

**Southern Illinois University
Board of Trustees Meeting**

July 19, 2012

Edwardsville Campus

Report by Kathy Jones

The July 19, 2012 meeting of the SIU Board of Trustees was called to approve the purchase of professional marketing and communications services for the Carbondale campus. This is a one-year contract at a cost of \$2 million with Lipman Hearne, a public relations firm based in Chicago. In May 2011, the Board had authorized the procurement of professional marketing and communications services and a one-year contract with Lipman Hearne was executed with options for renewal up to four additional years. Lipman Hearne was selected as part of an RFP process.

At the July 19th Board meeting, Chancellor Rita Cheng made a presentation on the need for professional marketing services, the services provided by Lipman Hearne and some of the data that has driven decisions about the University's marketing decisions. The July 19th Marketing Communications PowerPoint presentation may be found at on the Reports page of the Chancellor's Website at:

<http://www.chancellor.siu.edu/reports.html>.

The presentation was quite powerful in demonstrating the issues facing SIU Carbondale campus as it struggles with enrollment and retention issues in today's state budget and higher education environments. Some of the issues identified that the University had to overcome to build enrollment included:

- No sustained strategy for enrollment efforts
- Insufficient investment toward increasing enrollment
- Fragmented and ineffective strategies
- No consistent effort to dispel myths and unwarranted negative perceptions

One of the most interesting points made by the Chancellor was the recommendation of industry experts that institutions of higher education should be spending a minimum of 1% of their institutional budgets on marketing. The current \$2 million dollar contract represents .33% of the SIUC budget. (1% would be \$6 million). Edwardsville is planning to spend \$3.1 million in FY 13.

An important part of the University's contract with Lipman Hearne calls for baseline research so that we can determine what relevant populations think about SIUC and determine how that impacts the decision to consider SIUC as an enrollment option. One of the most important pieces of information gleaned from the research was the people were not aware of the academic

accomplishments of the University. That's why the current marketing pieces are focusing on supplying that information. The message will change as that information becomes more well-known. Then the focus of the University's marketing can shift to something else.

The Chancellor presented information on recruiting materials that showed that between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012, 895,000 pieces of recruitment materials had been disseminated. Another major aspect of the recruitment effort includes the purchase of names of high school students with ACT scores that fit the target profile of the prospects we want for enrollment. This increases the number of appropriate prospects going into our "enrollment funnel," hopefully resulting in more students actually enrolling.

The Chancellor provided information on positive results from marketing and branding efforts from Fall 2010 to Fall 2012, including a 12% increase in applications, a 21.9% increase in admissions and a 6.5% increase in registrations over that time period. Questions were asked about our recruiting efforts in southern Illinois, with the main focus being "Are we doing enough to recruit local students?" Dr. Cheng's response was that we are ramping up our efforts to recruit local students including high school visits and getting viewbooks out, but that less than 10% of our enrollment is from southern Illinois.

Following her presentation, Dr. Cheng was asked about her previous relationship with Lipman Hearne. She noted that she was familiar with the work of Lipman Hearne because that company had been hired by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, but she was not responsible for the hiring of Lipman Hearne at that institution. She indicated that one of the principals of Lipman Hearne is an SIU alum who had been concerned about the University's marketing efforts over the years and wanted to help his alma mater. As a result of submitting low bid in the RFP process, Lipman Hearne won the bid and received the contract for marketing and communications services.

Another Board member commented on the Carbondale campus billboards, banners and logo. He noted that the billboards were not attention-grabbing enough, that the banners were "goofy" and that a 4th grader could have done better with the logo, wondering why we couldn't have a campaign more like the Edwardsville campus. Other members of the Board from Edwardsville quickly noted that the Edwardsville community initially responded negatively to the Edwardsville campus campaign when it was first rolled out and now, people have come to accept and like it. The Chancellor noted that if it is determined that 17-years olds and their parents don't like our marketing campaign, it will be refocused.

The 2012-13 Lipman Hearne contract was approved with one dissenting vote.