

Annual Evaluation

Robert Jones
Chancellor University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
Vice President, University of Illinois System
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October 21, 2020

Dear Robert,

I thank you for the thoughtful and comprehensive memo summarizing activities during your fourth year as UIUC Chancellor and U of I System Vice President. I also appreciate your use of the suggested template I provided.

This year has been extremely challenging for you and for UIUC - and yet you have risen to the challenge with energy and effectiveness. You have managed the UIUC response to the COVID-19 global pandemic by sustaining world-class, on-line and in-person hybrid education, by attaining continued high levels of philanthropic funding, by implementing the construction of several important new facilities, and through your many communication efforts, including the publication of an updated strategic plan that sets the course for “the next 150 years”.

You led and galvanized your team to prepare for, and respond to, the historic COVID-19 pandemic. This essential and overarching work in 2020 has led to the situation where the UIUC pandemic response is heralded as the very best-in-class nationally (and possibly even internationally). The SHIELD program is now often cited as a national model – setting the standard – and that reflects well on the University. I appreciate your leadership and participation in forming and supporting the SHIELD team and in expanding the benefits of this pioneering breakthrough system with the rest of the UofI System and with many external partners and possible clients.

UIUC’s ranking in the U.S. News and World remains at #47 among all national universities in the most recent report. This is back to the kinds of levels we were at prior to the long budget impasse and an encouraging sign for the future. I offer my sincere congratulations on all these and other accomplishments and also my thanks for your collegial and collaborative approach to serving the entire University of Illinois System.

At UIUC, enrollments continue to grow steadily, although the effect of the pandemic on undergraduate freshman numbers will slow down implementation of the approved multi-year strategy. Faculty retention and recruitment efforts have been productive and several key hires have been recently announced, including some distinguished faculty recruits. Most importantly, yet another bumper class of graduates has benefited from the receipt of a world-class education, albeit with a virtual celebration due to pandemic constraints!

You have made significant and noteworthy administrative appointments, bolstering your leadership team. You appointed the first vice-chancellor for diversity, equity, and inclusion, and have devoted personal significant time and energy to these critically important issues concerning systemic racism that are very much in the national spotlight and are strong elements of our enterprise risk framework. You appointed or re-appointed several deans, including the new dean of Engineering, Dr. Rashid Bashir, after a national search. Progress with the Carle-Illinois medical school is apparent, with the third class of 48 students having arrived. Also, I support your efforts to drive towards an NIH Cancer Center designation.

You have worked directly on the chronic and debilitating Chief Illiniwek issue and commissioned an important forward-leaning process and report that we all hope will aid the institution in getting past this long-running controversy. Hopefully, this next year will see a significant abating of concerns with regard to this controversy.

Your new strategic plan and associated master plan, developed with a robust, inclusive process, were both presented to the Board for approval and have set the stage for a shared vision of where UIUC needs to go. Signature new buildings and facilities are being put into place – a prominent example being the nearly-finished Siebel Design Center. You have communicated effectively and directly with multiple stakeholder and groups and your annual “state of the University” address has been well received. Ongoing conversations with the faculty Senate have been productive and I believe that your commitment to shared governance and candid and direct communication is well received by the faculty. I heard positive comments from the Senate Executive Committee at my recent meeting with them concerning your leadership.

I appreciate and applaud your initiative in the areas of professional work-plan development for all direct reports. Your support for the newly approved system policies on Sexual Misconduct has been appreciated, as well as the joint Administration/Senate initiatives on this topic.

Your senior leadership team is diverse and of very high caliber. All members have contributed to the important and challenging discussions regarding pandemic response.

You have worked hard: to build community; to expand communication linkages on campus and within the community; to extend our research and development reach to Chicago and beyond; to participate in national and international settings; and to raise philanthropic funding. You have a national leadership position as chair of the APLU Board. You have directly led various successful fund-raising efforts, including the still recent and historic naming of the Grainger College of Engineering. It is very clear to me from this record fund-raising work that there is very significant external trust and confidence in UIUC leadership and direction. I look forward to the attainment of the *With Illinois* fundraising goal

Your energetic support for the system’s DPI/IIN project has opened the door to very important opportunities for expansion of influence into Chicago and in various multi-lateral partnerships, both nationally and internationally. I thank you for your partnership on this key system strategic initiative. You continue to focus intensely on the student experience as our highest priority in a most principled manner – one that all can appreciate and acknowledge.

Significant campus upgrades are in the works, with many refurbishment and new buildings and facilities planned. The past 5 years have seen more than \$1B invested in campus upgrades and you are to be thanked for continuing and driving this important process. The ground-breaking for the Siebel Design Center is particularly noteworthy, as is the opening of the Bruce B. Nesbitt African-American Cultural Center facility, the new instructional facility, the Sidney Lu Mechanical Engineering building, the new Civil Engineering extension, and the Smith football and other facilities in Department of Intercollegiate Athletics (DIA). The combination of newly-approved capital funding and of multi-agency federal funding for the quantum science initiative and the advanced IIN hub in Champaign-Urbana provides an excellent testimony to richly-deserved high standing of UIUC in our state.

I am pleased to see that steady progress is being made in recruitment of our African American student body, though much remains to be achieved on this score.

The quality of the university is extremely high and you are clearly committed to maintain and extend its reach and renown both nationally and internationally. You support the key advocacy role and have

participated actively and importantly in raising our visibility in Springfield, leading to the 2019 budget resolution and the extremely critical procurement reform, as well as the capital funding appropriation for the DPI. You have supported our longer-term legislative agenda and have been effective in building stakeholder support within the legislature. Congratulations on the evident success of the Illinois Commitment program!

Your plans for next year are appropriate and timely and I continue to urge you to move forward assertively. Your work to develop a modern budget process for the University is important and I applaud the positive and transparent manner in which this critically important effort has been conducted.

Your emphasis on building inclusion and diversity is incredibly important and, I believe, strongly supported on and beyond the campus. I believe that your system-wide leadership role will be very important and I look forward to the plans emanating from this system-wide thinking that you are leading. There have been significant gains in rebuilding UIUC faculty diversity and numbers since the recession and the Targets of Opportunity (TOP) and Dual Career Academic Couples (DCAC) programs are clearly among the system's best practices. The several distinguished faculty recruitments that have been made within the new stellar faculty hiring program are also very encouraging, as are the recent dean and department head appointments.

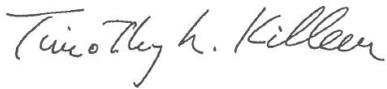
You have worked with your team and have acted to address the budget in ways that support the student experience, including assisting students hit hard financially by the pandemic. Faculty morale appears to be reasonable despite the disruptions caused by the pandemic.

There is no question that you continue to face a number of tough challenges. I share the wide sentiment that you have done an excellent job in stepping up to address many long-standing and complex challenges, including the ongoing pandemic and racial inequity crises. You have provided both stability and perspective throughout and I acknowledge these important contributions. Please know that I and many of our colleagues are deeply appreciative of the selfless and thoughtful manner in which you have taken on these challenges. You have made significant progress and have put many (if not most) of the long-standing difficult issues on a healthful forward course, with energized leadership and momentum.

I have a few thoughts and suggestions for next year:

1. With your leadership and insights, we can become a national leader on the thorny topical questions of addressing racial inequities, antisemitism and islamophobia, campus culture, student safety, first amendment, etc. It is just great to be working with you on these issues!
2. Continue to build upon your national leadership standing and role. This is a major asset for us!
3. Please continue to work closely and collaboratively with the University system leadership. Our flagship campus must lead the way and the fruitless territorial disputes that have occurred in the past only serve to slow progress and waste energy. I believe improving this relationship may have been among your most significant contributions to date!
4. Continue modeling a visible and effective partnership with me in my role as system president. Please avoid short and abrupt decisional time tables that create unnecessary opposition from the Board and other stakeholders.
5. Help me continue to work towards a graceful and effective reform of the System Offices and the URO programs, including your newly defined Alumni Association.
6. Please work intensively on the Research Park doubling plan and the growth in impact of Extension. Both of these projects are critical to the future. Congratulations on the Research Park transition to UIUC oversight, effected gracefully.
7. Continue your focus on Philanthropy and the planning and implementation of the new medical school which is certainly gaining momentum.

8. Continue to work effectively with shared governance, extending and supporting our base of faculty excellence.
9. As you are well aware, there are still important needs within the university system to clarify roles, responsibilities and communication pathways. Your participation in the Advancement Council and the “3+2” meetings is very important.
10. Student recruitment and faculty hiring go hand in hand and, I believe that both require serious attention in the next year to preserve and extend our leadership positioning within and beyond the state
11. Robert – I look forward to congratulating you in person for your hard work and for your many wonderful accomplishments this year! I look forward to future discussions about directions, approaches, problem areas, challenges – all focused on how to build and take advantage of the many opportunities for progress at the University of Illinois. Thank you for your support.



11/05/20

Timothy L. Killeen
President

Date



11/01/2020

Robert Jones
Chancellor and Vice President

Date