

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

URBANA-CHAMPAIGN • CHICAGO • SPRINGFIELD

**Remarks prepared for delivery by
University of Illinois President Tim Killeen to the Board of Trustees
September 8, 2016**

Thank you, Chairman McMillan and members of the board.

When our new Strategic Framework was approved in May, the board called it a living document ... one that will continually evolve and adapt to meet the rapidly changing needs of our students and the public good.

But even the best intentions can sometimes die away slowly, gradually pushed to the back burner as new demands and challenges shift our attention.

So this morning, I am beginning a series of presentations to ensure that we never lose sight of our ambitious goals.

The reports will examine how the Framework is being put into action ... charting our progress, showcasing our successes and reminding us to always be looking for new, innovative ideas that will fuel the successes of tomorrow.

As a brief recap, the framework is a roadmap ... or these days maybe I should I say GPS ... to guide the future of our flagship higher education and health care System – system with a capital S.

The U of I System is built on a foundation of four rock-solid corners: Three universities providing world-class education, research and discovery, and a leading edge health sciences and clinical enterprise.

Together, they provide a statewide footprint and a \$14 billion annual economic impact for Illinois.

And together, they have earned national and international reputations for excellence ... excellence on a large scale – 80,000 students; 20,000 degrees granted annually; 700,000 alumni worldwide; and a nearly \$1 billion annual research portfolio.

But as a 19th century British poet once wrote: “Nothing wilts faster than laurels that have been rested upon.”

So our new framework raises the bar to ensure that we never stop reaching for our brass ring:

“It is our duty as the University of Illinois System to offer the best possible return on investment for all our stakeholders and to ensure that we are efficient, competitive and constantly improving.”

This is the guiding principle, our North Star, for staying on course and fulfilling the high aspirations that students, their families and the people of Illinois have every right to expect.

The framework was a year in the making ... the capstone of one of the broadest, most inclusive processes in the U of I’s long history.

It is the product of input from every stakeholder, and well over 1,000 weighed in during town halls and office hours at each university, and many more through our Strategic Framework website.

Let me again thank the trustees and everyone else who took part in this highly transparent and participatory process.

When the ink on the Framework was barely dry, we began working to put its vision into action.

In July, the board hosted a retreat devoted solely to the Framework ... a day-long brainstorming session with leadership, deans, directors and department heads from across the System.

It was a coming together ... a critical first step to focus our collective attention on our target and blue-sky ways that our new roadmap can drive growth of our existing programs, create new ones and foster new public-private partnerships that support learning and discovery.

Now, I want to keep the ball rolling, and that is the goal of this series of Framework-focused presentations.

At every board meeting through July, I will provide a report that examines key elements of the Framework ... highlighting our progress and achievements.

My hope is that the presentations will keep us on track, keep the Framework top of mind for all of us and serve as a springboard for new rounds of ideas to keep us moving forward.

The Action Presentation Series will show measurable results related to each of the four strategic pillars identified by the Framework:

- An Institution of and for Our Students, which reaffirms our bedrock commitment to teaching and learning, to enrollment growth and diversity, and to the student experience and their success.
- Research and Scholarship with Global Impact, which seeks to build on our legacy of discovery and foster innovation to address the grand socio-technical challenges of our times.

- A Healthy Future for Illinois and the Midwest, which ensures that we channel our world-class resources to serve the public good ... providing the workforce and innovation that drives progress and economic growth.
- Tomorrow's University Today, which seeks to make our universities the model for higher education in the 21st century ... the best of the best in all that we do.

Given that it's the start of a new academic year, I want to begin this series of presentations by highlighting our achievements under Pillar I ... An Institution of and for Our Students

At our very core, that's what it's all about, right?

First and foremost, the University of Illinois is an institution for the students, by the faculty. Their needs and interests shape everything we do, and have created a culture of excellence recognized around the world.

Students and their families get it. And they are voting with their minds and with their feet in favor of the University of Illinois System.

This fall, our System again saw record on-campus enrollment, with increases at each of our three universities, according to 10-day enrollment figures.

System-wide, on-campus enrollment increased 1.2 percent, from 76,166 last fall to a record 77,073 for the fall of 2016.

When final numbers are known later this fall ... including online and off-campus students ... we expect total enrollment will also reach another all-time high – topping 81,000 students for the very first time, ahead of last year's record of 80,000-plus.

Our continuing enrollment gains are especially remarkable considering the financial climate in which we now operate.

Despite a year of headlines about a state budget impasse that has significantly reduced state support, students are still flocking to our universities in record numbers.

It is a testament to our academic excellence, to our unwavering commitment to the student experience and student success, and to ongoing efficiency and effectiveness efforts that put their needs first.

Digging deeper into the 10-day data shows more records ... and more signs that the U of I System continues to grow as a go-to destination for students.

Enrollment is at record or near-record highs at both UIC and UIS, where total enrollment has been determined, including online students.

UIC's total enrollment stands at 29,210, topping last year's record of 29,048. UIS is just three students shy of the all-time record set in 2014, with 5,428 students enrolled this fall.

In Urbana-Champaign, total enrollment won't be known until online and off-campus students are counted later this fall.

But we do know that this year's freshman class is the largest ever at 7,592 students, breaking a record set in 2005.

System-wide, on-campus undergraduate enrollment is also the highest ever, up 1.8 percent to 53,320.

That includes new records in Chicago, where on-campus undergraduate enrollment grew 2.1 percent to 17,876, and in Urbana-Champaign, which saw a 1.8 percent increase to 33,467.

The data also reflects our bedrock commitment to serve the students and families of Illinois.

Undergraduate enrollment of in-state students rose 1.9 percent, to 42,925 System-wide ... about 80 percent of total undergraduate enrollment. **Slide 15**

The System also again posted significant gains in minority enrollment, reflecting our continuing efforts to ensure that our universities mirror the rich cultural diversity of our state.

System-wide, on-campus enrollment of African-American undergraduates increased 5.1 percent to 3,780, and Latino enrollment was up 11.2 percent to 9,124.

The record freshman class in Urbana includes 548 African-American students, up 15.4 percent from a year ago and among the largest in history.

Combined, African-American and Latino students comprise nearly one of every four undergraduates across the U of I System.

We need to do better ... and will continue to strive to do better ... but this year's gains illustrate that we are headed in the right direction.

Here is a breakdown of 10-day enrollment numbers at each of our universities:

In Urbana-Champaign, total on-campus enrollment increased 1.8 percent to 44,880 students.

That includes the largest-ever freshman class that I mentioned earlier ... 7,592 students ... and 24,256 undergraduates from Illinois, up 1.9 percent from last fall.

On-campus enrollment of African-American students increased 9.8 percent to 1,961, and enrollment of Latino undergraduates increased 11.2 percent to 3,457.

At UIC, total on-campus enrollment increased 0.3 percent to 28,710 students.

On-campus enrollment of Illinois undergraduates was up 2 percent to 16,911.

And while freshmen enrollment was down 5.1 percent to 3,307 that was more than offset by a 24.1 percent increase in first-time transfers, which totaled 1,947.

UIC also added to its standing as a national leader in student diversity, with a 3.2 percent increase in enrollment of African-American undergraduates, 1,468, and an 11.1 percent increase in Latino undergraduates, 5,508.

At UIS, total on-campus enrollment increased 1 percent to 3,483 students.

On-campus enrollment of Illinois undergraduates was up 1.3 percent to 1,758, and freshmen enrollment increased 11.9 percent to 300.

Enrollment of African-American undergraduates decreased 9.5 percent to 352, while Latino undergraduates increased 15.2 percent to 159.

Enrollment is just one of the benchmarks that reflects the student-centered approach that attracts the best-and-brightest from across the state and around the world to our three great universities.

The University of Illinois System also has a commitment to ensuring that students complete their degrees in a timely manner, and move on to use what they learned to pursue their dreams.

We can all be proud of our success.

System-wide, 76 percent of our students complete their degrees within six years, more than 30 percent higher than the national average of about 58 percent among public, four-year institutions.

Urbana-Champaign's completion rate ranks in the top 3 percent among U.S. publics, with 85 percent of students completing degrees in six years.

UIC's six-year graduation rate stands at 60 percent and UIS's at 48 percent.

It is important to add some perspective to UIS's numbers. Completion rates are based on tracking of freshman. UIS only began enrolling freshman a decade ago and incoming classes are still small ... in the 250-student range ... so a relatively few students have a big impact on percentages. As a result, here is another number that I think is worth considering ... for transfer students to UIS, the four-year graduation rate is about 60 percent.

As in everything that we do, we are determined to build on our success ... and have set a target to improve our System-wide completion rate to 78 percent within five years, with a goal for the same 2 percentage point increase at each of our universities.

We can also be proud of our efforts to hold down student costs and fulfill our land-grant mission to open our doors to every deserving student.

For two straight years, we have frozen base tuition for incoming, in-state freshmen ... the first time rates have been frozen in consecutive years in nearly 40 years – since a four-year span in the mid-1970s.

The freeze comes on the heels of two straight years of 1.7 percent increases that tracked with the rate of inflation.

Our commitment to affordability, coupled with our academic excellence, is a cornerstone of our place as a go-to destination for students.

And I plan to recommend extending our tuition freeze to a third year for incoming, in-state freshman next fall, assuming an adequate level of funding from the state.

When our students graduate, data also shows they find jobs ... and good ones.

Each of our three universities are well below national averages for default rates on federal loans, a sign that U of I graduates land jobs that allow them to manage their debt.

The most recent data shows that nearly 8 percent of students who graduated from the nation's four-year public universities in 2012 had defaulted on their federal loans three years later.

Rates at each of our universities were well under half of that ... 2.1 percent in Urbana-Champaign, 3.2 percent at UIC and 3.4 percent at UIS.

Among Illinois' 12 public universities, rates within the U of I System were the three lowest ... with others ranging from nearly 4 percent to almost 14 percent.

Each of our universities also ranked at the midpoint compared to Big Ten institutions, where rates range from about 1 percent to nearly 6 percent.

It's time to wrap up.

I hope you've found this report useful, and that it inspires more ideas on how we can integrate the Framework to better serve the needs of our students, our state and the public good.

More will follow in the months to come, including a November presentation on our Strategic Enrollment Initiative and on our proposal for an agreement with the state that would provide predictable, multi-year funding in exchange for tangible contributions towards its future.

My thanks to all of you for your service and commitment to the University of Illinois System.