

To: The UIC Community
From: Provost R. Michael Tanner
Re: UIC 2010: Strategic Thinking

Strategic Thinking

It is my pleasure to invite you to join me in a vital campus-wide activity—the UIC 2010 Strategic Thinking process. UIC can only continue to evolve as a great public research university if there exists a clear vision for the campus that informs, guides and integrates all aspects of the institution's strategic development in the coming years. Of course, such a vision and the plans to carry it out do not materialize out of whole cloth, and they are not captured in any single existing planning document.

It is my strong belief that the best strategic activity occurs in an inclusive process that fosters a sustained organizational ethos or 'culture' of strategic discourse—a strategic thinking process, if you will. At its best, such a discourse is transformative, helping us to continually challenge and invigorate ourselves as an academic community and, at the same time, find the means to engage the city and world around us. At a minimum, such strategic thinking should be the springboard for planning at all levels at UIC: department, center, college, campus; east, west and south.

We are not beginning the strategic thinking process in a vacuum. UIC has benefited from several strategic planning exercises in the past and the results can be found in planning documents included elsewhere on this website. All of our units plan, some more formally than others. We all conduct some level of strategic activity and make choices about the future. But, as a campus and across units, there has been little collective conversation and we have lacked a real framework through which to foster strategic understanding.

A Framework

Over the past few months we have put in place the first elements of a framework for strategic thinking:

(i) An annual Leadership Retreat. A late summer meeting where 200 leaders from colleges, departments and other units identified major strategic questions for inclusion in the strategic thinking process. Hopefully this will become an annual event at which the leadership of the campus comes together for critical, reflective conversation and strategic collaboration

(ii) The UIC 2010 Strategic Thinking Committee. Chancellor Manning and I announced the formation of the 2010 Strategic Thinking Committee at the UIC Leadership Retreat in August, 2003. Since that time, a Committee comprised of faculty, staff, students and external parties has been formed and charged to lead a campus wide strategic process to consider the future of UIC and, specifically, to create a document that will guide planning on our campus for the next seven years. While all of UIC's many constituent bodies could not be represented in the committee's limited membership, it is the Committee's purpose to broadly solicit input and to engage in a sustained dialogue to ensure that the Committee arrives at the most informed and balanced conclusions possible.

(iii) Your active participation in the Strategic Thinking Process. My intention is that the strategic thinking process will offer multiple avenues of interaction so that each member of the campus community can find a way to engage the Committee and contribute to the crafting of a document that represents the very best thinking on the strategic directions of UIC. I have asked the 2010 Co-chairs, Professors Russell Betts and David Perry, to keep the campus well-informed and engaged in the Committee's work. To this end they have created a website, which can be found at <http://tiger.uic.edu/depts/oaa/2010/index.html>.

On this website you will find the Committee's charge, membership, timeline and meeting information. To keep everyone engaged, the Committee will be hosting a series of meetings—big and small—with all sectors of the campus to elicit your goals, thoughts and concerns. Please watch for notices of these meetings both here on the website and throughout the campus. The website will also have draft documents for your review and comment, once they are available. These documents will be the subject of campus-wide conversations, resulting in the delivery of the Committee's final strategic thinking document to me. I encourage you to visit the website periodically, and to engage fully in the strategic thinking process established by the Committee.

(iv) The Vice Provost for Planning and Programs. The fourth element of this new framework for strategic activity is the recruitment of a Vice Provost for Planning and Programs. The products of the strategic thinking exercise should serve as the foundation for good strategic planning and program development—at both the unit

and campus levels. Professor Russell Betts has been appointed to this position and I am relying on him to help the campus to maintain ongoing, sustained strategic direction.

An Invitation to Participate

Let me again invite you to participate actively in the strategic thinking process. Two of the three key permanent elements of the new framework for strategic action at UIC are the new Vice Provost for Planning and Programs and the Leadership Retreat. The third and most important element is the regular, sustained participation of all of us in a new organizational ‘ethos’ or ‘culture’ of strategic action. The future of UIC will be well served by a directed sense of mission and activity—and it all begins with each of us thinking carefully about the purposes, prospects, and paths to success for this outstanding institution.

Sincerely,



Michael Tanner

From the 2010 Committee Website

<http://tigger.uic.edu/depts/oaa/2010/index.html>

2010 Strategic Thinking Committee: the Charge

The 2010 Strategic Thinking Committee was drawn from recommendations made by deans, directors, department heads and other members of the campus community. The Committee will be co-chaired by Professor David Perry (College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs/Great Cities) and by Professor Russell Betts, the Vice Provost for Planning and Programs.

The charge to the UIC 2010 Committee is to help the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) develop a vision for the campus to inform and to guide strategic development of all aspects of the campus over the next seven years. The Committee should serve as a periscope toward the future, analyzing state, national, and international trends that will influence the opportunities for UIC and identifying themes and areas for emphasis that will propel UIC to greater academic excellence, compelling institutional value to Chicago and Illinois, and enhanced national and international prominence.

The vision should encompass the strengths and potentials of the east, west, and south campuses, culminating in broad recommendations to be of value to campus decision-makers until the year 2010 and beyond. Key recommendations are insights and ideas that can be interpreted flexibly, so they can be modified and adapted in response to changing conditions over time.

The Committee’s report will: situate UIC in a broader academic, social, cultural, and economic context; identify critical areas and salient features; integrate multiple dimensions of campus thinking and planning from the departments, institutes, colleges, and divisions; propose new initiatives without evident UIC antecedents, as appropriate; and promote campus thematic unity.

The Committee deliberations will result in a clearly written document laying out UIC’s present strengths on which to build and weaknesses that must be addressed, important UIC opportunities as well as threats to UIC’s future, and UIC’s competitive advantages as a high-quality public research university in a unique urban setting.

2010 Strategic Thinking Committee: Membership

Co-chairs:

R. Russell Betts

Vice Provost for Planning and Programs
Professor, Physics

David C. Perry

Professor and Director,
Great Cities Institute

Members:

Frances Aparicio

Professor and Director, Latin American Studies

Richard Benya

Associate Professor, Medicine Digestive
and Liver Disease

Bette Bottoms

Professor, Psychology

Tom DeFanti

Distinguished Professor, Electrical Engineering
and Computer Science

Douglas Garofalo

Professor, Architecture

Carol Gill

Associate Professor, Disability and
Human Development

Michael Johnson

Professor and Director, Center for
Pharmaceutical Biotechnology

Jenna Kim

Undergraduate Student GPPA,
Pre-med and Psychology

Jianxun Li

Associate Professor, Oral Biology

Sue McNeil

Professor and Director, Urban
Transportation Center

Ann Patla

Assistant to the VC for Health Affairs
Liaison to State Agencies

Members:

Arkalgud Ramaprasad

Professor and Head, Information and
Decision Sciences

Beth Richie

Professor and Head, African American Studies

Robert Rouzer

Director, Campus Unions

Celina Sima

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Education

Flecia Thomas

Director, African-American Academic Network

Angela Tyner

Professor, Molecular Genetics

James McNulty

UIC Alumnus
Former President and Chief Executive Officer,
Chicago Mercantile Exchange

Walter Michaels

Professor and Head, English

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