

TO: University of Illinois Board of Trustees

FROM: Jennifer Neubauer, President, University of Illinois Alumni Alliance & Associate Vice Chancellor for Alumni Relations, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

DATE: November 15, 2018

RE: University of Illinois Alumni Alliance

The previous year has been a period of stabilization for the University of Illinois Alumni Alliance (UIAA or Alliance). Following the Alliance's reorganization in September 2017, the organization took on the mantle of providing System level services to alumni, overseeing program and service areas including but not limited to alumni legislative advocacy, communications, affinity partnerships and programs, and management and maintenance of the Alice Campbell Alumni Center in Urbana. The reorganization provided an opportunity for the Alliance to refocus its efforts and strategy, and both staff and alumni volunteers are experiencing renewed senses of energy, purpose, and excitement.

Organizational Updates:

The University of Illinois Alumni Alliance Board of Directors recently met on Thursday, September 13 at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Meeting on the UIC campus afforded Board members an opportunity to engage with the UIC community; in addition to meeting at Student Center East and receiving updates from Chancellor Amiridis and UIC Alumni Association Executive Director Caryn Schultz Korman, the Board was invited to tour the UIC Innovation Center. During the business meeting, the Board elected Director Randy Witter to the position of Board Secretary, voted to approve the FY2019 budget, and heard reports from Alliance staff and the Board committees. The meeting agenda also included a Board of Trustees report from Trustee Smart, a University of Illinois System report from President Killeen, a University of Illinois System finance report from CFO Ghosh, and a Foundation Board report from Foundation Board Chair Feldman. In addition to the reports from Chancellor Amiridis and Executive Director Korman, the Board also heard a report on UIS and the UIS Office of Advancement from UIS Associate Vice Chancellor for Alumni Relations Chuck Schrage and an update on the Illinois Alumni Association from Illinois Associate Vice Chancellor for Alumni Relations Jennifer Neubauer. The meeting concluded with a report from Illinois Business Consulting, a student-run consulting firm with whom the Board has contracted. Illinois Business Consulting is currently working with Alliance staff and Board leadership to help the Alliance develop a strategy for expanding its service and product offerings for both alumni and the three System universities.

The Board has also formed a Strategic Planning Task Force to guide the Alliance as it moves forward. With Randy Witter as chair and Bill Forsyth as vice chair, the task force is comprised of representatives from the Alliance Board of Directors and from each of the three universities within the UI System. Members include:

- Chair: Randy Witter, UIS '82
- Vice Chair: Bill Forsyth, UIUC '86
- Pat Basu, UIUC '00
- Marissa Dupont, UIUC '19
- Jamaal Hollins, UIS '14
- Rob Kennedy, UIUC '78

- Annie Li, UIC '15
- John Ochoa, UIC '78
- Jeff Osuji, UIUC '09 and UIUC '11
- Prabha Parameswaran, UIUC '89 and UIUC '93
- Ex Officio: Steve Van Arsdell, UIUC '72 and UIUC '73

The task force's population was driven by a desire to include members who represent each of the System's three universities and who represent a diverse array of graduation years, backgrounds, and other experiences. Additionally, the Board is exploring means for establishing ad hoc committees that will complement the work of the task force. These committees may focus on strategic priorities including affinity programs, communications, history and traditions, membership, and service and product offerings.

The work of these new groups will dovetail with the work of Illinois Business Consulting (IBC). IBC is housed in the Gies College of Business and is the nation's largest professionally managed student-run university consulting organization. The IBC team is seeking to answer the question, "Where do we take the Alliance next?" After conducting primary research on alumni and current students and conducting case studies of successful alumni engagement programs at Illinois and other universities, IBC will develop a set of recommendations for the UIAA; those recommendations will include an in-depth communication strategy for outreach to both alumni and students, as well as a slate of proposed product and service offerings that the Alliance could provide its constituents. IBC will seek to ensure that its recommendations are scalable, allowing for any strategies, services, or products to be tailored to suit the System or any of the three universities. The students will present their recommendations at the end of Fall Semester, allowing the Board, Strategic Planning Task Force, and staff with the opportunity to review and implement their recommendations in the following months.

Program Area Updates:

The Alliance continues to oversee System-level alumni programs and services, including affinity programs, communications, legislative advocacy, and management of the Alice Campbell Alumni Center, including the newly opened Richmond Family Welcome Gallery.

The Alliance's affinity partnerships continue to grow. The partnership between the UIAA and the University of Illinois Community Credit Union saw a total of 15,256 credit cards in circulation at the close of the most recent fiscal year; that number represents a 402 card increase from the previous fiscal year. Compensable transactions for the final quarter of FY2018 also showed an increase, rising by 2.63% year-over-year, and the program generated \$172,996 in revenue for the UIAA during the same quarter. Similarly, the Mercer and Liberty Mutual Insurance programs saw growth: the UIAA's agreement includes a fixed royalty amount for 2018-19 of \$550,000, and there are an estimated 13,403 current policies across various product offerings. Finally, the EXPLORERS travel program has already booked 701 travelers to date for FY2019, compared to a total of 642 travelers in FY2018. FY2019 bookings to date bring roughly \$160,000 in commission, which also puts the program on track to see an increase in commission for FY2019.

Production of the three university-specific magazines continues. *Illinois Alumni* has a current quarterly distribution of 58,000. The Fall '18 issue was recently released, and the Winter '18 issue is scheduled to

be uploaded to the printer on November 30 and will include features on alumnus Robert Falls, artistic director of the Goodman Theatre; 1918 Influenza Pandemic and Homecoming; Illinois's 100-year history of preparing students for military service; alumna and U.S. Paralympian Tatyana McFadden; and the Blizzard of 2007. The Fall '18 issue of *UIC Magazine* was also recently released, and the Fall '18 issue of the newly redesigned *UIS Today* went to print this week. Both *Illinois Alumni* and *UIC Magazine* received Honorable Mentions in the 2018 Folio Eddie Awards, which recognize excellence in magazine editorial and design across all sectors of the industry.

Illinois Connection had a busy summer making inroads with legislators. Following the state's passage of a FY2019 budget, the program executed a thank you campaign that involved 725 advocates writing thank you emails to state legislators for passing a budget that provided the System with increased funding for operations and its first state capital funding in nine years. In July, Illinois Connection distributed an advocacy information survey to all members of the Illinois General Assembly; the Illinois Connection team is currently analyzing the results, which will inform future advocacy strategies and initiatives and will ensure that Illinois Connection communicates with legislators in the ways that legislators prefer. The Alliance has also supported Illinois Connection's acquisition of two new software programs to aid legislative advocacy efforts. Phone2Action will replace existing advocacy software and will expand communication opportunities for alumni advocates to engage their legislators through email, phone, Facebook, or Twitter. Meanwhile, RAP Index will aid with "grasstops" efforts by providing a forum through which alumni advocates can self-identify their relationships with elected officials. In addition to these initiatives, Illinois Connection continues to host events for advocates and legislators and also oversees the Student Advocacy Coalition organizations at each of the three universities.

Finally, this has been an exciting autumn for the Alice Campbell Alumni Center. Following years of planning and several months of construction, the Richmond Family Welcome Gallery was opened on October 11. The Alliance hosted a grand opening reception and ribbon-cutting ceremony featuring remarks by Alliance Board Chair Steve Van Arsdell, Alliance President Jennifer Neubauer, Illinois Chancellor Robert Jones, and System Executive Vice President and Vice President for Academic Affairs Barbara Wilson. Nearly 500 guests attended the grand opening, and guests included alumni, friends, donors, university leaders, and community leaders. There was significant media coverage from outlets including WCIA, the *News Gazette*, and *Penny for Your Thoughts* hosted by Brian Barnhart. The Welcome Gallery is now open to the public, and during the Gallery's first full week open, 985 visitors explored the Gallery's installations and features, including:

- A Memory Space featuring five life-size backlit transparency panels displaying large images of alumni and students, each sharing his or her personal story,
- An automated oral history Story Booth that allows visitors to record their own personal stories and memories,
- 10-foot-high by 5-foot-wide Discovery Boxes that focus on different elements of student life and university history by combining artifacts, photographs, and interactive video displays that enable visitors to obtain more detailed information through the use of touch screens,
- A large interactive Trailhead Map that displays the growth of the Urbana campus over the decades and offers turn-by-turn directions to get from the Alumni Center to any campus building,

- And a 55-foot kinetic mobile that is suspended from the Alumni Center's third story skylight and includes replicas of more than 400 University of Illinois diplomas contributed by alumni.

The Welcome Gallery will serve as a forum to educate visitors, celebrate the University of Illinois's history and successes, and bring together alumni and friends who return to campus.

Conclusion:

2018 has been an exciting year for the University of Illinois Alumni Alliance as the organization has refocused on several strategic priorities and begun to position itself for further success in 2019. The work of the Strategic Planning Task Force and Illinois Business Consulting will allow the Alliance to explore a variety of possibilities and opportunities for future programs and services, as the Board of Directors and staff remain focused and committed to serving, connecting, and celebrating the University of Illinois's diverse and accomplished alumni base.