

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

# Major cost-cutting ideas released

Report says vice chancellors should be reviewed, some of those positions cut

By **PAUL WOOD**  
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CHICAGO—Cutting or combining administrative offices and services like information technology and purchasing could save the University of Illinois \$50 million to \$60 million over the next two or three years, according to a

report obtained by The News-Gazette.

A working group named by interim UI President Stanley Ikenberry last November has compiled a list of 43 recommendations, many of which are based on personnel, 70 percent of the UI's spending. Other ideas suggest how to

save money with central purchasing, centralizing computer services and dealing with regulatory compliance issues.

"We're talking about a culture change," co-chairman Craig Bazzani said. "Dollar amounts will be discovered across all state, federal grants and private gifts."

This team is separate from more than a dozen budget review teams named by interim Chancellor Robert Easter and interim Vice Chancellor Richard Wheeler to find cost savings, specifically at the Urbana campus.

Faculty won't be touched in the review's recommenda-

tions, but support staff from academic professionals to top leaders are getting a hard look.

The team said the UI should review the responsibilities of all vice chancellors and reassign responsibilities "with the objective of reducing the number of such positions." Correspondingly, the role of provost — currently occu-

ped by Wheeler on an interim basis — could become stronger.

The Administrative Review and Restructuring Working Group was co-chaired by Avijit Ghosh, UI vice president for technology and economic development, and Bazzani, UI Foundation senior adviser.

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(cont.)

## UI

### Continued from A-1

At the request of incoming President Michael J. Hogan, Ikenberry will oversee a team to implement the recommendations. Hogan takes office July 1.

Bazzani said the UI is looking for savings at top posts, including vice presidents, vice chancellors and assistant vice chancellors.

"We'll have as many as necessary, and as few as possible," he said of vice chancellors.

But Ghosh stressed that the report is not just about reducing but reallocation, in order to buttress the university's teaching and research needs.

"This is not low-hanging fruit. We're going to have to make some investments along the way to capture the savings," Bazzani said.

They recommend combining the positions of vice president for technology and economic development and vice president of academic affairs into a single executive vice president position, a move already approved by the UI Board of Trustees.

The UI spends more than \$300 million a year for supplies and services, the report noted, and only a small portion of purchases are made through strategic-purchasing contracts that are actively managed.

The report estimates the UI can save \$22 million a year by

leveraging its large buying power and utilizing strategic, coordinated procurement methods.

Information technology spending annually exceeds \$250 million, and the report makes recommendations for streamlining IT functions, while improving performance, that could reduce spending by \$18 million.

Dwight A. McBride, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at UI Chicago, said there are not only possible cost-savings but also the chance to free up some space by centralizing servers.

"These savings are very possible by restructuring learning management, making more robust use of open-source (applications) and repurposing rooms that have been used for servers," he said.

One thing not on the chopping block: the much-maligned Banner system used for everything for storing grades to accounting. The team expressed support for its capabilities.

Not all the recommendations involve cuts.

The group said the UI needs to improve coordination of advancement-related activities, including government and corporate relations. The team recommends creating an Advancement Council, comprising the president, chancellors and the presidents of the alumni association and foundation, as well as the senior advance-

ment officer.

While seeking to increase access to alumni donors, the team would like to see a reduction of \$4.5 million in fund-raising expenses from the current \$33 million spent by the campuses and foundation.

They urge centralization of several functions, especially purchasing.

The UI should be aggressive in creating strategic-purchasing contracts for high-usage supplies and services, with greater use of such contracts by individual units.

iBuy, an online requisition and catalog hosting application used by other Big Ten schools like Ohio State, should be the primary requisitioning application for all applicable procurements.

The report says the UI must adapt its internal regulations to reflect changing practices and said it hopes changes could give relief from federal and state regulations that represent "a significant portion of the cost of doing business at the university."

The government regulations can "run contrary to good business practices, even when elements of risk or the need for compliance is considered," the report concluded. The team said further cuts might be needed.

Since fiscal year 2002, the direct state appropriation has been reduced and redirected by over \$130 million, or 16.2 percent, before adjusting for inflation. With inflation accounted

for, this is a reduction of nearly 30 percent.

In recent months, the state has been behind as much as \$500 million in salary reimbursements for the university, and the Urbana campus has responded with wage and hiring freezes, unpaid furlough days and buyout offers.

At the same time, the report noted, "costs of operations and capital needs, particularly maintenance and repair of an aging infrastructure, salaries and other expenses, have continued to increase."

In fiscal year 2004, in response to three consecutive years of state budget rescissions and reductions, the UI developed an Administrative Reduction Plan that led to reductions in administrative costs totaling \$37.4 million, including \$5.75 million of compensation costs for 57 administrative positions that were eliminated over the course of an 18-month period.

The university says that administrative overhead costs were the lowest among all Illinois public universities and seventh-lowest in the Big Ten.

Again in fiscal year 2009, the UI created a three-year plan to reduce administrative costs by \$15 million.

Half of this was to come from university-wide administration; the other, spread over the three campuses. The first year of the three-year administrative cost reductions have already been completed.

# University internal review recommends consolidation, reduced spending

Melissa Silverberg Editor in Chief [Contact me](#)

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A University-wide group dedicated to internal administrative review made 43 recommendations that could save up to \$58 million, according to their report released Wednesday.

The Administrative Review and Restructuring Working Group was established by interim President Stanley Ikenberry in November to look at Campuswide spending. Their work is similar to that of the Stewarding Excellence project on the Urbana campus, but on a larger scale.

The University has been struggling financially as a combination of reduced state funding and the economic downturn nationwide. The state owes the University \$332 million according to a press release from administrators.

"Our goal was to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of administrative services throughout the University," said Craid Bazzani, UI Foundation senior adviser. "Rather than use outside consultants, we opted to roll up our own sleeves to develop better business practices by using in-house content experts."

The 27-page report was delivered to Ikenberry last week and details recommendations ranging from clarifying administrative positions to making different purchasing and information technology decisions.

One of the recommendations from the group is already becoming reality, as the Board of Trustees approved the consolidation of two vice president positions into a single office of the executive vice president. The group recommended creating this position, which they wrote would work closely with the academic leaders of each campus and the president.

## Other recommendations and cost-reduction strategies

The group suggested clarifying the position of Chancellor at each campus and explaining their dual roles both on their campus and at the system-wide level. After the lack of leadership in both the Chancellor and Provost position, former ACES dean Bob Easter has been serving as interim Chancellor/Provost and there has been discussion about combining those positions further in the future.

Aside from a review of the chancellors job, the ARR group recommended further review of the organization of each campus but looking at what the jobs of the provosts and vice-chancellors are and how to make them more efficient. This may include changing the role of the Provost or creating an executive vice chancellor position.

Purchasing decisions were also reviewed by the group, as each year the University spends over \$300 million in purchasing supplies and services, according to the report.

The report said that although some of these decisions are managed through contracts, most purchases the University makes are more decentralized which can lead to "vendor fragmenting and disparate pricing."

The group suggested that the University actively renegotiate all of their existing contracts for improved services and lower costs, as well as look for more contracts that could help the University receive supplies and services for less money.

They also recommended several technological advances that could help save money, such as creating an online workflow system to reduce processing time of travel reimbursements and make the system more efficient.

Another IT related suggestion was to reduce the expense of maintaining the Banner enterprise system, which was instituted in 2003, through software upgrades, consolidating e-mail and calendaring services, and expanding University reliance on cloud computing and other new developments.

Potential savings from the IT related recommendations are between \$17 and \$19 million by fiscal year 2013, according to the report.

Other areas reviewed in the report include human relations, communications, alumni relations, facilities management and capital programs.

A possible \$2 million could be saved by more efficient communications spending and producing fewer print products, according to the report. Part of implementing these communications changes could be assigning a new staff dedicated to complying with the requirements of the updated Illinois Freedom of Information Act, which went into effect on Jan. 1.

Streamlining and reducing costs for the facilities and services departments on all campuses was a recommendation from the review group as well. This includes merging units doing similar activities, including selling Illini merchandise and other retail possibilities.

## The next steps

Although this report was the result of five months of internal review, not all of the groups recommendations will become University practices immediately.

"The real challenge is one of execution. Good ideas and recommendations are useless sitting on the shelf," said Ikenberry in a press release. "Change will not occur overnight, but it must occur promptly. The University must achieve the saving and improvements now."

The ARR group recommended that the President and Chancellors of the University establish a process for selecting which recommendations from the report will be implemented and the details of such.

Reports from the UI Stewarding Excellence review groups are continuing to be released throughout the summer, making recommendations for spending and efficiency on the Urbana campus.

## Reader's Comments

# U. of I. finds ways to save \$60 million on supplies, services

BY DAVE MCKINNEY

Sun-Times Springfield Bureau Chief

SPRINGFIELD — Facing a \$330 million IOU from the state, the University of Illinois could save nearly \$60 million over three years through a series of belt-tightening moves, a university panel announced Tuesday.

The panel formed in November by interim President Stanley O. Ikenberry proposed 43 cost-cutting steps that await approval by the university's administration and board of trustees.

The group did not indicate whether or how many people might lose their jobs under the recommendations, which offer the most savings by changing how the university buys supplies and streamlining its information technology spending.

In those two areas, the panel estimated nearly \$40

million in savings.

The U. of I., for example, spends \$300 million a year on supplies and services.

But only a small fraction of that purchasing is done through university-wide contracts.

It could save \$22 million by "leveraging its large buying power," the group's report concluded.

The task force also recommended paring down the 14 vice chancellors assigned to the university's campuses in Chicago, Urbana-Champaign and Springfield, though they did not say by how much.

"The real challenge is one of execution," Ikenberry said in a prepared statement. "Good ideas and recommendations are useless sitting on the shelf. Change will not occur overnight, but it must occur promptly."

*Comment at [suntimes.com](http://suntimes.com).*



**Stanley O. Ikenberry**

# Pensions costly, but they're no Cadillacs

**T**he phrase "Cadillac public pensions" sure gets your blood boiling, doesn't it?

That's why the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago, a business group spearheading a campaign to cut pension benefits for current government workers, uses it regularly.

Too bad it's an exaggeration and gross simplification of Illinois' seemingly overly generous pension systems.

A nearly bankrupt Illinois is facing tough questions about what it must do without. Already this year, the state created a less generous set of benefits for public workers hired after Jan. 1, 2011. And the state Legislature will need to further reduce pension benefits.

But not because Illinois has recklessly provided Cadillac benefits for decades. Ford, more likely.

We support changes to the state's five pension systems because the state has dug itself into such a massive hole by failing, decade after decade, to pay its annual pension bill. The unfunded pension liability now stands at roughly \$78 billion, a bill so large there's no way out without reducing the costs of benefits.

Even an income tax increase won't make much of a dent, though we strongly support one to chip away at that debt and to help pay for basic state services.

Here are some facts that undercut the "Cadillac" argument about the pensions for university and state workers, teachers outside Chicago, judges and legislators:

- ◆ About 78 percent of state retirees do not get Social Security. When a retired teacher gets a \$43,164 pension after working 29 years, then, that's all she gets. State employees also pay a hefty fee for their benefit, between 8 percent and 11.5 percent of their salaries each year.

- ◆ The Civic Committee loves to point out that a state worker can retire with highly comfortable "unreduced" benefits — 75 percent of final salary — not pointing out that you must work 45 years to get there. The average state worker re-

tires after 24 years with \$20,436 — just 40 percent of final salary.

- ◆ The "normal costs" to the state to fund pensions is no greater than in the private sector. Those normal costs — what the state pays for benefits excluding back payments for accumulated debt — represent about 11 percent of state payroll.

The private-sector figure, including 401(k) contributions and Social Security, is roughly 10 percent to 11 percent. Most state workers, then, do not leap into retirement with a golden parachute. But Illinois still can't afford to carry on as we have. The unfunded pension liabilities — fueled in part by an assumed investment rate of return that Northwestern finance professor Joshua Rauh convincingly argues is too high — are crippling the state.

To rein in costs, we recommend:

- ◆ Raise premiums for retiree health care. State retirees with 20 years of service do not pay any premiums in Illinois. This is a luxury the state cannot afford. An immediate rollback will jeopardize potential federal funding to help subsidize these costs, but we expect that would be dwarfed by the savings from rolling back this perk.

- ◆ Tax pension benefits. This idea has been championed by the Civic Federation watchdog group. Most states impose some type of personal income tax on public or private retirement income. Illinois does not.

- ◆ Include police and firefighters in the new two-tier pension system. This won't reduce the state's liabilities — these are locally funded — but these funds were excluded from the two-tier legislation even though they are among the state's most generous and most underfunded.

The Civic Committee wants to reduce benefits for existing state workers, a controversial idea that many argue violates the state Constitution. We support some changes to save money, such as a higher retirement age and a smaller cost of living hike, but we fear a generation of workers will work and retire before that legal battle is resolved.

*Comment at [suntimes.com](http://suntimes.com).*

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# Carwash, anyone?

Let's stipulate that Stanley Ikenberry is one of the most beloved figures in the University of Illinois' history, that Peter Fagan is an accomplished and reliable sculptor and that less than six figures is a bargain for a piece of public art.

The U. of I. still had no business commissioning a \$98,000 bas relief medalion in Ikenberry's likeness to be financed by student housing fees. Not in the current economic climate.

Not ever.

That was the plan, until Tribune reporter Jodi S. Cohen started asking about it. The U. of I. board of trustees had filed paperwork declaring its intention to award the no-bid contract to Fagan, a retired professor whose work already is on display at the university's Grainger Engineering Library and Beckman Institute and other public buildings.

The work was to be installed in October in the dining hall at Ikenberry Commons, a new \$75.7 million residential complex. That project, which will eventually replace the group of dorms known collectively as the Six Pack, is named for Ikenberry, who was president from 1979 to 1995 and returned last year when President Joseph B. White resigned.

Ikenberry stepped in at a time of turmoil. White left amid a scandal over the U. of I.'s shadow admissions track for politically connected applicants, and the university is facing huge financial challenges. Public funding for higher education has been declining steadily, and the state is more than \$300 million behind in promised payments to the U. of I.

Still, we have to wonder if Ikenberry appreciates the seriousness of those twin emergencies. Last month, the Tribune reported that Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan, perhaps the worst

offender in the admissions scandal, had intervened on behalf of 28 applicants whose relatives collectively donated more than \$115,000 to campaign funds he controlled. Ikenberry, in a prepared statement, dismissed them all as "inquiries on behalf of applicants."

"We know of no instance in which he exerted inappropriate pressure in the area of admissions or any other area of operations in the university," the statement said.

Hello? The university's president, chancellor and six of nine trustees had just resigned over revelations that they'd allowed state power brokers to

clout friends and donors into the U. of I. Nothing inappropriate?

The trustees' decision to commission the statue is similarly tone-deaf. They just voted to raise tuition by 9.5 percent for incoming freshmen (at the same meeting they voted to pay incoming President Michael Hogan \$620,000 a year — \$170,000 more than White was paid). University employees are taking furlough days, and lawmakers just granted the state schools greater authority to borrow money to make ends meet. This is no time for a \$98,000 piece of art. Not with money that's supposedly paid for room and board. Not with tax dollars, either.

Ikenberry himself pulled the plug on the sculpture after learning the Tribune was working on a story. Spokesman Thomas Hardy said Ikenberry "didn't want to generate any ill will toward the university or put the university in an embarrassing situation." Too late.

Trustees say they'll explore private funding sources, which is what they should have done in the first place. How about a carwash? Bake sale? Yes, that's a lot of brownies. We're sure plenty of tuition-paying parents can relate.

*This is no time  
for a \$98,000  
piece of art.*

**HEALTH CARE**

# UI allies with Mayo to study future of medicine

By **DEBRA PRESSEY**  
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URBANA — Doctors already know each person's uniqueness goes well beyond appearance and personality. Each patient also carries unique risks for diseases and will respond differently to treatments.

Now, through a new research alliance, the University of Illinois and Minnesota-based Mayo Clinic say they're poised to help advance the concept of personalized medicine, in which treatments are customized to each person's own unique genetic makeup.

An agreement formalizing the new research alliance was signed recently, the UI and Mayo Clinic announced Tuesday.

"The University of Illinois has well-recognized capabilities in basic and computational sciences, genomics, bioengineering and technology generally," said Lawrence Schook, director of the UI division of biomedical sciences. "When combined with Mayo's outstanding capabilities across the spectrum of biomedical research and clinical practice, this yields an alliance with enormous potential to transform medicine."

Eric Wieben, director of the Mayo Clinic Advanced Genomics Technology Center, said what makes the new alliance exciting is that the UI and Mayo Clinic have enough overlap in research capabilities to communicate well, but each also has some unique strengths.

Please see **PARTNERS, A-8**

(cont.)

## PARTNERS

Continued from A-1

Personalized medicine will be one area of emphasis, he said. This concept is already being used successfully in some pharmaceutical applications.

"What we'll be seeing over the next five to 20 years is increasing application of these principals to the care of every patient," Wieben said. "So the time is really ripe right now to try and speed the implementation of this technology to patient care."

Another significant focus of the new research partnership, Wieben said, is the development of better point-of-care diagnostics — meaning that rather than sending a sample off to a lab and waiting a few days, the doctor and patient would have an answer when the sample is collected.

Several joint research projects are already in progress and more are being planned, UI and Mayo officials said. A committee is being formed to oversee the research alliance, and all projects will require joint collaboration.

The two institutions also

said they expect to sustain the alliance financially with federal grants, donations and some entrepreneurial projects involving commercialization of intellectual property and corporate partners.

The UI also recently formalized a research agreement with Carle Foundation Hospital and its doctors, and that will continue.

"The idea is to extend the circle of partners in different focus areas and work with different institutions," Rashid Bashir, director of the UI Micro and Nanotechnology Laboratory. "We certainly see this as not exclusive but as an inclusive network of partners."

Carle currently has 46 collaborative research projects under way with the UI, Carle CEO Dr. Jim Leonard said.

"I congratulate the UI and Mayo, and I think this is really exciting for the community and all of us that both organizations are reaching out. This should benefit all of us," he said.

While the formal research agreements the UI has with Carle and Mayo are separate, Leonard said, "I'd anticipate and hope that we would collaborate on a number of projects."

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June 22, 2010, 02:30 PM ET

### Faculty Members Question Costs of Research Park at U. of Illinois

By Scott Carlson

More news about Illinois and its troubles. Faculty members at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign are questioning the expansion of a university research park, even as the state struggles with a big deficit and mounting deferred-maintenance problems at its universities.

Late last year, reports *The News-Gazette*, in Champaign-Urbana, faculty members wrote to the interim chancellor, Robert Easter, the interim president, Stanley Ikenberry, and the Board of Trustees, asking for a "transparent and full accounting" of economic-development efforts, including details about the research park. The faculty members doubt that the research park is carrying its weight.

The newspaper had done an analysis of the costs of the park, which include \$19-million on construction, \$1-million a year for operations, and another \$1-million to rent office space. "The research park does generate lease income, fees, and other revenue, but about half of the expenses this year were covered by university or state funding, according to UI documents," the newspaper reports.

Advocates for the park say that it has brought in \$20-million in research grants and other revenue, and that it has been an outlet for economic development, research, and student work.

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## Research

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June 22, 2010

### **Corporate Chief to Head Review of University Research Support**

*By Paul Basken*

At the request of Congress, a former chief executive of the DuPont chemical company, Charles O. Holliday Jr., will head a yearlong review of what the federal government can do to help ensure the long-term health of the nation's research universities.

The review, expected to be announced later this week and conducted by the National Academies, has been a major goal of the universities. They have argued that, because of cuts in state support, the federal government needs to play a greater role in financing science and research at public institutions.

The academies agreed to conduct the study at the request of lawmakers who have been pressed by groups such as the Association of American Universities, which has warned about the danger of states increasingly diverting budget resources from higher education to elementary and secondary schools, health care, and prisons.

"The competitive advantage the United States currently enjoys is obvious," the president of the association, Robert M. Berdahl, told Congress in his appeal, referring to the global pre-eminence of America's research universities, "but retaining it cannot be taken for granted."

University leaders have said they hope the outcome will be similar in effect to the "Rising Above the Gathering Storm" report that the academies produced in 2007, generating a bipartisan push in Congress to double federal spending on scientific research.

Mr. Holliday and other corporate leaders will account for about half of the approximately 21 members of the study panel, according to an official familiar with the effort. Input from business leaders could be critical to ensuring political support for any final recommendations, the official said. Current and former university presidents will comprise much of the rest of the panel.

Paul N. Courant, a professor of public policy, economics, and information at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, has been

one advocate calling for more federal involvement. He has pointed out that university-based research, supported by the government, was a key factor in the U.S. victory in World War II.

"Once more, it is time for the federal government to step in and provide the support necessary to keep our crucial graduate programs among the best in the world," Mr. Courant and colleagues wrote in January in a *Chronicle* essay.

The study may also take the panel of experts into the politically sensitive topic of immigration, including questions of whether the federal government should be doing more to encourage top foreign students to remain in the country.

The panel is expected to begin conferring by phone this summer and hold its first in-person meeting in the fall, with the goal of issuing a final report within 12 months.

*Karin Fischer contributed to this article.*

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## Players

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June 22, 2010, 11:48 PM ET

### The Future Is Digital

By Libby Sander

*Anaheim, Calif.*—When the Southeastern Conference struck a lucrative deal with CBS and ESPN in 2008, the dollar value of the agreement—more than \$3-billion over 15 years—instantly upped the ante for broadcast rights in college sports. But the deal was important to the SEC for more than just the eye-popping dollar amount.

Up until just a few years ago, few athletics conferences owned the rights to their digital media content. Instead, ESPN, ABC, Fox Sports, and other broadcast networks controlled the distribution of that content. But as most of the major athletics conferences, including the SEC, have renegotiated new media-rights deals in recent years, they have gradually gained ownership over those digital rights.

Just in time, say sports-marketing officials who are helping the SEC maximize its already-formidable digital presence: Now the league is finding ways to repack and redistribute that content for a hungry audience—and open up new revenue streams in the process.

The learning curve, however, can be steep.

“Every day I face challenges explaining these opportunities,” said Ben Godwin of XOS Digital, a company that provides digital technology to college and professional sports organizations. Mr. Godwin, who works closely with the SEC to oversee the digitization of its content, spoke on Tuesday afternoon to dozens of sports-marketing officials who have gathered here during an annual meeting of college athletics administrators.

“While retaining these rights and getting these rights back is a great opportunity for the conference,” he said, “there’s a lot of apprehension among the schools. You start throwing around the words ‘widget’ and ‘syndication,’ and you get some foggy looks back.”

It’s exactly those new platforms that can bring in additional revenue to athletics departments and conferences always hungry for more. But new opportunities also bring new problems.

Licensing officials at Louisiana State University, for instance, have had to closely monitor their brand and trademarks as local businesses have attempted to capitalize on the popularity of the Tigers’ fame—and name. A local insurance company, a Realtor, and a Web site for fans have each attempted to use the university’s trademark purple and gold colors, its block gold lettering, or photos of its football stadium to market their services. One Web site even began streaming live coverage of Louisiana State basketball games without permission.

“The evolution of digital media content is ongoing, but as new technologies come along, new problems come up that maybe you didn’t have to deal with 10 years ago,” said Brian Hommel, director of trademark and licensing at the university. A decade ago, officials worried if someone was infringing the logo on a T-shirt, he said.

“Today, it’s a lot more complicated than that.”

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