

**REPORT OF A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION VISIT TO THE
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, URBANA-CHAMPAIGN**

**Champaign, IL October 11-14, 2009 For The Higher Learning Commission
A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
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DIVERSITY AND CAMPUS CLIMATE

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The University has done much to address diversity and campus climate. Many of the efforts are outlined in documents such as the Project 2012 Transforming Illinois: Reenvisioning Diversity and Inclusion and some of the actions taken are included in the report to the HLC in response to the April 2004 focused visit. Further, the Self-study reports significant increases in underrepresented students (5.6%), faculty of color (91.3%) and academic professionals (42.9%). Positions, such as the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs/Intercultural Relations, have been added to enhance diversity efforts. The Division of Student Affairs, in particular, has taken significant efforts to address campus climate. For example, in January 2009 the Student Affairs Diversity Training and Programs Committee was convened. The Committee was charged with determining the need for a training program and identifying targets for diversity education; identifying best practices; developing programs and modules to be piloted in 2009-2010; and developing methods for assessment of the programs. The final report was submitted in June 20, 2009. Some of the recommendations are currently being implemented. A significant step was taken by the Chancellor's Office in providing tenure-track positions to the ethnic studies programs, which will soon achieve departmental status. In spite of all these efforts some challenges remain. The number of African American students has leveled off. Additional efforts will need to be instituted to increase the number of African Americans students enrolling in the University. Additionally, some students, faculty and staff feel that the University is not being aggressive enough in addressing diversity issues. The issue with the Chief is used as an example of the institution taking too long to address important issues and not taking advantage of opportunities to promote constructive dialogue.

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It appears to the members of the team that many of the efforts put forth by the University are not being recognized by some students, faculty and staff. It is recommended that the administration institute additional communication efforts to reach the groups raising concerns. One recommendation is that administrative staff members seek out and meet with small groups of affected students and staff and work at gaining their trust, advice, and recommendations. It is also recommended that they take advantage of the many alumni of color who love the University to help carry the message. The University should be commended for its efforts in implementing new initiatives to increase diversity and improve the institutional climate for under-represented individuals and now needs to communicate and coordinate those efforts to those most impacted

C. Adequacy of Progress in Addressing Previously Identified Challenges

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The 1999 HLC team expressed concerns over the campus climate for diversity and inclusion in general, the controversy over Chief Illiniwek in particular, and the recruitment and retention of under-represented faculty and staff members. The team acknowledges significant progress concerning the recruitment and retention of under-represented faculty and staff members. HLC focused visit teams in 2002 and 2004 continued to express very strong concern over the divisiveness and damage to the campus of the Chief Illiniwek issue.

Although the Chief was “retired” in 2007 (as noted concerning Criterion 1 and in the Advancement Report), there is a need for greater institutional attention, innovative approaches, and bold action concerning the campus climate for diversity and inclusion. Failure to address this issue undermines other institutional efforts that target improving diversity. In addition, differential treatment and responses to diversity issues involving underrepresented groups by university administration perpetuate the hostile environment for under-represented students, faculty, and staff and undermine other efforts to improve

diversity. UIUC needs to focus greater institutional attention and action to improve the campus climate for diversity and inclusion.

I. OVERALL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

UIUC (page 34)

Public perception of the institution has been damaged by the 2009 admissions scandal and the resulting administrative transitions and replacements. Continued mishandling of the issue of the diversity and lack of replacement of the University mascot has fostered a climate of mistrust of university administration. Issues of low graduate student salaries, representation of Academic Professionals in governance, the huge negative impact of deferred maintenance on campus facilities, and immature assessment environment are other examples of lapses in administrative leadership that have significant negative impact on the institution and create significant challenges for its future development.