

**Remarks Prepared for Delivery at the ASAC Meeting March 11 and BOT March 12, 2015,
by President Robert Easter:**

The question before us concerns the establishment of a medical college on the Urbana-Champaign campus that is independent of the existing University of Illinois College of Medicine based on the Chicago campus.

I have grappled with this question for more than a year, and sought and received advice from many. Consultant reports have been developed by both the UIUC and UIC campuses. I sought and received advice from the University Senates Conference and from Huron Consulting.

I believe there are three important criteria against which the proposal forwarded by UIUC to establish an independently accredited medical college must be judged:

- We start by asking whether the proposed medical college will advance our land-grant mission;
- Next, we must ask whether it will advance the research and educational mission of the Urbana campus;
- Finally, we must ask the question relating to feasibility of the proposed financial and governance model.

That the answer to the first two questions is “yes” has never been questioned throughout the debate that has taken place for the past few months. In fact, many have described the combination of engineering and medicine as the next frontier of scientific advancement and one that has the potential of having a profound impact on the delivery of health care in this country.

I also believe that executed properly the proposed college would advance the research capabilities of the Urbana campus, not only in engineering and biological sciences but in other areas, as well. The proposed medical school has the potential to promote Urbana-Champaign as a biomedical research hub and enhance regional economic development and beyond.

That leaves us with the third question: Is the proposed economic and governance model viable? Can this effort be sustained without negatively affecting other important parts of the University and campus, or putting additional strains on state resources?

The financial plan developed by the Urbana campus demonstrates the ability to adequately finance startup and ongoing operational costs through contributions from the Carle Health System, other donors and tuition revenue. Thus, the proposed college would not make further demands on state appropriations or taxing other colleges. In fact, this type of public-private partnership may become the model for sustaining public higher education in the state.

In supporting this effort, I am fully cognizant of the extremely valuable role of the UIC College of Medicine. The four campuses of this college collectively train approximately 300 physicians each year, many of whom then practice in Illinois both in urban and rural settings. Our current College of Medicine has a very significant commitment to diversity and the preparation of skilled doctors to serve the under-resourced and diverse communities of our state.

It also is important to point out the health sciences resources available on the UIC campus. They are vast and I believe could propel the University into leadership roles that would have a huge impact on health-care practice, health research, health education and beyond in the state and nation.

I view the proposed new college as complementary to the UIC effort – one that will provide a highly specialized, engineering-based medical curriculum.

As with any proposal of this nature, there are complex and difficult issues that must be resolved in a manner that reflects the best interests of all parties. Responsibility for some of these matters resides appropriately with the individual campuses. For example, the future of the existing Regional College of Medicine currently on the UIUC campus and the manner in which M-1 education will be delivered to students who proceed to Rockford and Peoria is the responsibility of the UIC Dean of Medicine and the leadership of our Chicago campus.

There are other activities such as the Medical Scholars Program (the MD/PhD program) which involve both the UIC and UIUC campuses. Also, there are non-medical scholar students in Urbana in the M-2, M-3 and M-4. The future assignment of various assets and responsibilities associated with the existing program needs to be addressed. It is extremely important that the proposed project add to and not diminish the current infrastructure for medical education and research at the University.

Based on all of these considerations and in consultation with President-designate Timothy Killeen, I am recommending that, at its meeting on March 12, 2015, the Board of Trustees approve the establishment of an independent College of Medicine at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign campus that is, *by design*, collaborative and synergistic with the UIC-led University of Illinois College of Medicine.

If this recommendation is approved by the Board of Trustees, the President's Office will immediately initiate necessary first steps in implementation. These would include bringing a binding contract with Carle to the Board of Trustees meeting for consideration and approval.

The President's Office will also work with the respective campuses to establish a plan that furthers medical education and research and the land-grant mission at the University of Illinois. The goals must be to advance the aspirations of each campus while creating greater synergies between them to advance health care and benefit citizens. Ultimately, the activities of each

campus must be guided by a University-wide strategic plan that fulfills the expectations inherent in our mission.

Let me offer a final comment. We are in a transformational period in the manner in which health care is delivered in this country, driven both by advances in technology and a need to contain costs while delivering the best possible services to all. The University of Illinois has an opportunity to gain a position of national leadership in this new era.

The new model calls for integration of the key disciplines of health care to a degree not imagined in the past. Our campus in Chicago is virtually unique in having not only a College of Medicine, but also colleges of Nursing, Applied Health Sciences, Public Health, Social Work, Dentistry and Pharmacy. The Board took a critical step last year when these colleges were brought together under the leadership of a single UIC Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs.

Approval of the proposed unique college on the Urbana-Champaign campus is a second critical step positioning the University to be at the forefront of technological innovation.

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