

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Urbana-Champaign • Chicago • Springfield

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Robert A. Easter
President

November 27, 2012

Astrida Orle Tantillo – Chairperson, UIC
Caryn Bills, UIC
Farok Eslahi, UIS
Laurel Newman, UIS
Scott Rice, UA
Kathy Seybert, UIUC

Dear Colleagues:

As a University, we have a finite set of resources that can be allocated to support our activities. As we assess our current funding model, looking to the future, it will become increasingly critical to assure we are using our resources in the most efficient manner possible. At the aggregate level, resources are allocated to support our core missions of teaching, research, service and public engagement, economic development and to administrative functions as well. Every organization needs an appropriate infrastructure for business and support services and we acknowledge that these services are vitally important for the conduct of our activities. However, we must be thoughtful and responsible as we make choices about allocating resources between academic and administrative needs. It is crucial that these expenditures be kept in appropriate balance, with a recognition that ultimately all that we do administratively must contribute to the core missions. Additionally, we must identify ways to remove the administrative burdens placed on the faculty and staff which should result in improved productivity and employee morale.

We are initiating a thorough evaluation of University Administrative (UA) units. This review will provide important guidance about the appropriate amount of resources that should be allocated to these units to carry out their activities and their appropriate alignment within the organizational structure. It is important to emphasize that this review does not begin with the predetermined outcome of adding or reducing resources to these units.

We write to invite you to serve on one of several working teams that are being appointed. We ask that your team review the following units; Administrative Information Technology Services, Human Resources and the Office of University Equal Opportunity. Broadly speaking, the areas of inquiry include reporting structure; scope of activities; the amount and deployment of resources; and developing a formal process whereby these units and their budgets and performance are reviewed annually.

As your team begins its work, we ask that the following key questions related to these units be explored:

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- Is the current reporting structure appropriate within the unit and within UA? Under what reporting structure will they be able to best serve the needs of the campuses?
- Is the current scope of activities of these units appropriate and how are these units contributing to the core academic missions-teaching, research, service and economic development-of the university? Are there activities and functions that should be strengthened, abandoned or transferred to the campuses?
- Do the activities and functions of these units warrant the amount of resources (both funding and personnel) that are currently dedicated to them, e.g., are there opportunities to outsource part or all of the functions or services?
- Are the resources deployed in an effective manner? Are there ways the unit's operations can become more efficient and effective? Is there duplication or overlap either within the unit or with other units that can be eliminated to create savings?
- How can the ability of these units to provide valued service to the University be protected as we continue to experience a period of declining State support and constrained tuition growth?
- Are there strategies or best practices used at other institutions that could be used here?
- Please suggest a process whereby these units' budgets and performance are reviewed annually with significant participation by the campuses.

In conducting your review, we ask that your team give careful thought to devising a process that will allow you to provide thoughtful, informed and comprehensive responses to the questions outlined above. It will be important for you to consult staff within the units and related units as well as external users of their services on each of the campuses. The University Office of Planning and Budgeting will be available to provide financial information regarding these units and will assist in gathering information from peer institutions that you might need (please contact Associate Vice President Randy Kangas). We are asking that you complete your work by March 15, 2013, and that you provide a report of no more than 20 pages with any findings and recommendations. Also, include an executive summary of no more than 3 pages. We are also asking you to provide a brief interim status update by February 15, 2013, so that we can identify any issues that might affect your ability to meet the final deadline. Please contact Bill Adams in the President's Office with questions or requests that emerge during your review.

We will be contacting you to set up the inaugural meeting of your committee in the next few days. Please be as flexible and accommodating as possible as we would like to get this process underway as quickly as possible. We are deeply grateful for your willingness to give of your time and expertise in this important review process, and look forward to your report and recommendations. If for any reason you are unable to serve on this review team, please contact Bill Adams in my office.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Easter