

Annual Evaluation

Michael Amiridis
Chancellor, University of Illinois at Chicago
Vice President, University of Illinois System
July 15, 2019

Dear Michael,

I thank you for your input summarizing your activities and accomplishments over the period July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019. I appreciate the detailed nature of your report and am very grateful for the time and energy you have put into preparing these materials. I met with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee recently to get their comments on the past year of performance and can report that it was an intensively supportive discussion with regard to both you and your senior leadership team. I look forward to a conversation that covers the issues, plans and opportunities you described in your report as part of the annual evaluation cycle.

At the outset, I want to congratulate you on another year of strong and effective leadership and significant progress. The University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) continues to prosper under your optimistic, energetic, and engaging leadership style and your efforts to build an action-oriented leadership team are paying off. There is evident appreciation within the faculty for your consultative and communicative style, and for that of Provost Susan Poser and Vice Chancellor Bob Barish. You were given particularly high marks for your listening skills and your willingness to solve problems and attend sessions in departments and interact with all members of the UIC community and beyond.

Your strategy to augment enrollment is working well, with a fourth straight year of encouraging gains in the number of admitted students, as well as important increases in diversity of the student body. UIC's enrollment gains have been highlighted in the media and this has contributed importantly to the evident high standing of UIC in both state and city leadership. The combination of tuition control and enrollment growth puts UIC in a state-wide leadership position. And the threshold, now reached, of 31,500+ students puts UIC in a very special category as a unique, diverse research-intensive university, situated in a world city, with a principled land-grant mission. Your plan to increase international enrollment through a partnership with Shorelight Education and UIC Global is paying off with more than 650 students now attending. This has been a very strategic and successful move. Congratulations to you and your team on this major accomplishment!

Morale has continued to improve since your arrival, despite the debilitating labor issues, and you have made significant strides in building a strong leadership team to guide UIC forward. With the difficulties of the bad state budgetary situation now in the rear-view mirror, your work to develop and refine a shared vision for the future of UIC has been well received by both internal and external stakeholders. You have participated actively in important system-wide discussions and have led the *Ignite UIC* philanthropic campaign, launched in October, 2017. The philanthropic campaign has exceeded the half way mark towards its goal and you are acting expeditiously to improve the fundraising team in an appropriate fashion. Your ongoing work to

build and staff a first-ever UIC Alumni Association program is moving forward with some considerable enthusiasm.

Your office has energetically re-envisioned priorities and processes, including initiation of the successful December Commencement ceremony and the co-branding campaign bringing East and West components closer together in outlook and collaborative function. You initiated a successful “state of the University” address, which serves to inform both internal and external stakeholders of progress towards shared goals. You continue to develop an appropriate national and international presence for UIC through your committee work and travel accomplishments (e.g., recent trips to Morocco and Israel). Provost Poser’s program of campus conversations is both very impressive and praiseworthy.

You have effectively managed tricky events and processes, such as a (small) number of critical ethics investigations and personnel issues, the faculty and graduate student labor contract negotiations, and the complex discussions regarding urban innovation initiatives. You have built task teams to review and re-engineer strategic enrollment planning, student mental health, student academic programs, diversity activities, and faculty affairs, as well as the academic program review, dashboard and Board approval steps to keep the University on track in its core academic mission. The Advisory Board for UI Health is important.

The acquisition of the John Marshall Law School is a major historic accomplishment and a testament to careful and through planning and your “strategic patience”. The upcoming ribbon cutting ceremony will be a major milestone for UIC. Congratulations on shepherding this effort through to a successful conclusion – a diplomatic coup as much as anything! Now, your attention will need to switch to the transition itself, which appears to be proceeding well.

It is clear to all that UIC needs significant upgrades to its facilities and an aggressive program to deal with deferred maintenance challenges. I acknowledge your leadership in this regard and complement you on the new modular engineering building and the shared dormitory/classroom facility openings. These have been funded through a unique new public-private partnership for which you deserve much credit – I appreciate also the excellent partnership with CFO Ghosh in this regard. These are both creative actions designed to improve facilities and UIC has pioneered the P3 approach, now being replicated at UIUC. Your team has supported our efforts to gain legislative relief on procurement and lease arrangements and to help advocate for a reliable annual state budget for UIC and the system.

The 2020 budget signed by Governor Pritzker contains several very important UIC components and we will need to work closely together to ensure optimal utilization of the capital aspects. I was also happy that the full 4.5% operating cost increase in the budget will flow down to UIC, providing important assistance on faculty salary/recruitment and retention fronts. We will talk about these positive impacts when we meet.

You have managed a complex and fast-paced flow of materials into and out from the Chancellor’s office. You have led a revision of the University Master Plan and continue to develop and communicate the four strategic pillars: Student Experience and Success; Emphasis on Chicagoland; Impact and Reputation of Research; and An Entrepreneurial University. You

also participated in the development and evolution of the system-wide strategic framework and the Illinois Performance and Commitment Act (IPAC), approved and supported by the Board of Trustees. Our new proposed bill, Illinois PROSPER, will be the topic of ongoing discussion in the upcoming year. You are well positioned to work effectively with the new mayoral administration. You have worked hard with the alumni to reenergize philanthropic giving for UIC and I believe these efforts are bearing fruit, but we probably agree that we are a long way from where we need to be in this regard. I support your efforts to improve the overall staffing situation in the fundraising arena for UIC. You have used the Jonasson House effectively to engage donors.

You have participated in the system-wide budget discussions that have allowed the University to continue its “affordability” posture during this time of budget stringency, by limiting tuition and fee increases for a fifth straight year. You have developed and implemented creative differential tuition rates, designed to build diverse enrollments across UIC’s colleges and programs. This and other efforts have “set the tone” for our entire advocacy and renewal posture: one that is student-centered, empowering of our three universities, and responsive to important fiscal and historical drivers. These actions, including the budgetary transfers, have been generally well received. In all this, you have been a trusted partner to the president and a principal shaper of the University-wide (as well as UIC) strategy.

The healthcare enterprise is a very significant component of UIC and the U of I more generally, constituting approximately 25% of the total budget. You are to be congratulated for continuing to provide comprehensive health care services and keeping the hospital firmly in “the black” through the period of the Illinois State budget impasse and the swirling policy discussions occurring nationally. Significant infrastructural and business model challenges remain and you are addressing these systematically. The strategic initiative to revamp the IT infrastructure is proceeding well, despite the failed bid challenge which slowed things down. You act expeditiously to learn from any “med mal” situations that may arise from time to time. Again, I welcome the new Advisory Board, and congratulate you and Bob Barish on its impressive membership roster and his strategic outlook.

Your hard work, your close respectful connections with your core campus and local communities, your analytical insight and experience, and your responsiveness to urgent calls on your time and expertise have all been important elements of the progress we have made this year, and you have certainly helped me in my role as president. I value highly our candid and numerous conversations and believe that we fundamentally share a common vision that is seen and appreciated by faculty and staff. I thank you for your participation in the system-wide enterprise risk management activities and complement you on the recent work on sexual misconduct prevention and response, as well as emergency preparedness.

I have a few thoughts and suggestions for the next few months. Some of these are fairly generic and repeated from last year. They are listed mostly to ensure we have a good discussion about higher education challenges as we go through the yearly evaluation.

1. We should work together closely to optimize recruitment of partners and outcomes for the Discover Partners Institute and the Illinois Innovation Network (DPI/IIN) initiatives.


2. The philanthropic campaign is well into its prime period of performance and I share your sense of commitment and urgency on the need for significantly more effective fund raising and building out the UIC base for the future. I stand ready to work with you and appreciate our regular meetings to track and comment on progress. This remains an important priority.
3. Congratulations on the Deerfield announcement. I look forward to talking with you and TJ about our overall corporate collaborative posture going forward.
4. The branding and marketing initiative for the system (through the work of 160/90) needs to be tailored carefully to augment and complement the efforts at UIC. Please work with me to help develop (and defend) a messaging platform that can benefit all components of our system.
5. The UIAA reform efforts is now clearly bearing fruit. This will require your careful attention to optimize UIC alumni engagement. I look forward to further conversations about this and other important reforms.
6. Continue your efforts to engage more deeply with the rest of the University of Illinois System and provide the bridge to the urban-serving academic mission.
7. We are still not yet where we need to be in terms of diversity and inclusion - and the whole U of I system certainly faces challenges that need to be addressed. One priority remains to push to recruit senior Latino/a talent and to enlarge the African American student enrollment, as well as building up international enrollments. I know you are working on all of these issues.
8. Please continue to work closely and collaboratively with me and the other University leaders to develop a truly aspirational implementation agenda in support of the strategic framework. I want to talk with you about possible expansions of the system, as well as particular strategic partnerships (e.g., with CPS and the IMD).
9. Michael – You have had another excellent year of accomplishment and are now clearly seen and respected as the change agent that UIC has needed for a long time! Keep up the good work! I have greatly enjoyed getting to know you and admire your analytical approach, your professionalism, sense of humor, and responsiveness. Congratulations and thanks!



Timothy L. Killeen
President

7/14/19

Date



Michael D. Amiridis
Chancellor and Vice President

7/15/19

Date