Members of the Board of Trustees, President White, alumni, faculty, staff, honored guests and others:

It is with great pleasure that we reflect upon and celebrate the University of Illinois through participation in this presidential inauguration. As Chair of the University Professional Personnel Advisory Committee, or UPPAC, it is my distinct honor to represent the thousands of academic professionals and civil service staff at the three campuses, the medical districts, the extension offices, and other University of Illinois-affiliated entities all across this great state.

President White has already begun to engage faculty, students and staff in a process that will develop a ten-year strategic plan for the university. No doubt this process will enable the entire institution to truly envision a student-centered future that embraces our 137-year legacy while also meeting the challenges of the technology revolution that drives much of our learning today and will continue to do so in the years to come. Academic professionals and civil service staff are certain to play a vital role in this strategic plan as they continue to support the university’s mission, students, and faculty through coordinating academic programs, managing facilities, recruiting students, working alongside faculty in research labs, and through the thousands of other professional and technical functions they perform. I cannot help but believe that many university staff members have chosen a career in service to this institution because they truly believe, as I do, in the transforming power of higher education.

The current vision for the University of Illinois states that the university must shape its future, not leave it to chance. Today we are shaping the future by coming together in celebration and thoughtful anticipation of what that future holds. With President White’s help, we will no doubt meet the challenges through careful planning and the wisdom to welcome change. Thank you.