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News Release

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(Note to journalists: Publication-quality photograph of Board of Trustees Chairman Niranjan Shah is available at www.uillinois.edu/our/images/.)

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Capital projects and research funding top Board agenda

Mumford House to be restored at historic site

URBANA, Ill. — The University of Illinois Board of Trustees today voiced its support for the continued use of two historic buildings on the Urbana-Champaign campus — Lincoln Hall and Mumford House — at a meeting in Illini Union, during which trustees also promoted additional research funding in the economic stimulus package and renovation-expansion of the university's Chicago campus teaching hospital.

Lincoln Hall and Mumford House have a combined 237 years of history on the Urbana campus, but both have been mothballed pending final plans and funding for renovations that would extend their use.

U of I Board Chair Niranjan Shah said it is important to protect, preserve and utilize the two buildings as historic links to the university's earliest days in an era of modern, technologically advanced academic buildings that have risen on the campus during the last generation.

"These structures that help tell the story of the University of Illinois dating to its inception in 1867 are an inspiration to current, past and future generations of the university community," Shah said.

An estimated $80 million total renovation of Lincoln Hall, built in 1911, has been stalled by the five-year absence of a state-supported capital spending program from Springfield. Lincoln Hall has been atop the university's combined capital priorities list since 2004. Constructed to honor the 1909 centennial of President Abraham Lincoln's birth, the iconic building on the Quad is home to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. While administrative and faculty offices remain occupied, Lincoln Hall was largely vacated last year and classes moved elsewhere due to poor conditions and so that the building could be prepared for renovation.

"In this bicentennial year of President Lincoln's birth, we must find a way to restore this important building, the oldest classroom building on this campus and one of the most utilized. As admiration for our 16th president grows every year, we here in Illinois and at our state's land-grant university must preserve this tribute to Lincoln and allow the building to function at full capacity," Shah said.

Shah noted that Gov. Pat Quinn on a recent tour of Urbana campus facilities expressed his desire to help restore Lincoln Hall, as have many state legislators.

As for Mumford House, erected in 1870, Shah said campus administrators will drop plans to relocate the oldest structure on campus and to restore and preserve the farmhouse at its current location — on the South Quad near David Kinley Hall. The board called on administrators to develop a new plan for Mumford House quickly considering public safety concerns with the aging building.

A proposal to relocate Mumford House, which has been vacant for numerous years, to a site further south, near Windsor Road and Race Street, met with opposition from local and statewide architectural, landmark and historic preservation groups, including the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA). The 19th Century farmhouse is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

IHPA Director Jan Grimes attended the board meeting and said: "It is a thrilling thing to learn. These historic buildings are not ours to own. We are stewards of them. Stewardship is one of the most important lessons a university can teach its students."

Shah called upon the preservationist organizations to join forces with the university to secure funding for the project. "We are reaching out to the central Illinois community and the historic preservationists to get the necessary funding," Shah said. "Support us with whatever you can do, whether it is contacting elected officials or getting the word out."

Trustees rallied behind Shah's call to restore Mumford House and put it to use at the location where it has stood for 139 years.

"I am totally supportive of maintaining that historic structure," Trustee David Dorris commented. "It is important to me and to a large number of alumni."

Trustee Robert Vickrey called on the board secretary to prepare a resolution for board consideration in May that summarizes the board's position on Mumford House and its directions to the campus administration for moving forward.

Other Urbana campus capital priorities include repair and renovation projects in eight buildings; $62 million for the new supercomputing facility; a new Electrical and Computer Engineering building; and an Integrated Bioprocessing and Research Lab. The state is awaiting Gov. Quinn's budget address on March 18 and state legislature's spring deliberations on state operating and capital plans for fiscal 2010.

Shah said the Urbana campus is an economic engine for central Illinois, with about $1.83 billion annually in spending on payroll, products, services and the like, but he said the regional economy could do better if local businesses took greater advantage of opportunities with the university. He said the university will do a better job of outreach to regional business

organizations to familiarize companies with how to go about competing for U of I business under state purchasing laws.

"A lot of the money goes out of the region. If we can find local suppliers, we would like to keep those dollars here," Shah said.

Shah also said university faculty leaders and staff, with the support of the Board of Trustees and other university leaders, will work to secure additional research funding through the federal budget and the federal economic stimulus package enacted by Congress and signed by President Barack Obama.

"It is crucial that the faculty receive funding for its research and that we as a board do all we can to provide the best facilities for research and scholarship," Shah said. "We must also assist in bringing the work of the faculty to the attention of those who can provide support. We are now carefully reviewing the stimulus program and federal budget process for sources of funding that could be available to the university," Shah said.

Research expenditures for the three campuses of the University of Illinois in the current 2009 fiscal year totaled $645.6 million.

At the Chicago campus, Shah said, a key priority is the medical center, which serves more than 600,000 patient visits annually and operates in conjunction with the UIC College of Medicine, the largest medical school in the country. In addition to Chicago, the College of Medicine trains future physicians at sites in Urbana, Rockford and Peoria.

"The hospital in Chicago is nearly 30 years old and desperately needs updating," Shah said. "Faculty specialties have changed in the last three decades and new facilities are needed for the faculty. In addition, some of our most productive and most outstanding departments are housed in unsatisfactory space and we must provide better accommodations for teaching and clinical work."

The current hospital would be renovated for adaptive use at an estimated cost of $75-80 million. The cost of a new acute care hospital with technologically advanced intensive care and high tech surgical services, a neonatal intensive care unit and model patient rooms is estimated at a cost of $450 million. Shah said the medical center is one of the largest providers of care to Medicaid and Medicare patients in the Chicago area. Its pathology lab serves hospitals and clinics throughout the state.

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The University of Illinois is a world leader in research and discovery, the largest educational institution in the state with almost 70,000 students, 24,000 faculty and staff, and campuses in Urbana-Champaign, Chicago and Springfield. The U of I awards more than 18,500 undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees annually.