

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Urbana-Champaign • Chicago • Springfield

Office of the President
364 Henry Administration Building
506 South Wright Street
Urbana, IL 61801-3689

February 5, 2015

Mr. Marty Nesbitt
Chair, The Barack Obama Foundation
300 East Randolph Street, Suite 4030
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Mr. Nesbitt,

We write to underscore our strong support and unwavering commitment for the University of Illinois at Chicago's bid to host the Obama Presidential Library. As Chicago's only public research university committed to enhancing the human condition and one of the most economically, racially and socially diverse campuses in the nation, UIC is the ideal institution to host the Obama Presidential Library and Museum.

In partnership with the North Lawndale community, known for its longstanding history of political and social activism, we set out to create a transparent, comprehensive proposal with a shared goal – to bring the Obama Presidential Library to Chicago. From the beginning, we have worked closely and openly with stakeholders to engage the community. Our proposal, which would create new park space, focuses on a scenario that co-locates the Library and Museum on a vacant, 23-acre city-owned parcel in North Lawndale, with an academic-cultural institute and visitor center at the corner of Harrison and Halsted on the UIC campus.

This multi-site proposal envisions creating an east-west cultural and civic corridor extending from the lakefront Museum Campus through UIC to North Lawndale. The five mile corridor – host to one of the greatest concentrations of civic and cultural institutions in the city -- would unite and serve community and academic purposes and establish dramatic new public spaces. The Library and Museum would form a new town square in North Lawndale, generating commercial and residential development, and add attractive green space to the site.

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel has committed to support quick and cost-effective conveyance of city-owned land in North Lawndale for this project and pledged to reopen the CTA Kostner Blue Line Station to facilitate better access to the North Lawndale site. Moreover, a generous \$5 million gift from the Steans Family Foundation will support the Library and Museum in North Lawndale.

The academic institute, the "O-4 Institute" — named for "optimism, outreach, opportunity and one world, extending to the four corners of the world" in keeping with the broad sweep of President Obama's policy agenda — would host fellowships for academics from universities in Chicago and across the globe, and junior fellowships for high school students. UIC faculty and students would design a research agenda with the institute on issues that would focus on the critical and relevant policy issues of the day, such as affordable housing,

gentrification, economic growth and development, workforce development, literacy, and access to health care. Barack Obama's Presidential Library belongs in Chicago, tied to an urban campus with a public mission and a west side community that can be the centerpiece of an economic revival.

We have issued public statements reaffirming the earnestness of UIC's bid and noted that the University of Illinois Board of Trustees unanimously passed an unequivocal statement of support for UIC's proposal. We write today to convey this same message to you, we are all firmly committed to UIC's bid. UIC's mission aligns with President Obama's vision for innovation, education, social justice, civic engagement and health care for all. The commitment of UIC to its mission transcends any current and future changes in university and state leadership.

Our innovative proposal conceives Chicago as the quintessential global city of the twenty-first century. The case for UIC's selection is compelling and the Obama Foundation should feel confident in the University leadership's ongoing support.

We look forward to continuing this conversation.

Sincerely,



Edward L. McMillan
Chair of the Board of Trustees
University of Illinois



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President
University of Illinois



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