

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

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TO: Academic Senate, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
FROM: Joyce Tolliver, Chair, Executive Committee
DATE: March 16, 2011
RE: Final Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Integration of Multi-campus Universities

On Feb. 1, 2011, I asked a group of seven colleagues from this campus to research various administrative structures that have been used to integrate universities with multiple campuses. This request arose from the clear need for reliable, documented information to serve as the basis for a data-driven and extensive conversation about what organizational structures suit the University of Illinois's unique characteristics.

The Senate Executive Committee called for such a conversation in its Statement on the Campus and the Chancellor. In his February 18, 2011 letter to me, Chair Kennedy agreed, noting that "we need to position the University for success in the future, and it may be worth entering into a University-wide dialogue about the future of the University. To have that discussion with all of the University's constituents would be an ambitious task but one which I think will ultimately be necessary. . . ."

In composing a team for this project, I approached widely-respected faculty leaders whose knowledge of this campus and of the broader context of public U.S. research universities was extensive. The members of this blue-ribbon panel were Debra Bragg (Education), C. K. Gunsalus (Business), George Gollin (Engineering), Sarah Projansky (Media), Wojtek Chodzko-Zajko (Applied Health Sciences), Matthew Wheeler (ACES), and Paul Diehl (LAS), who graciously agreed to chair the committee. These experts, in addition, interviewed several national leaders in higher education, some of whom have a close familiarity with this university and its traditions. I asked the committee not to make any specific recommendations about the best structures and practices for the University of Illinois, but rather to gather, organize, and present a cogent data base upon which such recommendations might ultimately be made. The final report of the committee is attached.

While the committee members scrupulously avoided recommending any specific course of action, the report makes the following crucial observations:

I. Scholarly studies in higher education distinguish between *multi-site universities*, which usually feature a single flagship campus with smaller regional campuses; and *multi-campus* universities, which comprise several campuses with different missions and profiles. The University of Illinois is clearly more like a multi-campus university than a multi-site university. Moreover, it differs from multi-site universities in the small number of its campuses and in the heterogeneity of the mission profiles and size of its campuses, each of which

exists and is accredited as a discrete university, rather than solely as a part of a single university.

2. There is greater *centralization* of functions at multi-site universities (such as Penn State and Ohio State, for example) than at multi-campus institutions. Furthermore, where this centralization is beneficial, it more concerns the "*administrative shell*" functions, as opposed to "core academic" functions. The outside consultants interviewed by the committee were consistent and clear in their comments about this organizational principle.

3. Academic and research excellence is more strongly correlated with *decentralization* of academic functions, and decision-making that is held closer to the site of these core activities. Again, our consultants, from a variety of different kinds of institutions, were strongly consistent on this point.

With deep gratitude to the committee members, I offer this report to the University community in the expectation that it will serve as the foundation for a much-needed University-wide conversation about what administrative structures best position us to thrive in the decades ahead. Let the conversation begin.

c: Christopher G. Kennedy, Chair, Board of Trustees
Michael J. Hogan, President
Robert A. Easter, Interim Vice President and Chancellor
Richard Wheeler, Interim Provost and Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs