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NEWS RELEASE

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Installment of B. Joseph White as 16th President of the University of Illinois

URBANA—The University of Illinois today formally inaugurated B. Joseph White as the 16th president of the University in its 138-year history, and White pledged to lead the state’s largest educator past its current “tipping point” into what he described as a “brilliant future.”

“It will be a future in which we will be excellent; win against our best competitors; serve the state, nation and world; and be a continuing source of pride for millions,” White said. “Such a future will not be given to us. We must create it.”

White, 58, who took the University of Illinois helm last January after a 30-year career at the University of Michigan, said a brilliant future for the U. of I. will require four ingredients: a high aspiring strategic plan, resources, leadership and “big ideas.”

“We need more big ideas, stretch ideas, creative ideas than I sense we’re thinking about today,” White said, invoking master planner Daniel Burnham’s mantra of “make no little plans.”

Examples White suggested to his audiences included: creation of a fourth campus, or a “virtual university” by melding elements of the three existing campuses and U. of I. Online to compete with the growing for-profit sector in national higher education; leading a consortium of Illinois-based research institutions to discover and develop sustainable energy resources; and establishing the University as the national leader in the expanding field of “successful intelligence.”

White instituted a university-wide strategic planning process when he took office and will produce a document in 2006 that, led by the University of Illinois Board of Trustees, will set the university’s direction for the next decade. Advocating for the resources required to sustain excellence,

White described an “Illinois Compact” needed to navigate what he called a “sea change” in how public higher education is funded.

“For much of our history, the state provided most of the money to build facilities and operate the University. Now, four years of budget reductions, no increases and little capital have sent a resounding message: we are on our own as never before when it comes to incremental operating funds, capital for new facilities and the money to address what is politely described as ‘deferred maintenance,’” White said.

Critical to the University's future, White said, are the five elements of the compact: state support, which accounts for about a third of the University's \$3.5 billion budget; tuition payers and their families, with adequate financial aid; faculty members through productivity and the \$600 million in research they generate; private donors who grow the University endowment; and administrative leadership strategically allocating precious resources.

"The University of Illinois has never been more important than it will be in the decades ahead," White declared. "We will be a great gateway of opportunity for students. And we will address the world's most pressing problems, like safety and security, economic opportunity, energy and the environment, health care and nutrition, peace and justice."

The installation ceremony, presided by Board of Trustees Chair Lawrence C. Eppley, was held in the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts in Urbana. All three institutions that fly the University's banner—the University of Illinois at Chicago, the University of Illinois at Springfield and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign—participated in the ceremony and it was simulcast to audiences at UIC and UIS and College of Medicine sites in Peoria and Rockford.

The Illini Marching Band led a procession from the Quad to Krannert that included nearly 500 students, faculty, staff and alumni from the three campuses and 90 representatives of universities and learned societies from across the country. A dozen state legislators and Secretary of State Jesse White led a contingent of elected officials, and video remarks were delivered by Gov. Rod Blagojevich, U.S. House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert and U.S. Senators Richard Durbin and Barack Obama.

The University of Illinois educates nearly 70,000 students and awards 17,000 undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees annually.

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A copy of White's speech may found at www.uillinois.edu/president/speeches.html.