Approved by the Board of Trustees

January 23, 2025

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Board Meeting

January 23, 2025

# ESTABLISH THE CENTER FOR LINCOLN STUDIES AS A PERMANENT CENTER, SPRINGFIELD

**Action:** Establish the Center for Lincoln Studies as a Permanent Center

**Funding:** No new funding is required

The chancellor, University of Illinois Springfield, and vice president, University of Illinois System, with concurrence of the appropriate administrative officers, recommends approval of a proposal from the Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs to establish the Center for Lincoln Studies (CSL) as a permanent center.

The Center for Lincoln Studies was established as a temporary center in 2018 to promote the study of Abraham Lincoln, the City of Springfield, the State of Illinois, and the United States during the 19th century, focusing on Lincoln’s vision, legacy, and impact as they relate to the modern era with a focus on the study and application of online learning pedagogy, technology, and best practices. Since its inception, CLS has become an important contributor to Lincoln studies both locally and nationally. Propelled by two distinguished historians of Lincoln, now joined by a full-time director, and strengthened by substantial endowment gifts, the center has a proven track record of sponsoring active learning, meaningful research, and impactful civic engagement.

Since its founding, CLS has supported the publication of several books, peer-reviewed journal articles, a variety of creative works, and numerous public presentations. This includes producing a feature film on Lincoln, directing an art exhibit on Lincoln’s legacies, providing workshops for K-12 educators, and creating an online course about our 16th president.

In addition, the CLS has sponsored the annual Mary and James Beaumont Endowed Lincoln Legacy Lecture Series, the country’s most distinguished lecture series on Lincoln. By sponsoring and organizing this lecture series, the CLS has continued the UIS tradition of hosting the *Lincoln Legacy Lecture* annually since 2002. In expanding on these efforts, in 2022, CLS began sponsorship of a new Juneteenth lecture that explores Lincoln’s role in promoting emancipation and highlights the subsequent implications of freedom for Black Americans.

As a permanent center, CLS is well positioned to expand its offerings to offer broad interdisciplinary learning opportunities for students of all ages. CLS uses the iconic status of Abraham Lincoln, the historical individual, to introduce, explore, and explain structural aspects of history, including the emergence of the middle class, market revolution, American democracy, race, and understanding how the 19th century shaped America more broadly.

Recognizing the many possibilities for collaboration, the Abraham Lincoln Association urged UIS to create a Lincoln studies center in 2016 and its advocacy and support for CLS remains firm. As a permanent center, CLS will continue its critical role of collaborating with other Lincoln institutions in Springfield and central Illinois, such as the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Lincoln national historic sites, and Looking for Lincoln, which promotes tourism in central Illinois.

With the goal of becoming the world’s foremost academic center on Abraham Lincoln within the next 10 years, CLS will continue its commitment to collaborate with other Lincoln institutions to reach both public and scholarly audiences to promote Lincoln scholarship. CLS faculty affiliates will teach UIS students directly in the classroom, engage UIS students and the public more broadly via CLS programming, and offer research assistantships to provide UIS students opportunities for hands-on learning. The center also plans to grow and broaden faculty involvement with the addition of a faculty fellows’ program.

The CLS resides within the academic affairs division led by the provost. The director of the CLS reports to the vice provost and director for graduate education. The center does not house academic programs or offer classes but benefits from the assistance of two faculty affiliates, both distinguished professors of Lincoln studies housed in the Department of History. Aside from the salary and benefits for the director and staff, which are provided for through the operating budget of the Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the CLS is funded entirely through endowment revenues and current use funds.

The Board action recommended in this item complies in all material respects with applicable State and federal laws, University of Illinois *Statutes*, *The General Rules Concerning University Organization and Procedure*, and Board of Trustees policies and directives.

The president of the University of Illinois System concurs. This action is subject to further review and approval by the Illinois Board of Higher Education.