

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Chicago • Springfield • Urbana-Champaign

Office of the President
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Urbana, IL 61801-3689

October 4, 2006

University of Illinois Faculty

Dear Colleagues,

America's universities face increasing criticism for weak performance on educational quality, affordability, access and innovation. The University of Illinois has an opportunity to be an innovative, national leader in providing expanded access to high-quality post-secondary education if we have the collective will and courage to launch the Global Campus successfully. A successful launch means engaging the support and cooperation of the faculty, living up to our potential and adhering to our commitment to quality. It also means simultaneously implementing an agile, responsive and decisive strategy for operating the organization while interacting with and respecting the traditional academic culture that has served us so well throughout the 139-year history of the institution.

There is an old saying: "Don't believe everything you read in the newspapers." Since the public release of the Task Force Report in July, much has been written and reported in the media about the Global Campus. Some of it has been accurate and some of it hasn't. As scholars we know that the first rule of good research is to consult the original sources, along with the interpretation of those sources by others. The Task Force Report describes in considerable detail how the Global Campus would be organized and how it would operate. It is the original source of information on the initiative. This report contains the collective thinking of almost 40 faculty members, administrators and staff from our three campuses. These colleagues spent nearly eight months studying the online marketplace and thinking about how we could increase access to the University and better serve nontraditional students who cannot spend an extended period in-residence at one of our campuses.

We recognize, however, that not everyone has the time to personally read this 54-page report. In our September 22 letter to the University Senates Conference (USC), we addressed three crucial academic issues: the Global Campus academic plan, the involvement of tenure system faculty, and shared governance. In addition, we have prepared a list of the most frequently asked questions about the Global Campus and the answers to these questions. Our letter to the USC and the Q&A document can be downloaded from the VPAA web site (along with the Task Force Report, <http://www.vpaa.uillinois.edu>). We believe these two brief documents may address many of your questions and concerns.

There is another old saying: "The devil is in the details." As you know, one of us (Chet) is leading the Global Campus Startup Team. That team is mapping key processes (e.g., recruiting, admitting and enrolling a student) and preparing a detailed organizational and operational design (e.g., staffing requirements, IT requirements) for the entity. They also are developing a project plan and financial model to guide implementation and budgeting. We have asked the USC to help us assemble a group of faculty and student representatives to provide advice as the Startup Team continues its work. This group could be a valuable interface with the campus senates to provide assurance that all the crucial student and academic quality issues are being addressed properly.

We are grateful that the senates have arranged forums on each campus for us to discuss the Global Campus initiative with you (UIC, 3-4 p.m., Tuesday, October 10, Student Services East, Rooms B & C; UIUC, 9-11 a.m., Monday, October 16, Beckman Institute Auditorium; UIS, 1:30-3:30 p.m., Friday, October 20, Brookens Library 333). These forums provide the opportunity for us to clarify the vision for the Global Campus, to answer questions and to engage the faculty more broadly in the continued planning and implementation of the initiative. While details matter and we welcome any question you have about the Global Campus proposal, we are especially interested in learning your thoughts about the overall goals for the Global Campus and how the initiative might be structured to enhance the benefit to you and to your on-campus students as well.

We look forward to hearing from you at the Global Campus forums.

Sincerely,



B. Joseph White
President



Chester S. Gardner
Special Assistant to the President