Academic Senate Enrollment Management Task Force
Assessment and Recommendations Regarding
The External Review of University Enrollment Management Report

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

DRAFT v.5

November 15, 2011

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Executive Summary

It is the conclusion of the UIUC Enrollment Management Task Force (EMTF) that the most important recommendations contained in the external Enrollment Management Report and those that should be implemented immediately are EM Report recommendations (EMRR) 1, 2, and 12. In summary, EMRRs 1 and 2 call for each local campus to establish (and/or communicate) their 2013 strategic enrollment goals near term, followed by establishment of a University-wide Projection Enrollment Plan through a collaborative process involving the input of key campus academic and University administrative leaders and enrollment managers. It is our conclusion that these activities/recommendations need to be achieved before recommendations 3-11 and 13-21 can be effectively implemented. It is only in the context of a collaboratively developed overall plan that the advisability, viability and most effective means of implementing the other recommendations can be evaluated.

EMRR 12 calls for tuition decisions to be completed before February 1 to enable timely financial aid decisions to be made. This EMRR supports the conclusion the UIUC EMTF has reached from numerous information sources: that financial circumstances, both on the University and student applicant level, have challenged the University and have led to perceived university "failures" in enrollment management. The realities of rapidly escalating UIUC tuition relative to public peer institutions, in conjunction with comparatively limited available financial aid and recruiting budgets, place UIUC enrollment managers in an increasingly non-competitive position when attempting to recruit both in-state and out-of-state highly qualified, exceptional students. This is not in itself a structural problem, but rather a resource problem. In addition, delayed tuition decisions result in delayed UIUC financial aid offerings to prospective students, frequently after enrollment decisions have already been made. It is the strong recommendation of the UIUC EMTF that these financial factors also be a prominent part of any discussions regarding enhancement of the overall enrollment management process.

It is our conclusion that institutionalizing EMRRs 1, 2 and 12 as a yearly process will be the most valuable and powerful single output of these extensive EM assessment efforts and will allow organizational realization of the primary efficiencies, synergies, and overall EM effectiveness rightly envisioned by the Board of Trustees and President Hogan. To summarize:

- We accept and recommend immediate implementation of EMRRs 1, 2 and 12.

- We recommend collaborative evaluation of EMRRs 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 19 in the context of EMRRs 1 and 2.

- We do not support implementing EMRRS 7, 8, 10, 17, 18, 20 and 21 in their current form without extensive further collaborative evaluation and revision.

A foremost goal of all EM activities must reflect an eye toward the enhanced competitiveness of each campus in relation to their peer institutions. This focus will be most important in raising the profile of the University of Illinois as a whole.

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Introduction and Background

The UIUC Enrollment Management Task Force (EMTF) was formed on November 1 by Professor Matt Wheeler, chair of the UIUC Senate and the Senate Executive Committee, and charged with reviewing from a UIUC perspective the External Enrollment Management Report (EM Report) commissioned by President Hogan, including the report's 21 recommendations. We were asked to provide advice and input regarding the EM Report to be shared with the SEC, the Senate, and with the separately commissioned University Senates Conference Committee on Enrollment Management (USC-CEM). From November 4-15, the UIUC EMTF had four separate, 2 hour meetings. We invited campus enrollment management leaders to the initial two meetings to help us better understand some of the issues involved and provide us with their expert and experienced perspectives on the EM Report recommendations (EMRR). Our intent in this report is to provide a broad overall assessment and comment on the issues identified in the EM Report, and additionally, to identify those EMRRs that we feel are: 1) most critical, needing quick implementation; 2) reasonable, but require careful discussion and further benefit vs. cost of implementation assessment; or 3) widely viewed as problematic, for various specific reasons. In order to effectively communicate our views, we frequently will refer to or quote portions of the external EM Report prior to providing our perspectives.

The charge to the external Enrollment Management Review Team was to:
- Examine opportunities to improve recruitment and admissions, particularly when it comes to underrepresented students, non-resident students, and high ability students.
- Identify strategies to streamline, coordinate, and improve efficiencies in recruitment and admissions.
- Evaluate the relationship between admissions and financial aid operations.
- Suggest collaborative strategies to enhance student retention and graduation, and recruitment.

The UIUC EMTF generally agrees with these activities in principle as they likely reflect the enrollment management strategic goals present at most academic institutions. One of the most important aspects of strategic implementation is careful, collaborative discussion among key stakeholders and EM experts at both the campus and university administrative levels to ensure that the benefits of implementation warrant the costs incurred (including opportunity costs) and that current successful EM practices and operations are not harmed. Of course, these stated principles assume that stakeholder assessments occur in a timely, professional, productive and non-biased manner and that current practices will be enhanced by the proposed changes. They also explicitly imply that rapid, non-collaborative implementation without such assessment is not advisable and would likely be unsuccessful.

Based on discussions we have had with UIUC administrative leadership and enrollment managers, the UIUC EMTF believes the current enrollment management process is generally highly respected and "not broken". The EM Report itself states:

> "*Clearly, enrollment managers on each campus, so far as they understand campus enrollment goals and strategies, are committed to enhancing enrollment (and the educational experience of students) through a competitive admissions process and appropriate financial aid packages.*"

That being said, most individuals recognize that there are opportunities for more strategic EM coordination across the campuses that can realize possible synergies and efficiencies and have realistic benefits to both the individual campuses and the University as a whole.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the UIUC EMTF that the most important recommendations contained in the external EM Report and those that should be implemented immediately are EMRRs 1, 2, and 12. In summary, EMRRs 1 and 2 call for each local campus to establish and communicate their 2013 strategic enrollment goals near term, followed by establishment of a University-wide Projection Enrollment Plan <u>through a collaborative process involving the input of key campus academic and University administrative leaders and enrollment managers</u>. It is our conclusion that these activities/recommendations need to be achieved before recommendations 3-11 and 13-21 can be effectively implemented. It is only in the context of a collaboratively developed overall plan that the advisability, viability and most effective means of implementing the other recommendations can be evaluated.

EMRR 12 calls for tuition decisions to be completed before February 1 to enable timely financial aid decisions to be made. This EMRR supports the conclusion the UIUC EMTF has reached from numerous information sources: that financial circumstances, both on the University and student applicant level, have challenged the University and have led to perceived university "failures" in enrollment management. The realities of rapidly escalating UIUC tuition relative to public peer institutions, in conjunction with comparatively limited available financial aid and recruiting budgets, place UIUC enrollment managers in an increasingly non-competitive position when attempting to recruit <u>both</u> in-state and out-of-state highly qualified, exceptional students. This is not in itself a structural problem, but rather a resource problem. In addition, delayed tuition decisions result in delayed UIUC financial aid offerings to prospective students, frequently after enrollment decisions have already been made. It is the strong recommendation of the UIUC EMTF that these financial factors also be a prominent part of any discussions regarding enhancement of the overall enrollment management process.

Our Assessment of the EM Report Recommendations

A. Strategic Enrollment Goals

Recommendation 1: Establish strategic enrollment goals for each campus no later than the new fiscal year.
Recommendation 2: Establish a University-wide Projection Enrollment Plan through a collaborative process engaging the President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Chancellors, Provosts, and Deans.
Recommendation 3: Stabilize freshman enrollment at UIUC; increase transfer enrollment at all campuses; increase international enrollment at UIS and UIC, and grow UIS enrollments to campus capacity. [See suggestion above]

As stated above, the UIUC EMTF strongly believes these are the pre-eminent recommendations contained in the EM Report. With regard to EMRR 1, we feel it is important that the "locus of control" remain with each campus as they are best able to define the appropriate academic composition of enrolled students and therefore, their strategic enrollment goals and targets. The EM Report agrees with this principle stating:

> *"Given their unique identities and missions, each campus can and should continue to develop admissions criteria and enrollment goals that support its distinctive mission."*

"…..with each campus establishing its own admissions criteria and making its own admissions decisions. This model of locally setting admissions criteria is common at multi-campus universities and we believe it is appropriate for the University of Illinois. After all, the University's campuses are distinct in mission and, to some extent, in the students and community they serve."

Once these local strategic goals are established, it is imperative that EMRR 2 occur as a collaborative exercise to enable assessment of potential synergies or conflicts between local campus and/or university goals and strategies. Action Plans for realizing synergies and remedying conflicts can then be jointly developed. Once this collaborative University Projection Enrollment Plan is established, realistic and jointly supportive campus and university EM targets and goals will be better understood, communicated, and where appropriate, will facilitate the most effective implementation of the remaining EMRRs 3-21. As the EM Report states:

"Although each campus has strong enrollment management practices, we noted a lack of clarity regarding enrollment goals. The campus-based enrollment management teams, along with admissions deans in the colleges and schools, expressed a desire for better-articulated enrollment goals in order to guide recruitment and yield strategies."

"In order to allow for sufficient time to develop and implement recruitment and yield goals, we recommend establishing strategic enrollment goals for each campus as early as possible, and no later than the beginning of the new fiscal year. Doing this early in the recruitment process will allow admissions and financial aid operations time to develop thoughtful and data-driven models critical to building the freshman and transfer student classes. Understanding how enrollment goals are determined would benefit enrollment managers across all campuses. To fully leverage its three campuses, the University might consider developing a University-wide "Projection Enrollment Plan." Doing so will require collaboration between multiple offices, including the President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Chancellors, Provosts, and Deans."

The topics described in EMRR 3 represent an agenda for collaborative discussion once EMRR 1 and 2 have occurred.

It is our conclusion that institutionalizing EMRRs 1 and 2 as a yearly process will be the most valuable and powerful single output of these extensive EM assessment efforts and will allow organizational realization of the primary efficiencies, synergies, and overall EM effectiveness rightly envisioned by the Board of Trustees and President Hogan.

B. Strategic Diversity Enrollment Goals

Recommendation 4: Establish clear goals with respect to underrepresented students on each campus, which together, map onto University goals.

C. Diversity Recruitment Strategies to Support Strategic Diversity Enrollment Goals

Recommendation 5: Develop a strategic diversity recruitment plan aimed at increasing enrollment for all undergraduate majors, led by a coordinator who would work with admissions and financial aid staff on the campuses.

Recommendation 6: Clearly articulate the roles and authority of campus partners and fully leverage their expertise and access to diverse groups to increase the enrollment of underrepresented students on the campuses.

Based on the information we have received, EMRRs 4 and 6 are all already ongoing on the campuses to some degree and generally acceptable dependent on the locus of control. With regard to EMRR 5, our position is that local underrepresented student enrollment targets are best understood and determined by the individual campuses with collaborative, central university coordination so as to realize potential synergies and efficiencies and minimize direct conflicts or negative results. Individual enrollment managers have stated this might be an opportunity to "step back" and see how we can be more strategic in our diversity efforts. The EM Report correctly states:

> *"A coordinated effort is needed to design a strategic plan to address the diversity aims of the University, its campuses and their schools and colleges. There appears to be good support for such an approach on the campuses."*

The campuses and individual colleges need to make a more concerted effort in this area, and in that context, local efforts will be more effective in achieving diversity goals.

D. Common Application Consortium

Recommendation 7: Join the Common Application Consortium.

While the UIUC EMTF can understand some of the perceived benefits that might be realized by an academic institution in general with participation in the national Common Application Consortium (CAC), some aspects of participation are conceivably not going to be present in the specific UIUC scenario and applicant pool, and may be clearly and specifically disadvantageous. On November 7, 2011, UIUC enrollment managers attended a day-long conference involving ~40 colleagues from numerous peer universities that are using or contemplating using the CAC. Significant information and institutional experiences with the CAC were obtained, including some important insights on the costs of implementation. Concerns regarding UIUC CAC participation include:

- Based on peer information, the cost of UIUC CAC implementation would be significant. In addition, aspects of CAC implementation would reverse efficiencies (e.g. less processing personnel) in the UIUC admissions process that have been recently realized (with significant cost investment) in the new Self-Report Academic Record (SRAR) process. Decommissioning SRAR or redesigning it to work in a CAC environment would incur significant additional costs and reintroduce inefficiencies in admissions records processing, including the re-hiring of additional personnel with potentially little/no gain in effective evaluation of applicants.

- One perceived advantage of the CAC is an increase in non-state applicants, especially highly qualified, exceptional students, thereby increasing our overall "selectivity" (e.g. a decreased ratio of admitted students to total applicants) and therefore our national selectivity standing among peer institutions. While the UIUC EMTF agrees that may be a likely outcome, it is not certain and may actually be an additional factor contributing to the UIUC declining enrollment "yield" (ratio of enrolled to admitted students). As the EM report states:

> *"It's important to note that in the absence of clear goals, metrics like selectivity and yield have little meaning."*

If the desired significant increase in non-state, highly qualified applicants occurs, it is conceivable that we will be forced to "admit" them due to their exceptional qualifications. However, they will likely not ultimately "enroll" due to no real interest in UIUC, excessive UIUC tuition, our inability to provide competitive financial aid packages, and aggressive recruitment packages and lower tuition that peer institutions are able to offer. This scenario would actually result in a less advantageous impact on selectivity than anticipated (as we would be "admitting" them) and contribute to a continuing decline in "yield" (as we would add to our numbers of admitted students who don't enroll). Part of the difficulty with emphasizing EM statistics such as these is that they are widely utilized in determining institutional ranking relative to peers.

- The CAC was originally a consortium of East Coast, largely private, academic institutions catering to a different student than those typically found at large, Midwest, public land-grant universities. The latter institutions have only recently joined the CAC. The best strategic option might be to monitor the actual experiences and potential benefits realized by the current Midwest CAC members prior to investment of the considerable resources necessary for UIUC participation.

In summary, we do not consider CAC participation a clear advantage for UIUC at this time. Implementation can only follow an extensive cost/benefit analysis by appropriate EM managers and campus/UA officials. If we are to participate in the CAC it must allow students to clearly select one or more of the UI campuses for admission.

E. Information Systems Supporting Enrollment Services

Recommendation 8: Provide permeable access to the SIS student data at all campuses for authorized staff in the admissions, financial aid, and the registrar offices.

There is significant concern about whether a cost-benefit analysis will show this recommendation to be advantageous as the costs of implementation will be substantial and raise significant potential conflicts. The latter include: 1) a concern over inappropriate cross-campus articulation without proper campus/academic department review and 2) federal restrictions on the cross-campus sharing of confidential applicant financial data. Additionally, there are highly focused, expensive databases of applicant demographic information that are used by the campuses for recruiting students. The databases used by some campuses may not be appropriate for the others. In addition, these databases are also not shareable since they are licensed to an individual campus. These concerns will need to be addressed prior to implementation.

Recommendation 9: Capitalize on the promise of the SIS through a detailed analysis of the current functionality of the system and the future vision of a fully developed CRM to support recruitment and enrollment goals on all three campuses, in conjunction with the University's information technology leadership to generate costs savings in purchase, maintenance, and updating of the systems.

Based on information from UIUC EM leadership, this recommendation has the potential for significant university cost savings, but ONLY if the unified CRM system utilized is the Talisma® system currently employed by UIUC. It is admittedly different from that currently used by UIC and UIS, but it is considered 'state of the art" by EM professionals; UIUC could not justify decreasing their current high CRM capabilities and effectiveness for a less advanced system.

F. Admissions & Financial Aid Operations

Recommendation 10: Adopt a centralized admissions and financial aid processing system.

This recommendation is uniformly of major concern to UIUC EM officials for a variety of reasons. The intent and perceived benefits, efficiencies and synergies of the recommendation are understood and agreed to from a centralized processing standpoint. However, it seems EMRR 10 needs significant discussion by EM experts and campus and university officials prior to implementation to identify and solve potential strategic issues and concerns. The EM report concludes and we agree:

> *"Centralizing the current scholarship process is desired by some at the University; however, we recommend the current decentralized program remain in place and encourage financial aid to continue developing strong partnerships with each school or college to maximize available funds to entering students."*

G. Financial Aid Packaging Philosophy & Scholarship Awarding Practices

Recommendation 11: Retain campus-specific financial aid programs, but encourage stronger partnerships across awarding units to (1) maximize available funds to entering students, and (2) consolidate award communications to the extent possible through a single letter/e-mail.
Recommendation 12: Ensure that tuition decisions are made by the end of February (preferably in January) to allow admissions and financial aid offices to develop and communicate financial aid packages to students.
Recommendation 13: Analyze the cost of attrition to inform packaging formulas, so as to ensure that the financial aid packaging philosophy for each campus is aligned with University and campus enrollment, retention, and graduation goals.
Recommendation 14: Use financial aid modeling tools to assist with determining price sensitivity of new in-state and out-of-state students, with particular models designed to examine needs of Chicago area students.
Recommendation 15: Redesign the current freshman scholarship programs to increase competitiveness in recruiting and enrolling high achieving and diverse students by offering more four-year scholarships and framing communications to highlight a four-year package.
Recommendation 16: The University's enrollment leadership should work with the President and Vice Presidents/Chancellors to increase central scholarship funds and continue building strong relationships with the University of Illinois Foundation and advancements units to obtain more funding for student scholarships.

We have already described the consensus view that EMRR 12 is critical for any of these recommendations to succeed.

EMRRs 11, 13, 14, 15 and 16 are believed to be reasonable goals and activities that are already ongoing to some degree, but the main questions seem to be "What do they really mean?" and "How do we best achieve enhancements of these activities?". Specifically what practices would be most beneficial, most efficient and derive the most synergies, and at what cost? We return here to our opening observation that until EMRRs 1 and 2 are completed, it is impossible to make informed decisions about whether and how to implement these others. In addition, it is critical that the individual identities and characteristics of each campus and its applicants be appreciated. It is clear that implementation of these recommendations, as with EMRR 10, require further discussion with responsible and knowledgeable campus EM professionals.

H. University Brand & Campus Identities in Marketing Messages

Recommendation 17: Capitalize on the University's brand in communications to prospective students to emphasize the University as a whole, while retaining strong messages of campus identity.
Recommendation 18: Consolidate the marketing and communications related to enrollment management services across the campuses to both better capitalize on the strength of the University of Illinois brand, while promoting individual campus distinctiveness, strengths, and missions, and reducing costs.
Recommendation 19: Develop mechanisms to share best practices in development of print and e-materials across campuses to identify opportunities to improve campus communications with students, work collaboratively, and manage costs.
Recommendation 20: Incorporate messages about the value of a University of Illinois degree in all messaging in a consistent manner across all campuses, as a complement to campus specific highlights and points-of-pride.

The UIUC EMTF does not agree with the intent of EMRRs 17 and 18. It seems that these EMRRs suggest that in communications to prospective students, including high achieving, exceptional individuals, the UIUC would position itself as only one distinctive campus of the greater University of Illinois. Based on the information we have received, this is not the EM practice of other highly ranked peer institutions (e.g. the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Wisconsin at Madison, the Ohio State University) and is not believed by enrollment industry experts to be an effective and productive strategy, especially with high achieving students. We fully endorse the message that the University of Illinois is a premier academic institution that can appeal to ALL prospective students in the state of Illinois and elsewhere through three individual campuses with distinctive strengths, missions, and student characteristics and needs. However, UIUC also has an existing distinct and favorable national and international reputation which is effective in attracting both out-of-state and international students, especially high achieving students. It would be counterproductive to dilute this existing, recognized UIUC "brand" in order to establish an overall University "brand." We feel strongly that distinct UIUC recognition and strength should be maintained and fostered, albeit in association with development of a broader message recognizing and communicating the overall excellence of the University of Illinois as a whole. We agree with the EM report which states:

> *"These identities are important to the campuses and to the overall strength of the University as a whole. They are also an asset in recruiting students because, when approached as a whole, they allow the University to address a broad variety of student needs and interests……… Each of the University's campuses has different admissions criteria, which provides opportunity for a highly prized University of Illinois degree for any qualified student."*

We recognize that the differentiation between our perspective and EMRR 17 might be viewed as subtle by some, but we feel the message, and especially the emphasis, are critically important and distinctive.

With regard to EMRR 18, from the information provided to us by our EM professionals, the current UIUC marketing and promotions efforts are considered exemplary within the industry. Anecdotally, we are told that at recent national EM conferences, UIUC presentations on EM marketing practices have been "standing room only" events. It seems that again, collaborative discussions between campus EM professionals and university officials to more strongly incorporate the overall University message while not losing the distinct UIUC brand are recommended.

ERMM 19 is generally believed to be a valuable recommendation regarding the enhanced sharing of best communications and marketing practices between campuses. Any efforts to share best practices to

improve the EM successes, efficiencies and reduced costs of each campus and therefore the University as a whole is advantageous and should be encouraged. As the EM Report states:

> *"We believe that the path to such improvements lies in greater sharing and coordination of best practices, resources, and information systems across the campuses."*

EMRR 20 raises concerns in relationship to ERMM 17 and 18. It is significant that this issue is one that UIUC students and alumni seem to be most concerned about. The position embraced by these individuals and most faculty is that degrees are conferred by the faculty of each campus. UIUC students and alumni are emphatic that their degrees are distinct from those conferred by other campuses.

I. Pathways between the University of Illinois Campuses

Recommendation 21: Create pathway agreements between the three University of Illinois campuses to facilitate transfer arrangements as well as course- and credit-sharing.

There are already processes in place to facilitate student transfer and course articulation between the campuses. UIC, for example, is already the #2 "feeder" school for UIUC. Without question these can be improved and streamlined; for example, there is a major effort at UIUC to reduce the time it takes to have courses reviewed and approved for transfer. If "facilitate" means to streamline and simplify these processes, we can support this recommendation; however, if "facilitate" means removing barriers, such as reducing the campuses' ability to selectively screen transfer students and/or evaluate courses for equivalent transfer, then it is problematic. The proper basis for these judgments must rest in colleges and departments that best know their requirements and course content. This argues for such decisions to be held closer to the level of faculty expertise, rather than creating additional levels of review distanced from faculty.

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Summary

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In conclusion, we embrace the overall goals of making our enrollment management processes more efficient and effective in serving individual campus and overall University interests. We agree that these activities can likely benefit from some level of strategic central coordination and more extensive campus-to-campus collaboration in order to realize possible synergies and efficiencies which would have realistic benefits to both the individual campuses and the University as a whole. We also agree with the goal of being even more aggressive in recruiting students in an increasingly competitive, higher education marketplace, especially as it pertains to the most academically talented students and those students who add intellectually and socially valuable diversity to our student population. The greatest single impediment to improving our performance in this area is a lack of adequate financial aid, and any proposals must be evaluated in relation to costs that divert resources away from this primary area of need.

Many of the recommendations contained within the External Review of University Enrollment Management Report may have potential benefits. However, we believe the primary, over-arching EM Report recommendation was clear; specifically, to initiate collaborative and broad-based planning and goal-setting processes with regard to enrollment management. Central University Administration coordination through an Executive EM Director may help achieve this goal, but only after the campuses, along with University administration, have identified key goals, targets and synergies through a collaborative and broad-based discussion and agreement. As the EM Report states:

"We believe, however, that these resources would be better leveraged through stronger sharing and coordination, as well as more clearly articulated strategic goals. The University's distinctive campuses, each with unique identities and missions, are its greatest strength. But the potential to truly realize that strength is undermined by a tendency for the campuses to act independently in how they manage enrollment services".

In that regard and in that spirit, it is the strong recommendation of the UIUC EMTF that the most important recommendations contained in the external EM Report and those that should be implemented immediately are EMRRs 1 and 2, which call for each local campus to establish and communicate their 2013 strategic enrollment goals near term, followed by establishment of a University-wide Projection Enrollment Plan through a collaborative process involving the input of key campus academic and University administrative leaders and enrollment managers. We have outstanding expertise on our campuses, and any review process will benefit from involving those individuals and their viewpoints on what can work, what can work better, and what won't work within our system. The evaluation of these recommendations should also be informed by a review of "best practices" at peer institutions. It is our conclusion that these activities/EMRRs 1 and 2 need to be achieved before EMRRs 3-11 and 13-21 can be effectively implemented. It is only in the context of a collaboratively developed overall plan that the advisability, viability and most effective means of implementing the other recommendations can be evaluated.

Therefore, to summarize:

- We accept and recommend immediate implementation of EMRRs 1, 2 and 12.

- We recommend collaborative evaluation of EMRRs 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 19 in the context of EMRRs 1 and 2.

- We do not support implementing EMRRS 7, 8, 10, 17, 18, 20 and 21 in their current form without extensive further collaborative evaluation and revision.

A foremost goal of all EM activities must reflect an eye toward the enhanced competitiveness of each campus in relation to their peer institutions. This focus will be most important in raising the profile of the University of Illinois as a whole.