PROPOSAL FOR A CROSS-UNIVERSITY DIALOGUE  
(Revision of the Summit document)

While the past two years have seen great and rapid change for the University of Illinois, because of both external and internal factors, most members of the University community look toward a time of greater stability in which they can focus on the work they came here to do. We are now in a position to pause and reflect on how our University has changed, and how it might change in the future. To that purpose, the three campus Senates have endorsed Chairman Kennedy’s suggestion for a summit that would include representatives of key constituencies of the University. The purpose of this meeting would be to engage in dialogue about the long-term goals of the three campuses and of the central University Administration; and, crucially, to clarify the process by which decisions leading to those goals need to be made.

1. What are the specific core objectives for the University of Illinois, and how can those objectives be achieved?

2. What are the decision-making processes that will lead us toward achieving those objectives, while maintaining a balance between the legitimate authority of the central administration, on the one hand; and, on the other, the proper scope of self-governance of the campuses, especially over academic policy matters? Specifically, how do we create a system with a strong President and with strong Chancellors who are the CEOs and leaders of their campuses?

3. How do we envision articulation among the three campuses in the future? What are the processes that will help maintain a balance between three separately-accredited and mostly independent campuses, and the greater strength that can be generated through cross-campus collaboration and synergies? Given that the current benchmarking project compares each campus with its respective peers, what role should such metrics play in cross-campus comparisons? Are the “dashboard” benchmark criteria sufficient to evaluate academic quality and centrality in a wider sense? What role must the campus Senates play in reviewing and approving any proposals that affect the academic profile of the campuses?

4. The uncertainty of state funding, including likely changes to the state pension system, have been a primary factor in the decline in faculty morale and recent departures or early resignations. While working to address these state policies, on the one hand, what can be done internally to sustain and encourage faculty enthusiasm about the university’s future, moving forward?