

January 14, 2005

TO: Advisory Committee on University Space Planning

FROM: Henry S. Bienen, President

SUBJECT: Response to committee report

Thank you for your thoughtful and thought-provoking report on campus development at Northwestern. You have raised some important issues and provided some very interesting ideas in regard to those issues. I know that serving on this committee required a significant commitment of time and effort, and I very much appreciate your service to the University.

Following are my responses to the recommendations included in your final report. A copy of the Conclusions and Recommendations section of the report is attached for reference; for convenience's sake, I have organized my responses in the same manner as that portion of the report.

The Planning Process Matters

I agree that the process of campus planning is important. I am very encouraged by the efforts of this committee and the continuing work of the Educational Properties Committee (EPC) of the University's Board of Trustees, which has reviewed and discussed this report. The EPC supports the principles, and will use them as guidelines

for space planning. I have given thoughtful consideration to ACUSP's recommendation for creating a standing space planning committee but I believe that it would be more effective to create special committees to look at particular issues, both campus-wide and regarding different sectors of campus. As you may know, we have had such a committee examining issues specific to the southeast quadrant of the Evanston campus, and that has served us very well. We plan to bring together other groups to look at central campus planning issues and at parking on the Evanston campus. Additionally, we will soon be presenting the plans for the Southeast Campus at a campus-wide meeting.

Invest in Community Relations

Your assessment of town-gown relations as a long-standing issue is certainly accurate, although the situation may not be that markedly different between Northwestern and Evanston than it is between many other universities and their host communities. And while Northwestern may have fewer staff members dedicated to this area than some of the other institutions you noted, I think that could be said of almost all areas of Northwestern's administration. In general, this University tends to have a leaner administrative staff than many peer institutions. That does not reflect a lack of commitment to community relations (or any other particular area), but simply the University's overarching philosophy of keeping administrative costs as low as possible. I do not regard dollars spent on administration as necessarily a good indicator of strength of commitment.

Northwestern has made substantial investments in community relations over the past seven years, including improved communications, additional coordination of student

volunteer efforts and more outreach on the part of the university. Recent meetings with neighborhood groups in the areas near the main campus and near Ryan Field have gone very well; I am hopeful that holding those regularly, along with the meetings of the neighbors' group established as part of the historic district lawsuit settlement, will continue to provide opportunities for meaningful conversations with our neighbors.

Invest in Green Space

I agree that maintaining and enhancing the green spaces on both campuses, and particularly the lakefront on the Evanston campus, should be a key precept in our campus development. I'm very encouraged by the plans for the southern end of the lakefront that are now being developed that include a new music building and improved access to the lake. In regard to providing additional funds for landscaping, that already is under way. We have undertaken significant plantings in connection with recently constructed buildings on the Evanston campus, including the McCormick Tribune Center, the Pancoe-ENH Life Sciences Pavilion and Crowe Hall. On the Chicago campus, extensive landscaping will be done in connection with the expansion of the Erie parking garage and with the Robert H. Lurie Medical Research Center, which will include a roof garden. We also recently completed new landscaping along Lake Shore Drive near Abbott Hall and the Rubloff buildings. In summary, we will continue to invest in and enhance our green spaces on both campuses, both through smaller annual projects and major projects in connection with new construction.

Build Taller on the Evanston Campus to Manage Density and Aesthetics

The recommendation to build taller buildings in the central part of the Evanston campus both for space efficiency and for aesthetics is a very interesting one. As you note, this would require variances from the City of Evanston, so it may be somewhat difficult to achieve, but we will consider it as individual projects come up.

Create Pedestrian-Friendly Campus

This too is an interesting and thought-provoking recommendation. At the same time, I know that the amount and location of parking on campus is an extraordinarily sensitive issue for the University community. Nevertheless, I think the current mix of pedestrians, parking, roads and cars on the Evanston campus is not only aesthetically problematic, but creates hazardous conditions in some locations. Therefore, I agree that we should work to reduce the number of cars on the central campus area; segregate cars and pedestrians more; and extend pedestrian walkways. The first phase of a central north-south walkway has been completed in the area between the Pancoe-ENH Life Sciences Pavilion and the Nanofabrication building. As other major construction projects, including a new co-generation facility at the central utility plant and the Proteomics and Nanobiotechnology Building, are completed, that walkway will be extended south. On the Chicago campus, we have established 15-foot setbacks as the standard for all buildings that front on Fairbanks Court, which is consistent with the committee's recommendation. For other streets this will be more difficult, given the small amount of land available and the significant programmatic needs of the units in Chicago, but we will continue to take this

into consideration in our planning. Mid-block pedestrian access will continue to be preserved in Chicago.

Chicago campus signage recently has been revised and will be updated as required.

Signage for the Evanston campus needs to be improved; we are currently working on new signage for the campus including the South Campus entry, the Arts Circle and new campus directories.

Resolve the Issue of Parking on the Evanston Campus

I agree with this recommendation. A campus-wide parking committee is now being formed to examine parking issues on the Evanston campus and will make recommendations on how best to address those issues.

Develop Guidelines without a Master Plan

This is under way. We have hired a well-regarded planning firm, Sasaki Associates, that has developed campus plans at numerous colleges and universities to assist us in developing guidelines for campus development. This firm has been very helpful in considering our options for the southern end of the lakefill and the central part of campus and soon will assist us in the parking study. We will develop three-dimensional computer models of projects and their surrounding areas as they are being considered, but it is unlikely that we will develop three-dimensional models of the entire Evanston and Chicago campuses. We have already used three-dimensional computer models for the southeast campus development and proteomics building projects (as well as physical three-dimensional models) and we will continue to do so for other projects and studies.

Again, thank you for your good work on these important campus planning issues. We take our role as stewards very seriously and your work will be very helpful as we continue to examine alternatives and make decisions with long-range consequences. I appreciate the time and thoughtful insight that you have provided to the University.