

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor
for Academic Affairs
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Uni High School Strategic Vision Task Force

Richard Wheeler, Chair

Jeff Walkington, Director, University Laboratory High School

Elizabeth Majerus, Uni Faculty Representative

Sharlene Denos, Uni Faculty Representative

Steve Michael, Uni Parent-Faculty Organization Representative

Brent McBride, Child Development Lab

Amy Ando, Agricultural and Consumer Economics

Michaelene Ostrosky, Special Education

Timothy Stelzer, Physics

Matthew Tomaszewski, Associate Provost for Capital Planning, *ex officio*

Keith Marshall, Associate Provost for Enrollment Management, *ex officio*

Dear Colleagues,

In February 2016, Interim Provost Ed Feser charged the Uni High School Strategic Vision Task Force to consider Uni's mission in the context of a research-intensive university and Uni's financial model in light of the current financial difficulties faced by Uni, the University and the State. The task force completed its work and submitted its final report to Interim Provost Feser in December, who passed it to me for consideration.

First, let me thank the task force for its hard work and the thoughtful report. It is clear from the report that the task force members thought deeply about the complex issues facing Uni and crafted many promising recommendations to problems that defy easy solutions. I would like to offer a special thanks to the task force chair, Richard Wheeler, for his willingness to step out of retirement to lead this group. His hard work, exemplary leadership and masterful prose are on full display in the final report.

The task force report outlines nine major recommendations to address a range of issues, including mission, vision, operating expenses, and long-term financial health. The report also provides several smaller recommendations and ideas worthy of consideration and promise. The report's clearest recommendation, establishing a governing board charged with shaping Uni's future, is compelling and one I believe we should undertake.

To give due consideration to the report's many recommendations, I have asked my office to work with the Uni leadership to assess the feasibility of each recommendation, including the costs or cost savings, perceived benefits to the university and community, and a realistic timeline for implementation. These details are needed to make informed decisions about next steps, and were clearly beyond the scope of the task force's charge.

The two most pressing items in the charge—establishing a long-term financial model that does not rely on additional university resources, and solutions to Uni’s deteriorating facilities and infrastructure—must be addressed in the coming years. These are intensely complex issues, so I am not surprised that the task force found solutions difficult to identify. Nevertheless, every unit on campus, including the academic colleges, has been instructed to plan for a significant reduction in state funds over the next decade, and, in this climate, new funding models and sources for facilities renovations are critical to Uni’s future.

Uni has been an incredible asset and source of pride for the University for over 95 years. The Task Force report is a critical first step in identifying the creative ideas that are needed to not only maintain Uni’s excellence, but to chart a bold new future. I look forward to continued discussions with the Uni community about Uni’s future.

Sincerely,



John P. Wilkin
Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost

c: Chuck Tucker