

# ILLINOIS

## *On Our Watch*



volume 1 | issue 1

### A LETTER FROM CHANCELLOR HERMAN

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the inaugural edition of *On Our Watch*, a newsletter for Illinois alumni—all 380,000 of you around the world. At commencement ceremonies last month, Illinois awarded its 500,000th diploma, marking a new chapter in the story of our great University.

The story of Illinois is the story of remarkable people who dedicated their knowledge and creativity to building a place of excellence. From these men and women, we have inherited one of the nation's most distinguished and historic educational institutions.

Illinois helped the country invent the public research university and to deliver the finest education to people who could not afford an education in the past. The people who preceded us at Illinois literally created the "opportunity society" that was the hallmark of America in the 20th century.

Now, in the 21st century, it is our watch.

Today, *you* are those remarkable people. Our alumni, students, faculty, and staff are now writing the story that will be handed down to those who take the next sentinel's watch.

I am excited to share a few of these stories with you in these pages. And I invite you to join us for more stories of Illinois's remarkable people by subscribing to our e-newsletter at [www.uiuc.edu/goto/enewsletter](http://www.uiuc.edu/goto/enewsletter).

In coming issues, you will learn more about our plans to elevate Illinois to a new pinnacle of excellence. As you know, America's public universities are in a period of upheaval. Yet, when the dust settles, I believe that Illinois will emerge as the preeminent public research institution in the nation. This is the only goal worthy of our heritage.



Accomplishing this goal will not be easy. Today's land grant universities find themselves struggling in a new financial environment as states all across the nation are faced with broader social obligations. Yet we must find new resources to attract and retain outstanding faculty so that a new generation of men and women can continue the Illinois legacy of learning, research, and service to our state, nation, and world.

We are aggressively pursuing funding alternatives, including federal grants, corporate partnerships, and collaborative research agreements with universities and government agencies in the United States and around the world. We are ever-grateful to our alumni and friends, whose generous contributions have helped to preserve and

enhance educational opportunities for our students.

Yet the challenge remains. And the stakes are enormous.

Today's graduates face a world in which social, political, and economic changes occur at a breakneck pace. We must prepare our students for this changing world by teaching them to think critically and creatively—not just about their careers, but about the kind of society in which they want to live.

At Illinois, we are shaping the future—through our research, through our teaching, and through our commitment to offering a world-class education to people from all walks of life, in the belief that their work will improve the lives of us all. This is the story of Illinois.

We are the sentinels of our generation. On our watch, we will make Illinois's next chapter its best ever.

Sincerely,

Chancellor Richard Herman

### *Illinois Focuses on Local Efforts to Make Global Connections*

This campus is nearing completion of a major strategic planning process that will reinforce and build comprehensive excellence, launch and support several strategic

initiatives, address much-needed facility maintenance, and secure resources necessary to achieve preeminence among public universities.

The plan will extend traditional strengths shaped by the state's land grant university ideal to embrace the profound changes that

transform our world, from local to global. Powerful programs in the sciences, engineering, technology, and agriculture will bring us global eminence by addressing issues vital to the very well-being of the globe and its inhabitants. Powerful developments in the arts, humanities, and social sciences will

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*Illinois alumni make up one of the largest alumni groups in the nation, and they now have a building to call home.*

## Alumni News and Notes

### Alice Campbell Alumni Center Open for Visitors •

The ribbon has been cut and the doors are now open for your first visit to the Alice Campbell Alumni Center at Lincoln Avenue and California Street in Urbana. The location is perfectly appropriate, as it stands adjacent to the historic Hallene Gateway, reminding visitors of our rich history while providing a taste of the excitement of Illinois today.

This is the first time in its 139-year history that the campus has a space devoted to welcoming the more than 380,000 alumni back to Urbana. The \$16 million project was financed by private donations, including a lead gift from Robert and Alice Campbell, who are also the main benefactors of Campbell Hall for Public Telecommunication, home to WILL-AM-FM-TV.

**Illinois Alumnus Walks Away With Oscar •** Were you among those pulling for your fellow Illini on Oscar night? The world watched on March 5 as the Academy



*On March 5, 2006, Ang Lee accepted the Academy Award for Best Director for his work on Brokeback Mountain.*

of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences bestowed one of its most prestigious awards—the Oscar for Best Director—upon **Ang Lee**, who earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in theater at Illinois in 1980. In all, Lee’s movie “Brokeback Mountain” was nominated for eight Oscars and won three.

### Enjoy the Benefits of Alumni Membership •

*Illinois Alumni Magazine*, a bimonthly publication sent to all members of the Alumni Association at Urbana, has been producing an in-depth, three-part series called “High

Noon for Higher Education: What will it take for the University of Illinois to Remain Competitive?” You can read the articles without charge on their Web site ([www.uiaa.org](http://www.uiaa.org)) or join the organization to receive this beautiful, glossy magazine and discover the many other benefits of membership. ♦



## Learn from the Experts at Illinois

You don’t have to be on the Urbana campus to feel its pulse. A trip to the home page ([www.uiuc.edu](http://www.uiuc.edu)) will give visitors a snapshot of campus news, daily citations of Illinois experts in the world’s top media outlets, and the broad range of events that make the campus such a rich place to visit, work, and study. Over its history, the work of the University has been contributing in virtually every aspect of society because its research and education are built upon society’s needs.

Recently a new feature has been added to the home page that demonstrates how Illinois faculty and staff members are contributing to current critical issues. Illini friends can arm themselves with fresh examples of the ways the campus is educating people and improving lives by spending “A Minute With...” one of our faculty and staff experts each week.

It takes only a minute to read, and it’s always just one click off the Illinois home page. ♦

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Photography: Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Bachrach Photography, BLDD Architects, Inc., Don Hamerman, Jason Lindsey/Perceptive Visions, Cesar Pelli and Associates, UI Sports Information, Thompson McClellan Photography, and these University of Illinois campus units: College of Communications, Department of Computer Science, News Bureau, Office of Admissions and Records, Study Abroad Office.

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