

Annual Evaluation

Susan Koch

Chancellor of the University of Illinois at Springfield

Vice President, University of Illinois System

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August 29, 2017

GOALS:

Continue to direct efforts and those of leadership team, along with the financial human resources of the University, to advance the three strategic priorities of UIS

- growth in visibility, reputation and enrollment
- the recruitment and retention of highly talented faculty and staff
- the provision of facilities that will best serve students and the University

Continue to serve effectively as Vice President and a member of the leadership team, contributing in every way possible to support the strategic priorities of the system President and Board of Trustees while advancing the mission and vision of the University of Illinois.

EVALUATION:

Dear Susan,

I thank you, once again, for your very thorough and thoughtful memo summarizing your activities and those of your University and campus during the past year. I particularly appreciate the clarity – and simplicity – of your stated priorities for the University of Illinois at Springfield (UIS) and your obvious enthusiasm and commitment to being an integral part of the larger University of Illinois system.

During the six years of your leadership the university has grown in enrollment and reputation and the campus has seen significant upgrades and has been the source of many excellent accomplishments. The growth of distance education, the building of a presence in downtown Springfield, the increase in enrollments and, of course, the new student union are among the very exciting developments occurring on “your watch.” You are also to be congratulated for your tenacity, forbearance and effort in weathering the two-year long budget impasse, without leaving irreversible damage to UIS. A major effort this year has focused on building out the UIS leadership cohort, with exceptional, successful recruitments of a new provost, an associate chancellor for student affairs, an athletic director, and many other positions.

During the past year, you and your team worked to finalize a – first of its kind – negotiated collective bargaining agreement with the new UIS faculty union. This two-year process was very difficult and certainly engaged strong emotions, leading to a damaging strike that occurred just before the week of spring final examinations. Your direct personal involvement into the process and your regular communications with staff, the negotiating team, and with the president’s office, helped diffuse this situation and has led to the broadly successful outcome that we now enjoy. I appreciate just how much energy and commitment you expended on this

effort and want to both acknowledge the favorable result and congratulate you on achieving a much-improved level of labor harmony within the faculty.

During this year, you had to deal with several difficult personnel issues, as well as with a tragic accident occurring after a concert on campus. You navigated these difficult matters extremely well. I acknowledge, in particular, your strong commitment to full dialog and communication with my office, as well as with the Board of Trustees as you dealt with these unpredicted events and issues.

Overall, Susan, this has been an excellent year of performance and I congratulate you once again and thank you for all the hard work!

You list many specific accomplishments in your report and I want to highlight some of them in my response. I want to start with the beautification of the campus, which has been great! The new Abraham Lincoln statue (with the president portrayed as a younger man), the Shakespeare garden, and the wonderful, light-filled (as you aptly put it) student union - all serving as great iconic additions to the physical beauty of the UIS campus. These are truly legacy contributions. It is obvious that both faculty and students, as well as community members and donors have all been inspired by this work. Well done!

Your emphasis on fundraising has been successful. Leading to the roughly \$6M commitments for the student union (a large fraction of the planned \$8M). With the start of the public phase of the fund raising campaign planned by the Foundation, I am confident of full success for this important, "signature" project. Your relationships with community members are strong and, I both enjoy and appreciate the monthly column that you write for the local newspaper. Your efforts to build a supportive community within Springfield are important.

Your leadership at the local, regional and national levels is significant: the top-ten status in the U.S. News and World Report ranking as a regional public university in the Midwest is great. Your participation in the leadership activities of the AASCU (American Association of State Colleges and Universities) and COPLAC (Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges) programs yields opportunities to help shape national higher education policy. The growth and quality of UIS Online are both remarkable features and assets of UIS and these offerings have clearly had national and international impact.

You have successfully recruited Dennis Papini as the new UIS provost, following a rigorous national search, in which I participated at the interview stage. While I may stumble a little (two Dennis's!) over the name, this is a very strong choice and I look forward to Dennis's contributions in leadership at the U of I system.

I applaud your work in mentoring and staff development. You continue to nominate staff for awards and participation in development programs and I appreciated your listing many key UIS leaders and award winners by name in your materials. The new fund to support professional development of civil service employees is noteworthy, as is your suggestion of a system-wide

approach to the recruitment of minority faculty: an area where all three universities lag. Staff mentoring and professional development efforts are more important than ever when the normal reward systems of salary programs are not available. You make yourself regularly available to faculty and staff and have the kind of listening skills that are deeply appreciated by the smart and committed people at UIS. The partnership with UIC College and Nursing and Memorial Health System to provide a BSN option is working well, as is the productive research relationship with SIU School of Medicine in Springfield.

I thank you for your efforts to review and analyze the Alumni Association, an effort that is nearing a positive outcome. The new “advancement model” that you pioneered at UIS is gaining strength and will position the entire U of I system well for the upcoming campaign and the associated needs for better branding across our units (that you correctly highlight). Your focus on facilities has led to much recent progress that should also be acknowledged. The new Child Protection Training Academy, upgrades to the Academic Success Center, and the new recreational facilities are all supportive of the student experience. The Innocence Project and the focus on ADA compliance upgrades are also important activities that demonstrate a commitment to social equity. I can’t leave out the new cricket pitch too!

You have taken on the challenge of a severely restricted year on the budget front, implementing successfully a 20% reduction in state support. You have held town hall meetings to ensure (as much as possible) transparency in decision making and communication. As you know, we now have had a breakthrough with the state budget that was not secure at the time of your writing this year. Thanks for all your work on advocacy. Truly believe that higher education advocacy made the difference in ending the two-year impasse!

Susan – I have enjoyed getting to know you and greatly admire your vision, drive and calm sense-of-purpose. You embody “leadership lived” in ways that inspire our students, faculty, staff, and our important external constituents.

Tim Killeen