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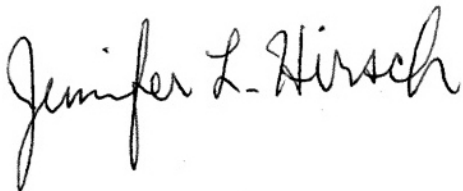
August 21, 2014

**Letter of Affirmation for UIC Innovation Point 3: Sustainability Strategic Thinking**

I affirm that approach taken to the Sustainability Strategic Thinking process at UIC is innovative among institutions of higher education. The goal of this process was to define sustainability for UIC and how it connects with the long-term strategic goals of the campus. The SST process explored UIC's sustainability work in and beyond ecology and the environment, in areas such as economics, resources, and social equity. The SST process used a two-phase approach, beginning with a focus on asset identification. Asset identification related to sustainability was adapted from The Field Museum's work engaging Chicago communities in sustainability and climate action, which itself was an adaptation of asset-based community development methodologies. This approach for developing a tailored sustainability integration strategy takes UIC's particular strengths in sustainability as the foundation for crafting a plan for sustainability. Assets in the areas of research, operations, curriculum, and community were identified and analyzed by the Office of Sustainability and the Working Groups to define a set of asset matrices. The end result revealed a wide assortment of individuals, programs, centers, courses, research, activities and projects that contribute to sustainability across campus. This process identified five domains of sustainability to be strengthened at UIC: Environment, Energy, Economy, Equity & Diversity, and Health, as well as four planning principles.

Because campus sustainability needs broad innovation and continuous improvement, the university must become a learning organization with nearly everyone publicly engaging and learning. By increasing pride in what they are doing now, and recognizing a broad continuum of sustainability efforts, UIC is increasing excitement and engagement around sustainability because people are beginning to see their work and passions connected to sustainability.

Sincerely,



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