and students to the world, and of the world to UIC. We are fortunate to be located in Chicago, a major and long-standing hub of transportation and electronic communication. Couple this with particular strengths on the UIC campus, and we can position ourselves in the vanguard of modern communication technology. Couple it with welcoming facilities, and we will become a destination for the outside members of our Great Cities.

A New Definition, Design and Planning of “Campus”

Today, and in 2010, the traditional notion of “campus” as an “ivory tower,” whose borders serve as walls of intellectual demarcation and physical differentiation, is inadequate. The borders of the campus are permeable, and as the area gentrifies, the university should recognize that it is at once a campus and a city—a 24/7 environment where the formal border of the campus will become increasingly less important and the quality of living, working and playing on the campus and in its neighborhood becomes the central feature of what it means to be “at UIC.” Campus planning means community development planning in all its manifestations. For example, the importance of faculty, staff and students living in proximity to the formal campus requires that the campus plan be as much about securing employer-assisted and affordable housing in the UIC neighborhood as it is about new residence halls and academic buildings on campus. UIC will have limited success in improving the quality of non-class life for members of the university if the majority of faculty, students and staff who wish to live near campus cannot do so. The South Campus development is one success where a previously declining area has been transformed into a mix of student housing, town homes and condominiums with commercial and university space, all in close proximity to the campus. This is bringing a new sense of life and community to the campus environs. Ironically, however, it has not provided housing that is financially accessible to most of the faculty and staff.



Technology

In 2010, the best communication and computer technology will support and enhance our mission.

UIC's computing, networking and communication infrastructure and application should be second to none and fully accessible to the UIC community. This is an essential part of providing access to excellence, and allows us to extend our reach to all the communities in which we participate and serve.

Communication and computer technology have advanced at an extraordinary pace in recent years, with profound implications for research, scholarship, teaching and economic development. Sometimes research has driven the development of new technology; sometimes technological progress has opened up new methods or areas of study. UIC has led in many of these fields, from networking to virtual reality, and we are well positioned to bring technological expertise to the service of our mission. Technology has vast potential to improve teaching and to support the application of our knowledge. As we develop new technologies or find new uses for existing ones, we must bring them from the classroom or laboratory to the world.

The continuing rapid rate of change in technology is both a benefit and a challenge. It means we cannot simply establish ourselves as state-of-the-art at a single point in time; we need a structure that allows us to adapt to continual change. This applies not only to hardware and software but to the support and training of users—students, faculty and staff. We must recognize that the effective use of technology requires deliberate, continuing effort, and be willing to make that effort.

Technology in Creating, Sharing and Applying Knowledge

There was a time when computing and networking capability outpaced our ability to put it to good use. However, technology has quickly moved from a new tool that faculty, staff and students struggled to infuse into academic and administrative work to an essential element in carrying out cutting edge research, teaching and service. Today, our requirement for technology, which is central rather than peripheral to the classroom, conference room and laboratory, has surpassed the ability of the university to keep up with demand. Research grant support is invaluable in providing current technologies to address specific pressing challenges, but those technologies are required to interface with a broader infrastructure that must continually be upgraded. In addition, a teaching and learning infrastructure must be developed and maintained so that educational technology is a seamless part of the teaching and learning experience rather than a classroom management challenge. To live up to our commitment of access to excellence, we must employ all available means of increasing access to knowledge. This will not only require attention to hardware and software, but must also include a human resource support structure and an institution-level strategic technology plan designed to support every aspect of UIC's mission.



Campus Integration

In 2010, UIC will function as an integrated whole: physically, architecturally and substantively.

One of the distinctive features of UIC is the diversity found in almost every aspect of its makeup. To take full advantage of the opportunities presented by diverse disciplinary strengths, the institution must function as an integrated whole—physically, architecturally and substantively. The challenge is to create a coherent, functioning entity while respecting the uniqueness and strengths of constituent parts.

To achieve this vision, radical improvement in the transportation and communication infrastructures that facilitate dialogue and scholarly collaboration is required. High on the list are upgrading the campus bus system, creating common interactive spaces between the east and west sides of campus and effectively promoting campus-wide events. The visible improvements have to be supported by administrative and institutional processes; though they are less obviously parts of the campus environment, these processes are crucial to our ability to work together in a complementary, coherent and constructive manner.

Care of Our Campus

In 2010, the care and maintenance of our working environment will be a part of UIC's culture.

The poor maintenance of our campus, so passionately addressed by those who met with the committee, strikes at the core of our identity. It erodes the sense of value and achievement that should result from our successes, undermines our efforts in recruitment and retention and impedes the day-to-day performance of students, faculty and staff.

Poor maintenance is a chronic problem, and remedying it requires a cultural change. The physical appearance and maintenance of the campus must become a priority, not an afterthought. The care of our campus is a responsibility belonging to all of us. It should become a source of pride rather than contention.

Lack of resources is only the superficial cause of the problem. The current condition has arisen over time and by choice—albeit forced. Maintenance cannot be viewed as a cost to defer, but as an essential investment in the people and institution. UIC's outstanding programs and leading research initiatives require funding, but if undercut by poor maintenance of the environment, they will soon decline. Excellence in scholarship simply cannot be sustained without an infrastructure of equal excellence.



We recognize that decades of neglect cannot be repaired overnight. Restoring the campus will require creativity, careful planning and a clear commitment of resources. But without it, UIC cannot be the great urban institution it aspires to be. With conscious efforts, refocused priorities and innovative applications, UIC can create a campus environment worthy of a top research university of the 21st century.

Critical Issue: The Physical Environment of UIC

Too often, problems with the physical campus have been regarded as merely cosmetic and brushed off or relegated to a secondary status since they were not seen to affect the primary functions of the university. We believe just the opposite. We believe that these problems strike at the core of the UIC identity, insofar as a successful university is one where all people have pride in the entire enterprise—in their workplace, their employer, their work, and themselves. Environmental problems can drain motivation and stifle the productivity of every student, faculty member, administrator, and staff member of this university. In turn, these problems limit the growth of research activities, threaten the teaching mission, and block community engagement. By 2010, UIC will experience a sea-change in attitudes to the importance of the campus environment. Without this change, our continued growth and increased stature cannot be sustained.

