

UIC**Office of the Provost****UIC 2010: Strategic Thinking****An introduction from Provost Tanner****Provost Tanner's
Introduction****2010 Strategic
Thinking Committee:**

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It is my pleasure to invite you to join me in a vital campus-wide activity—the UIC 2010 Strategic Thinking process. UIC can only continue to evolve as a great public research university if there exists a clear vision for the campus that informs, guides and integrates all aspects of the institution's strategic development in the coming years. Of course, such a vision and the plans to carry it out do not materialize out of whole cloth, and they are not captured in any single existing planning document.

It is my strong belief that the best strategic activity occurs in an inclusive process that fosters a sustained organizational ethos or 'culture' of strategic discourse—a strategic thinking process, if you will. At its best, such a discourse is transformative, helping us to continually challenge and invigorate ourselves as an academic community and, at the same time, find the means to engage the city and world around us. At a minimum, such strategic thinking should be the springboard for planning at all levels at UIC: department, center, college, campus; east, west and south.

We are not beginning the strategic thinking process in a vacuum. UIC has benefited from several strategic planning exercises in the past and the results can be found in planning documents included elsewhere on this Web site. All of our units plan, some more formally than others. We all conduct some level of strategic activity and make choices about the future. But, as a campus and across units, there has been little collective conversation and we have lacked a real framework through which to foster strategic understanding.

A Framework

Over the past few months we have put in place the first elements of a framework for strategic thinking:

(i) An annual Leadership Retreat. A late summer meeting where 200 leaders from colleges, departments and other units identified major strategic questions for inclusion in the strategic thinking process. Hopefully this will become an annual event at which the leadership

(iii) Your active participation in the Strategic Thinking Process. My intention is that the strategic thinking process will offer multiple avenues of interaction so that each member of the campus community can find a way to engage the Committee and contribute to the crafting of a document that represents the very best thinking on the strategic directions of UIC. I have asked the 2010 Co-chairs, Professors Russell Betts and David Perry, to keep the campus well-informed and engaged in the Committee's work. To this end they have created this Web site.

On this Web site you will find the Committee's charge, membership, timeline and meeting information. To keep everyone engaged, the Committee will be hosting a series of meetings—big and small—with all sectors of the campus to elicit your goals, thoughts and concerns. Please watch for notices of these meetings both here on the Web site and throughout the campus. The Web site will also have draft documents for your review and comment, once they are available. These documents will be the subject of campus-wide conversations, resulting in the delivery of the Committee's final strategic thinking document to me.

I encourage you to visit the Web site periodically, and to engage fully in the strategic thinking process established by the Committee.

(iv) The Vice Provost for Planning and Programs. The fourth element of this new framework for strategic activity is the recruitment of a Vice Provost for Planning and Programs. The products of the strategic thinking exercise should serve as the foundation for good strategic planning and program development—at both the unit and campus levels. Professor Russell Betts has been appointed to this position and I am relying on him to help the campus to maintain ongoing, sustained strategic direction.

An Invitation to Participate

Let me again invite you to participate actively in the strategic thinking process. Two of the three key permanent elements of the new framework for strategic action at UIC are the new Vice Provost for Planning and Programs and the Leadership Retreat. The third and most

of the campus comes together for critical, reflective conversation and strategic collaboration

(ii) The UIC 2010 Strategic Thinking Committee. Chancellor Manning and I announced the formation of the 2010 Strategic Thinking Committee at the UIC Leadership Retreat in August, 2003. Since that time, a Committee comprised of faculty, staff, students and external parties has been formed and charged to lead a campus wide strategic process to consider the future of UIC and, specifically, to create a document that will guide planning on our campus for the next seven years. While all of UIC's many constituent bodies could not be represented in the committee's limited membership, it is the Committee's purpose to broadly solicit input and to engage in a sustained dialogue to ensure that the Committee arrives at the most informed and balanced conclusions possible.

important element is the regular, sustained participation of all of us in a new organizational 'ethos' or 'culture' of strategic action. The future of UIC will be well served by a directed sense of mission and activity—and it all begins with each of us thinking carefully about the purposes, prospects, and paths to success for this outstanding institution.

Sincerely,
Michael Tanner



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