

**WILLARD AIRPORT GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABLE AIR SERVICE
ADVISORY TASK FORCE
March 6, 2014**

Time: 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Location: Bryan Room, Institute of Aviation, Willard Airport

Members Present: Steve Carter (Chair), Tom Berns, Deb Busey, Lori Cowdrey Benso (via phone), Dorothy David, Mike DeLorenzo, Jayne DeLuce, John Frasca, Karl Gnad, Dick Helton, Al Nudo, Laurel Prussing, Seamus Reilly, Dan Sholem, Kristin Williamson

Others Present: Tim Barnes, Bill Ferguson, David Foote, Tom Gordon, Gozen Hartman, Bruce Walden, Steve Wanzek, Kris Young

Members Absent: William Dick, Bumsoo Lee, Chris Schroeder, Bill Volk

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Meeting was started by Chair Steve Carter at 3:35 p.m.

2. International Use of Airport (Tim Barnes, Director of Illinois Strategic International Partnerships)

Steve Carter introduced Tim Barnes, Director of Illinois Strategic International Partnerships, to the group. Tim has worked in the Office of International Programs and Studies at the University of Illinois for 16 years in some type of capacity with international relations. Tim informed the group there are currently 467 active international partnerships with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. One of the goals for staff in Tim's office is to identify partnerships with other countries and universities that can benefit the university and surrounding communities. Another role for Tim is to act as the primary point of contact and liaison for international dignitaries from partner or potential partner institutions and members of Foreign Service corps when they visit the University of Illinois.

The University of Illinois has the second-largest international student population in the United States; the largest population for a public institution. Students travel from more than 110 countries. Approximately 20% of students enrolled at the university are international students. The percentage of undergraduate international students is expected to continue increasing. There has been a dramatic increase during the past 5-7 years with most coming from mainland China (almost 50%), Korea, and India.

Study abroad programs are coordinated through International Programs and Studies. Top choices for university students are Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom. Australia is also a top destination for students. On average, 2,200 students study abroad each year. There are over 900 international faculty members and scholars. Last year, University of Illinois was also recognized as the leading institution for Fulbright Scholars.

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All of these statistics emphasize the amount of international travel related to the university. The office of International Programs and Studies personally coordinates about 20-25 trips each year for international delegations visiting the university. Personnel with the International Programs and Studies office conduct about 25 trips per year visiting international institutions. Senior officers travel internationally about 5-7 times a year.

Tim noted students travelling to the university mainly fly in/out of Chicago airports and then use bus, train or rental car, or cab to travel to Champaign. One reason could be that the incoming students do not have a good sense of how far the distance is between Champaign and Chicago. The people in the Tim's office do not use Willard Airport for travel due to one of two reasons: flight cancellations at Willard Airport and layovers that are longer than the drive time. Overall, the main belief is there is a limitation of convenient service from Willard Airport.

Tim also commented he believes the current leadership team at the university is very focused on creating an international/global presence.

- *Questions for Tim from Task Force:*

- Alan Nudo asked if there is a way to negotiate a specific set of flights with American Airlines for the thousands of international students that travel to/from Champaign. Can something be done to entice an airline with the international population at the university?
 - Bruce Walden stated the short window when these students are traveling is also during the high peak times for everyone else around the country; such as spring break, and the beginning or end of semester. Gozen stated it is possible American and other airlines would be more interested in the international travel conducted by faculty members and business travelers.
- Dan Sholem asked if there are resources in place that provide information to international students about the benefits of traveling to the university via Willard Airport.
 - Tim Barnes responded that information is provided on the university's International Students and Scholars website. It was noted information can be provided about Willard Airport, but the website cannot list a specific carrier such as American Airlines. Tim also stated improvement in the communication to international students prior to their arrival in the United States would be beneficial to the students.

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3. Institute of Aviation Transition Update (Kris Young, Vice President, Parkland)

Steve introduced Dr. Kris Young, Vice President at Parkland College, who is coordinating the transition of the Institute of Aviation from University of Illinois to Parkland College. Dr. Young gave the group a brief historical summary leading up to Parkland's acceptance of taking over the Institute of Aviation from the university. She stated first and foremost, University of Illinois has been very instrumental in keeping the Institute of Aviation at Willard Airport. University asked Parkland to take over the Institute of Aviation on three different occasions. Parkland declined the first two times due to concerns of how to handle the financial aspects related to the facilities and equipment. The administration at Parkland did not believe they could successfully manage this portion during the first few years after the transition. Parkland already had knowledge on how to transfer the students to a four year college and the curriculum was already established by the university. Parkland administrators discussed this need for a financial model with Riverside Research after they recently moved to Champaign. Riverside Research is a not-for-profit, scientific-research institution committed to enhancing the nation's security through trusted, high-level technical advisory and engineering support to government entities, public agencies, and private subcontractors. Their centers of technical excellence move science from the laboratory to the field. They create teams of experts to create effective, efficient, high-value solutions and services. Riverside Research sees central Illinois as a great location for developing unmanned aerial operations for agricultural research. Their company's operations are benefitted by the Institute of Aviation staying at Willard Airport. After meeting with Parkland, Riverside was able to provide a financial model to assist Parkland in operating the Institute of Aviation.

Kris explained the 3-year agreement Parkland has with the University of Illinois includes a lease agreement on the land, facilities and equipment owned by the university and the use of a \$3 million savings fund that is available to replace the fleet as it becomes unusable due to the age of the equipment. The agreement between Parkland College and Riverside Research still needs to be signed, but it expected to be completed in the near future. Riverside will be acquiring full-time staff to work at the Institute of Aviation. The current staff and faculty working at Willard Airport will be hired immediately by Parkland after no longer on the university's payroll. The change-over will occur about mid-August. The curriculum that is currently in place will remain the same after the transition is completed.

An additional benefit coming from Parkland managing the operations of the Institute of Aviation is that people who want to learn to fly as a hobby can do so without being required to enroll in a 4 year program.

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Current enrollment at the Institute of Aviation is lower than normal because of the known possibility that the Institute may be closed. Now that the future of the Institute is stabilized, enrollment is expected to increase, but Parkland does have plans to market and advertise the courses to expedite this process. The enrollment goal for the first year of operation is 90 students, 120 students in the second year and 150 students in the third year. The goal is to have a maximum of 250 students in at least 10 years.

After the flight training curriculum is established and running smoothly, Parkland will begin working on other training aspects, such as airplane maintenance, avionics and aviation administration. The work conducted by Riverside Research may also create training curriculums related to Unmanned Aviation equipment.

- *Questions for Kris from Task Force:*

- Alan Nudo asked what college at the university will support the four-year program for an aviation degree. Plans are still being finalized for transfers to the University. They will be able to transfer, what college they go into depends on what degree they are seeking to earn from the University.
- Laurel Prussing asked if a University of Illinois student can get university credit if they enroll in a course at the Institute of Aviation. Kris explained anyone that enrolls and takes the aviation courses will first get the credit and credential degree at Parkland and then later, if the student transfers to the University, the credits will transfer and apply towards a four-year degree.

4. Consultant Selection Process Update (Karl Gnadt, MTD)

- Karl Gnadt provided an update on the selection process of a consultant to assist the Task Force. Three proposals were received and opened Wednesday, March 5. The evaluation team – Steve Carter, Mike DeLorenzo, David Foote, Bruce Knight, Seamus Reilly, Dan Sholem, and Bruce Walden - reviewed each proposal and decided Sixel Corporation's was the best suited for the goals of the Airport Task Force. The team will negotiate the financial side of the contract during the next few days. After the negotiations are finalized, the proposed contract will be reviewed and voted on by the MTD Board during their next board meeting on March 26. After the contract is approved, a copy of the contract will be shared with the Task Force.
- Sixel Consulting is expected to provide several reports to the Task Force during the next several months. The information they compile and provide will assist the Task Force in making their recommendations to the Chancellor.

5. Task Force Updates

- The April meeting of the Task Force will be canceled. Many local government representatives plan to be in Washington, D.C. on April 3. Also, the first report from

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Sixel Consulting will not be ready prior to the May 8 meeting. Steve stated it is likely the Sixel consultants will assist in the process of educating the public once the Task Force makes their recommendations to the Chancellor.

- Steve Wanzek listed the international airline alliances that were referred to earlier in the meeting. American Airlines is a member of One World Alliance, United is a member of Star Alliance and Delta is part of Sky Team Alliance.
- Steve Carter asked if anyone knew what the actual percentage rate is for canceled flights at Willard Airport.
- Bruce Walden and Steve Wanzek stated it was 18% this past winter, which was higher than normal due the winter weather. It was noted how word-of-mouth can make the number of canceled flights seem greater than reality. Gozen mentioned the FAA website has a tool that can compare cancellation statistics of different airports. She will look for it and send a link to the Task Force members.
- Alan Nudo mentioned Greg Principato's statements from an earlier Task Force meeting about creating a self-sustainable airport. Increasing the visual appeal of the airport would be a way to welcome visitors coming in to Champaign-Urbana through Willard Airport. Mike DeLorenzo mentioned artwork and historical items will be coming over to the terminal building from the Institute of Aviation prior to its transition to Parkland College.
- Dorothy David brought up the fact that only 7 meetings are left on the calendar for the Task Force. Will the group need to meet more than once a month to meet the deadline for submitting recommendations? Steve Carter responded saying they are waiting to make a decision on how to adjust the meeting calendar after the evaluation group has a sit-down meeting with the consultants from Sixel.

6. Next Meeting: possibly May 8, 2014
Meeting adjourned at 4:43 p.m.