

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor  
for Academic Affairs  
Swanlund Administration Building  
601 East John Street  
Champaign, IL 61820



March 1, 2018

**Undergraduate Education Strategy Task Force**

Tracy Sulkin, *Chair*  
Janet Carter-Black  
Kevin Jackson  
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Carla McCowan  
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David Ward  
David Zola  
Michel Bellini, *ex officio*

Dear Colleagues:

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has experienced tremendous progress and innovation in Undergraduate Education over the past five years. The Fall 2014 Conversations on Undergraduate Education engaged nearly 700 faculty, staff, and students and led to the Grand Challenge Learning Initiative, campus-level Student Learning Outcomes, and the ePortfolio System. The University is doing more to understand student learning through the creation of the Council for Learning Outcomes Assessment.

New programs have been created that connect disciplines like Computer Science with Linguistics, that expand Illinois' reach like the iMBA program, and that allow for better specialization as in the concentrations in Psychology. In addition, CITL was created to support faculty teaching efforts.

The University continues to support and grow undergraduate research. Groups have met to assess the student experience with on-line learning platforms, mental health, and accessibility issues.

To build on this progress and to create the best foundation for the success for Undergraduate Education, we are initiating the development of a comprehensive strategy for Undergraduate Education as part of the next phase of strategic planning.

Based on consultation with campus leadership, including the Deans with whom you are associated, you have been identified to contribute critically to this process by serving on the Undergraduate Education Strategy Task Force. Tracy Sulkin has agreed to lead this Task Force, whose efforts will culminate in a report.

Given the shifting landscape of higher education, we want you to consider ways that our university can offer relevant and meaningful education to prepare our students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Some broad themes to consider include: the essential core of a 21st-century Liberal Arts Education for a land grant university; the structure of degree programs, certificates, and cross-disciplinary educational experiences will allow students to assemble the skills and knowledge they need to succeed; how to prepare students to become effective online learners and to embrace the

importance of learning through the lifespan; how to capitalize on technology to improve the student experience and expand Illinois's ability to reach students all over the world; the role of design thinking and entrepreneurship in the preparation of our students to become agents of progress and thoughtful change; the development of opportunities and the implementation and advancement of technology and data analytics to support access and student success; the need to continue to grow our efforts to make our campus a diverse and inclusive environment; and enhancing resources and guidance for faculty to achieve teaching excellence.

We want the task force to think boldly and broadly about undergraduate education. You need not come up with specific outcomes to be achieved. Rather, we hope you will identify comprehensive and far-reaching goals and areas to be explored. While it is not necessary to provide a high level of detail at this point, it is important to outline major themes along with the processes and timelines that will be necessary to accomplish those major goals. Specifically, the task force should address the following:

- In what areas does Illinois have the greatest opportunity to positively impact student learning and engagement?
- What opportunities and challenges do we face in Undergraduate Education over the next five to ten years?
- What specific actions would be most effective in realizing our potential in Undergraduate Education related to cross-disciplinary education, structures of degrees, student success, and student services? What new investments would be necessary to implement those actions? Please distinguish short (24 months), medium (3-5 years), and long-term horizons (5-10 years) for the actions.
- Undergraduate Education presents many opportunities for community engagement and better understanding of cultural differences. How best can we connect with our local, state, and global community through service learning, volunteerism, and civic engagement?
- How can we best engage the entire UIUC community in this effort? Are there specific opportunities or ideas to bring together faculty from all disciplines?

Your team might wish to consider additional questions to help guide the development of multiple strategies for Undergraduate Education at our institution. In developing the comprehensive strategy, we ask that you develop, as the product of your efforts, a process for engaging key internal and external stakeholders and drawing on the diversity of disciplinary expertise on the campus.

We ask that your task force also connect with other groups at work on Undergraduate Education, including the MOOC and Online Strategy Advisory Committee (MOSAC), the Technology Entrepreneur Center, the Council for Undergraduate Deans, the Student Accessibility Task Force as well as advisors and student affairs professionals.

An update to the Provost's office will be due April 23, 2018 with a report following by May 21. Please contact Staci Provezis ([sprovez2@illinois.edu](mailto:sprovez2@illinois.edu)), Associate Provost for Academic Effectiveness, in the Provost's Office with questions or requests that emerge during your review.

We appreciate your willingness to serve on this task force.  
Sincerely,

Robert J. Jones  
Chancellor

Andreas C. Cangellaris  
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost

- c: Kevin Pitts, Vice Provost for Education
- William Bernhard, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
- Staci Provezis, Associate Provost for Academic Effectiveness