CONGRATS, GRADS!

Photo: UIC Creative and Digital Services
Dear graduates,

Your time as a UIC student is nearing its celebratory conclusion with commencement ceremonies scheduled as fall fades into winter. However, unlike Chicago’s seemingly ever-dark winter days, your future is bright with a diploma from the city’s only public research university and one of the nation’s best institutions of higher learning.

I hope you cherish the opportunities you had at UIC to pursue your studies, work and personal growth in one of the nation’s most ethnically and culturally diverse universities. This kind of experience allows you to broaden your perspectives and worldview while serving as a foundation for you to build a path to success.

You will face personal and professional challenges in the next stage of your life and career. The skills, desire and dedication you demonstrated during similar moments as a UIC student will help you face those difficulties head-on anywhere, from classrooms and hospital rooms to conference rooms and court rooms.

Commencement is not only an opportunity to recognize your academic achievements, but it also marks your entry into an important university entity — the UIC Alumni Association. It’s a network of more than 250,000 people who are creating a better Chicago, a better Illinois, a better America and a better world. Go join them and make your mark.

I encourage you to stay connected with your alma mater, help us continue our upward trajectory and come back to campus to see our growth firsthand.

Our 10-year campus development plan begins in earnest next year with the construction of a new College of Engineering building and a new live-learn community. These exciting projects and future ones will support scholarship and research, address projected enrollment growth, improve the student experience, and serve as points of pride during your future visits.

By choosing to attend UIC, you sought a high-quality education that makes a difference, so now is your chance to make a difference in the lives of others.

Congratulations on everything that you’ve accomplished. I wish you continued success in your future journeys.

Keep your UIC spirit strong…Go Flames!

Michael Amiridis
Chancellor
Medical district, Obama Foundation CEOs to speak at commencement

Francisca Corona — fcoron3@uic.edu

A health care industry executive and a longtime aide to former President Barack Obama will speak at separate commencement ceremonies Dec. 16 to congratulate the Class of 2017.

A ceremony for the Graduate College will be held at 9 a.m. and an undergraduate ceremony takes place at 2 p.m. at the UIC Pavilion, 525 S. Racine Ave.

Illinois Medical District leader Suzet McKinney will speak to graduate students, and Obama Foundation CEO David Simas will address undergraduates receiving degrees in Architecture, Design, and the Arts; Business Administration; Education; Engineering; Liberal Arts and Sciences; Nursing; and Urban Planning and Public Affairs. More than 1,500 undergraduate students and 1,450 graduate students are eligible to participate in graduation ceremonies.

McKinney is CEO and executive director of the Illinois Medical District, which houses four hospitals, medical research facilities, labs, a biotech business incubator, two universities, development areas and more than 40 health care facilities.

McKinney previously worked with the Chicago Department of Public Health, where she was deputy commissioner of Homeland Security's Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

In academia, she is an instructor at Harvard University and an adjunct assistant professor at the UIC School of Public Health, where she received her doctoral degree.

Simas is CEO of the Obama Foundation, started by former President Barack Obama and former First Lady Michelle Obama to inspire and empower the next generation of civic leaders to create positive change in their communities and around the world. The Obama Foundation is developing the Obama Presidential Center in the South Side of Chicago.

In 2007, Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick appointed Simas, a native of the state, as his deputy chief of staff.

Two years later, Simas joined the Obama administration as deputy assistant to the president, working with senior advisers David Axelrod and David Plouffe. For Obama’s re-election in 2012, Simas became the director of opinion research. After Obama’s re-election, Simas returned to the White House, as director of the Office of Political Strategy and Outreach.

Simas has a bachelor’s degree in political science from Stonehill College and a J.D. from Boston College Law School. He lives in Chicago with his wife, Shau- na, and their two daughters.

UIC among best public universities

By Francisca Corona — fcoron3@uic.edu

UIC is one of the top student-focused universities in the nation, according to the voices of 200,000 current college students and outcomes of combined datasets.

Times Higher Education ranked the University of Illinois at Chicago 23rd among the Best Public U.S. Universities and Colleges. The ranking was determined using data from the Wall Street Journal and Times Higher Education 2018 U.S. rankings.

“We are delighted to see UIC included among the top 25 public universities in the nation in the most recent Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education rankings,” UIC Chancellor Michael Amiridis said.

“The methodology for this survey, which evaluates student outcomes and faculty productivity, reflects the quality of the student experience in our campus.”

This year’s comparative assessment used student opinions collected through the Times Higher Education’s annual Student Survey about engagement, student-teacher interactions and satisfaction with the college experience. Results are based on institutions’ performance in 15 individual indicators, created to reflect the values of students and their families. Factors include available resources, engagement, environment, campus diversity, graduation rates, loan repayment and employment after graduation.

To see the full list of Best Public U.S. Universities and Colleges, visit timeshighereducation.com
$3M gift to honor immigrants who lived American dream

By Carlos Sadovi — csadovi@uic.edu

Isadore and Sadie Dorin were teenag-ers in the early 1900s when family contacts in the United States offered them a refuge on the West Side of Chicago from the devastation of the Russian Revolution and the anti-Semitism in Europe.

In this country, Isadore and his wife, Sadie, who arrived separately and met in Chicago, were able to earn enough money running a produce store to raise their five children, Leah, David, Bingy, Mollie and Bud during the Great Depression. Today, only David and Bud survive.

“WE WERE TAUGHT THAT EDUCATION WAS IMPORTANT, BUT ALSO CONSIDERATION AND HELP FOR OTHERS.”

Since the family was raised near what is today the UIC campus, David, who is president of the Isadore and Sadie Dorin Foundation, has chosen to honor his par-ents by providing UIC with a $3 million gift. UIC will recognize the foundation’s generosity through a term naming of the UIC Forum as the Isadore and Sadie Dorin Forum at UIC, as well as through establishing a permanently endowed fund to provide scholarships to undergraduate students from Cook County.

“They came over with practically noth-ing, no money, no access to anything — but they worked very, very hard,” said David, 98. “They were immigrants and they started something in Chicago… immigrating were a big part of making Chicago what it is and I think making the United States what it is.”

UIC celebrated the gift Oct. 28 at the launch of IGNITE: The Campaign for UIC, an inclusive, high-energy event for do-nors and alumni, hosted by UIC Chancel-lor Michael Amiridis. A formal unveiling event for the new name of the UIC Forum will be held in the spring.

The Dorins’ story in the United States began when Sadie and a younger brother left what is now Ukraine and managed to get to Hamburg, Germany, before sailing to this country and eventually landing in Chicago. Isadore followed a few years later when he also left Ukraine and fol-lowed an older brother, who had previ-ously settled in Chicago.

Once here, Isadore and Sadie each found a strong, tight-knit family structure that helped support the newest arrivals of their respective families. Sadie and Isa-dore married after having met through their families. As immigrants, they each knew they had to contribute their share to bolster their extended family here and to help others emigrate from Europe.

“Everybody took care of each other,” said Bud, 87. “Nobody asked; it was just done. It was just how it was. They were survivors.”

Sadie had gone as far as high school in Russia, which was unusual for a woman. She also learned the art of business from her father, who would buy live chickens, slaughter them and sell them throughout Europe along with other food items. In Chicago, Sadie worked in a fac-tory, earning $6 a week.

Isadore first worked as a peddler and shoveled snow during the winter months before he and Sadie opened a produce store in a rented West Side storefront, where they lived in a small rear apart-ment. Isadore worked nearly 18 hours a day to nurture his business and provide for his growing family.

As Isadore’s businesses became more successful, he bought a car for his wife to drive, at a time when women were not typically behind the wheel. Being a short woman, she struggled to reach the con-trols of the Packard and look out over the windshield, but her determination never stopped her from taking her chil-dren on excursions and long trips to the 1933 World’s Fair, trips to Michigan and other road trips.

Among their more prized memories, Bud and David remembered the weekly summertime trips they took from their West Side home along 12th Street (now Roosevelt Road) to the 12th Street beach, where they would cool off in Lake Michigan as their mother spent the day reading and watching over her brood.

On these trips, they would drive along Roosevelt Road, often stopping at the Maxwell Street market near Halsted Street, where they would take in the sounds of Italian, Russian, Yiddish and other languages.

The location of the UIC Forum at the southeast corner of Roosevelt and Halsted Street presented a perfect opportunity for honoring their memory.

“I’m so enthused with the location, I think they’ll both look down on us here with a big smile on their faces,” David said. “They are wonderful memories.”

Isadore died in 1939 at age 45 leaving Sadie, who died in 1992 at age 102, to run the business with David before she packed up, loaded her children in her car and drove to Los Angeles, where a daughter had moved after get-ting married.

Even though they became successful, they were frugal people and lived in basic surroundings to save money, accor-ding to their family. Even as they struggled to save what they could, they never forgot where they came from and how family helped them. As the Great Depression took its toll, more people would show up at the Dorin home for handouts of food. They never left empty-handed.

“We were taught that education was important, but also consideration and help for others. We felt an obligation to the family, the community and to live up to certain standards,” Bud wrote in a family history.

Over the years, the remaining family members set up a foundation in their parents’ name to keep their legacy alive.

It is from that foundation they are mak-ing this gift to UIC.

The Isadore and Sadie Dorin Scholar-ship will support undergraduate stu-dents with high academic achievement who graduated from a Cook County high school. David and Bud hope that the fu-ture beneficiaries will be appreciative of the struggles their parents had to en-dure.

“I know it’s not an easy thing these days to get through college,” David said. “The Dorin name is very important and I think our parents deserve all the credit they can get.”
Khadijat George, rehabilitation sciences

By Christy Levy — christyb@uic.edu

Khadijat George grew up in a rough neighborhood in Mushin, Lagos, a part of Nigeria where violence is pervasive.

“Anyone who has heard of Mushin knows how often riots happen there — street fights almost all the time,” said George, a senior in rehabilitation sciences. “They aren’t very good memories for me, but the problem was that my parents were poor and that was what they could afford.

“But I always knew I wanted to be more than just a ‘ghetto girl’! I wanted a good life, family, friends, education, financial security. But most of all I wanted to make a difference.”

George’s father wanted to be a lawyer, but his family could not afford to send him to school. But he wanted his kids to be educated, so he filled their home with books.

“I guess what changed my perspective was that I grew with these books,” she said. “My dad would always ask what I had read and learned. I started to think differently — that I wanted to be different from the environment I was in.”

And then, George’s family caught a lucky break. Her father played the lottery and won, and in 2013, he was able to bring George and her sister to the United States.

After settling in Chicago, George began taking classes at Truman College, then transferred to UIC in fall 2016.

Around the time George began her studies at UIC, her father moved to Texas, so she had to work as many as three jobs at once to pay for school, housing and other bills.

Her work schedule has posed some challenges. She works full time on the overnight shift at Presence Saint Joseph Hospital in the Lakeview neighborhood as a patient care technician. It’s been tough working at night, then sometimes heading straight to class.

“It was very hard,” she said. “But it has prepared me for the challenges in the near future.”

George plans to work full time for the next year, then apply to graduate school. She recently married in Nigeria and her husband, Adenrele Oke, will join her in the U.S. next year. Together, they will decide whether to stay in Chicago or relocate for a graduate program.

George aspires to become an occupational therapist and someday use her skills to help advance health care in her home country of Nigeria.

“If someone has been shot and now feels like they are useless, maybe we can show them what they still can do,” she said. “And some people in Nigeria still hide their kids who have disabilities, which is horrible. I want to help make changes in how disability is perceived. The culture is different, so it’s not going to be an easy thing, but it has to start somewhere, with someone.”

Kelly Gerhardt, psychology

By Christy Levy — christyb@uic.edu

When Kelly Gerhardt returned to campus after winter break last January, she was looking forward to her May graduation date. But her plans suddenly changed.

On the first day of what was supposed to be her last semester, Gerhardt suffered a stroke at just 21 years old.

She went to the hospital after experiencing double vision and other symptoms, and she was shocked when doctors told her she had experienced a transient ischemic attack. She later learned that she has a small hole in one of her arteries and an autoimmune blood clotting disorder that contributed to her condition.

“It was definitely a scary 72 hours — I had never even been in a hospital,” said Gerhardt, a senior in psychology.

After a few days, Gerhardt returned to campus, but soon decided to take the semester off to focus on her health.

“I didn’t think about the after effects,” she said. “But after two weeks, I felt them — emotionally and physically it was really hard. I took the time that I needed but was determined to come back to school.”

Since returning to campus in August, she has faced some new challenges, but she’s proud to have faced them in order to finish her degree this month.

“I’m still struggling a little bit, but I’ve found ways to calm that side effects,” she said. “I have some memory issues now — before I could retain things easily, but now it takes a little longer and it’s a lot longer of a process.

Still, she’s succeeded academically — earning a 3.8 GPA — while commuting from her home in Roselle and holding a part-time job as a beauty adviser at Walgreens.

“I go to every single class, which is extremely important,” she said.

Gerhardt transferred to UIC in 2015 after receiving an associate’s degree from the College of DuPage.

“I never really pictured myself in a school environment.”

Her UIC experience has prepared her well for the future, Gerhardt said.

“The curriculum challenged me to the point where I think about things on a much deeper level than I ever thought I could have,” she said. “It was very specialized, and it has prepared me to work in a school environment.”
Urban garden shows students big picture

By Francisca Corona — fcoron3@uic.edu

Where does your food come from? When preparing dishes in class, nutrition students in the College of Applied Health Sciences can point to their shared backyard on Taylor Street, which houses one of the college’s new and most important “classrooms” — the UIC Nutrition Teaching Garden. There, students follow the growth of their produce and other food-bearing plants from seeding to harvest time to holistically study what goes into making high-quality foods and nutritious meals.

“We need them to know the big picture,” said Renea Solis, clinical instructor in kinesiology and nutrition.

The program uses biological and physical science to teach undergraduates about nutrition and its relationship to human health. In other words, students’ understanding of meals and food starts from the ground up.

“Part of that is going back to the farm,” said Solis, who grew up living and working on farms in Indiana. “In Chicago, that’s harder to do. So, with contributions from biological sciences, Solis and her colleagues brought the farm to students instead. And their efforts have been recognized with a Chicago Excellence in Gardening Award.

Last year, she started seeds for the Nutrition Teaching Garden at AHS, but to grow a larger variety of plants, some weren’t sown there. Instead, Solis started them at the UIC Greenhouse and Plant Research Lab, near Union and Taylor streets, where master gardener Matthew Frazel is based.

“I’ve worked in gardens my whole life,” said Frazel, who now manages the UIC greenhouse, 3,600 feet of controlled growth space that supports faculty research and other initiatives on and off campus. “So I have a pretty good sense of the things that you need to have like access to water, good light and soil.”

Frazel gave AHS helpful advice about those essentials when the AHS garden was in its early stages of development. Since it was built, he’s offered more: an extra pair of expert eyes and hands.

“In the Chicago area, you sometimes need space to put plant material to get a bit of a head start. So we set up a plan for how [Solis] could do that here,” Frazel said.

Solis started seeds for tomatoes, onions and a variety of herbs in the greenhouse, where staff fertilize plants, control room temperatures and keep pests away.

The partnership has also allowed AHS staff to extend their growing season and get support when seasons change.

“It’s a cooperative relationship,” Frazel said. “We like to support green things overall at the university.”

“It’s been really helpful to have [Frazel’s] input and knowledge,” said Solis, adding that he also checks plants for diseases. Some can wipe out an entire crop if they’re not spotted quickly enough.

Thanks to the collaboration, some students can seed plants and visit the garden for about 15 minutes during class. Most students focus on harvesting the plants. Others volunteer and work to maintain the garden with Solis during the summertime and when classes aren’t in session.

“Growing food takes a lot of attention and work and that’s one thing we want to convey to students. Food doesn’t just show up on grocery shelves,” Solis said.

Four classes — Foods 110, Culture and Food, Cooking and Healing Wellness and Science of Foods — will be using produce and other food from the garden this semester to cook dishes with quinoa, corn, eggplants, onions, shallots, bok choy, basil, broccoli, cabbage, Swiss chard and more.

“Our garden really is a valuable teaching space,” says Renea Solis, clinical instructor in kinesiology and nutrition. (Photos: Carley Mostar)
Health equity research center established at UIC

By Jackie Carey — jmcarey@uic.edu

Jesus Ramirez-Valles

Health equity research center established at UIC

UIC has received $6.75 million from the National Institutes of Health to establish a specialized Center of Excellence in minority health and health disparities research.

Called the Center for Health Equity Research, or CHER, the new UIC center will investigate how various social structures and determinants contribute to the health of marginalized groups.

"The reality is that the vast majority of preventable disease in the U.S. happens in a small group of minority communities and it's not always because of biology alone," said Robert Winn, associate vice chancellor for community-based practice at UIC and director of the University of Illinois Cancer Center.

"It's also because these groups are socially disadvantaged due to geography, poverty or discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation," said Winn, the corresponding principal investigator on the grant.

A growing body of scientific evidence strongly suggests that social determinants such as poverty, living in a food desert, lacking safe spaces to play and exercise, discrimination or growing up with neighborhood violence can contribute to the development of preventable diseases and conditions including cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and substance abuse.

CHER will initially focus on three research projects that address health and structural violence — a term that describes the multiple characteristics of social, economic and political systems that expose vulnerable communities to physical, socioeconomic, behavioral or psychosocial risks leading to increased morbidity and mortality.

Lisa Tussing-Humphreys, assistant professor of medicine in the UIC College of Medicine and fellow of the Institute for Health Research and Policy, and colleagues will study how colorectal cancer risk in the black community correlates to experiences of racism.

Kristine Molina, assistant professor of psychology in the UIC College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, will lead a study on the relationship between stress due to racial discrimination and cardiovascular disease outcomes in Latino families.

Karen Kim, a CHER partner from the University of Chicago's department of psychology in the UIC College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, will examine the factors associated with mental health disparities among Asian immigrant populations.

"The end-goal is to get to a point where my health and your health is not determined by the color of our skin, where we live, or who we live with," said Jesus Ramirez-Valles, professor and director of community health sciences in the UIC School of Public Health.

Additional studies and programs that promote minority health and reduce health disparities are already in the center's pipeline.

Ramirez-Valles, who will lead the administrative core of the new center, says that Chicago's highly segregated, urban environment provides a rich foundation for studying structural violence and public health, and that UIC's "ability to bring together multidisciplinary researchers from diverse racial, ethnic and social backgrounds" gives strength to the center.

According to Martha Davigailus, associate vice chancellor for research at UIC, a second goal of the CHER is to invest in the career development of minority researchers and support the participation of underrepresented communities in public health activities.

"We want to make it easier for researchers from diverse backgrounds to seek support and mentorship, so that underrepresented groups are not just more likely to participate in research, but are also more likely to initiate research and drive it forward," said Davigailus, who will oversee the new center's training and research project core.

Seven UIC entities will collaborate on the center's work: the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, College of Medicine, College of Nursing, School of Public Health, UI Cancer Center, Office of Community Engagement and Neighborhood Health Partnerships, and Institute for Minority Health Research.

UIC is one of 12 centers nationwide and the only in the Midwest to be funded by the NIH's National Institute of Health and Health Disparities' Center of Excellence program. The centers will share approximately $82 million over five years.

"We need strong collaborations and research based upon asking the right questions in specific areas. The Centers of Excellence are poised to emphasize scientific inquiry that will promote health equity," said NIMHD Director Dr. Eliseo Perez-Stable in a statement.

Davigailus, Ramirez-Valles and Winn, who are all from underrepresented minority backgrounds, jointly lead the Center for Health Equity Research.
As the academic year moves forward, plans for campus improvements do, too. Construction for two UIC projects, including one new College of Engineering building and one new live-learn community, will begin in January. The projects are part of a decade-long framework for the physical development of UIC, called Envisioning Our Future: 2017–2027 Plan.

Another building project reflected in the plan, which is actively being fundraised for, is part of a dean’s vision to make more room for UIC’s growing engineering and computer science programs.

All three buildings will help the campus meet the plan’s priorities of supporting scholarship and research and improving the student experience.

“Our capital infrastructure must reflect the quality and impact of this institution if we are to achieve our educational, research and engagement goals; attract the best faculty and staff; and provide much-needed facilities for students,” wrote Chancellor Michael Amiridis in a July campus email about the additions. For students, faculty and staff in the College of Engineering, the new 50,000-square-foot Engineering Innovation Building will house instructional space, research labs and faculty and staff offices. The Engineering Innovation Building will also include the university’s first high-bay structural research lab, where researchers can carry out a wide range of tests on large-scale structural components. A groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled for Nov. 17.

Other labs will be built “so they can be very flexible,” said David Taeyaerts, associate vice chancellor of learning environments and campus architect. “The space and infrastructure is all there to accommodate a range of different research types within the engineering field.”

He said. At its planned location, the northern part of Parking Lot 5, the building will provide room for three of the college’s departments — chemical, mechanical and industrial engineering, and civil and materials engineering — concentrating the College of Engineering in one area on the east side of campus by fall 2019. The facility will be the first new academic building on the east side since 1991.

The Computing, Design, Research and Learning Center — a more than 150,000-square-foot, six-story building — is also being planned. By the project’s envisioned completion date in 2021, the college hopes to have a place for the engineering community — including housing for UIC’s Department of Computer Science — to have access to more classrooms, interactive learning spaces and computing research labs in an area adjacent to the Engineering Research Facility on Taylor Street. The project has already received $4 million in gifts and multiyear pledges from more than 30 donors, who are being recognized as members of the college’s Founders Circle in a quiet phase of fundraising. More public fundraising will start at the beginning of 2018.

The placement of the two engineering buildings around an open green space, and also near three existing science and engineering buildings, will enable opportunities for people to engage and interact near their classes and labs.

“We’re creating what we envision as a College of Engineering quad,” said Taeyaerts, referring to the engineering corridor and Memorial Grove.

The facilities will also help the college accommodate the increasing number of students enrolled in engineering and computer science programs, now and in the future. Peter Nelson, the college’s dean, believes that enrollment could grow from 5,000 to 7,500 once the buildings are constructed. Engineering already has more than doubled its number of students since 2005.

To address the university’s overall projected enrollment growth — an increase of 5,000 to 10,000 students over the next 10 years — UIC will build its first living-learning environment. The community, which will be entirely financed through a public-private partnership with American Campus Communities, will be located near Harrison and Morgan streets. It’s expected to house more than 500 students by fall 2019 in a mix of traditional dorm rooms and suite-style units. The building will include lounges for studying and student interaction, offices, laundry rooms, a fitness center, a coffee shop, and more.

“This is the first in a long process of ultimately replacing all of the east campus housing stock,” said J. Rex Tolliver, vice chancellor for student affairs. Campus leaders are planning to demolish existing dorms on the east side that have passed or are nearing their 40-year mark, such as the Commons and Courtyard residence halls.

On the academic side, the complex of buildings will include active learning classrooms, ranging in size from 32 to 288 seats, informal learning oases and a C-Stop with a help desk and printing. The facility will also replace the Stevenson Hall classroom building, which has a significant amount of deferred maintenance and cannot support the needs of large classes.

“I think [this project] and the plans we have for the future are going to go a long way in furthering our record of enrollment growth,” Tolliver said. “They’ll make us competitive in terms of what we’re offering to students, and we will continue to be a first-rate option for students and families.”

View more information on the 2017–2027 Plan at cppm.uic.edu/masterplan
UIC honored for student voter engagement

By Francisca Corona — fcoron3@uic.edu

Since 2015, UIC has gone all in to get civic engagement rates up.

The ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge is a nationwide effort to promote an active and informed citizenship on college and university campuses. Thursday was the first ALL IN Challenge Awards Ceremony, where UIC was honored with two recognitions among 296 competing institutions and 584 campuses.

UIC received the Bronze Seal for its voter participation rate between 50 percent and 59 percent in the 2016 election. The Champion Award spotlights UIC as the most engaged campus in the country. “They speak highly of the work we’re doing at UIC,” said Spencer Long, associate director of Student Leadership Development and Volunteer Services (SLDVS). He attended the first ALL IN Challenge Awards Ceremony in Washington, D.C., Thursday to accept the awards on behalf of SLDVS and its core partners, including the Institute for Policy and Civic Engagement, Office of Public and Government Affairs, political science department, and a number of student organizations.

“This has been at the root of all the work we’re doing,” Long said. For the past year, the group has implemented an action plan to increase voter registration, education and turnout. The plan, created by a campus-wide committee, sparked long-lasting campaigns such as UIC Votes, which has included debate watch parties, early voting and more.

The result has been a 7 percent climb in UIC’s voter registration rate and a 13.9 point jump in voter participation, from 44.1 in 2012 to 55 percent in 2016. The jump was one of the largest increases in voter participation among more than 1,000 U.S. colleges and universities, according to Tufts University’s National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement. The voting rate of students who were already registered also increased from 57.9 percent to 70.6 percent. Those successes and the campus action plan helped the campus earn a Voter Friendly Campus designation from the Fair Elections Legal Network’s Campus Vote Project and NASPA (Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education) in March.

“We’re above the national average and we’re going to continue to work at that,” Long said.

Campus leaders will continue to encourage people to vote for midterm elections, when governors and members of the House of Representatives are chosen. “UIC prioritizes civic and community engagement” Long said. “We want people to listen to our views and the needs of students.”

Visit the ALL IN Campus Challenge Facebook page, @allincampuschallenge, to watch the ceremony.
Four physicians from Cuba are working in Chicago to improve maternal health and birth outcomes in Englewood.

Through a partnership with UIC, the physicians have been observing clinical care at Mile Square Health Center, UI Health’s network of federally qualified clinics. They have also met with community leaders, including elected officials, nonprofit groups and others, to develop a picture of how health care is delivered in under-resourced communities, and how their expertise may help fill gaps in care.

“The Cuban health system does preventive health very, very well, and they do it without a lot of money,” said Dr. Robert Winn, associate vice chancellor of community-based practice at UIC and director of the University of Illinois Cancer Center.

Per capita, Cuba spent roughly $600 on health expenditures in 2010. In the U.S., this figure is above $8,000 for the same year, but life expectancy in the two countries was the same, at 79 years.

For the past year, doctors from Cuba and researchers from the Cancer Center have traveled between the two countries to observe practices and exchange ideas. During the exchange, the team identified a key difference between the two countries: doctors in the U.S. do not know as much about their patients’ home life and environment. In Cuba, doctors have more insight into how the home and neighborhood affects their patients’ health.

“In Cuba, we visit every home and we ask health-related questions for every individual in the household,” said Dr. Jose Armando Arronte Villamarin, one of the physicians from Cuba who has been in Chicago since August. “The assessment we use gives us a comprehensive picture of overall health and health risk in different communities, and it helps us focus on addressing community level public health concerns.”

The health situation assessment tool is the cornerstone of preventive health throughout Cuban communities.

In Cuba, the assessment includes questions about health — weight, exercise and medical symptoms, for example — but also an environmental analysis. Physicians in Cuba want to know if their communities have access to clean drinking water and affordable food and transportation, for example. While in the homes, doctors and nurses, with the help of medical students, can quickly assess for other factors that impact health — like allergens and dust that may trigger respiratory conditions in children, such as asthma — or affect risk of accidents.

Based on the assessment, physicians allocate their limited resources accordingly. If a community is composed of primarily young families, physicians may invest in vaccination and family-planning resources; if a significant population of the community is older, physicians may bring in resources to help minimize falls, fight cancer or facilitate transportation to medical appointments. If a community has an overabundance of standing water, mosquito remediation spraying may be ordered for that location.

Kathy Tossas-Milligan, an epidemiologist, says that there is no process or individual-level assessment like this in the U.S.

“In the U.S., we rely on random epidemiologic samples that aggregate community-level data,” said Tossas-Milligan, director of global assets and innovative approaches at the UI Cancer Center. “While this is good information for academic and provider reporting, it does not provide adequate information for addressing barriers and taking action.”

Learning from the Cubans and their successful experience with the health assessment, the Cancer Center team at UI Health is adapting the questionnaire to a U.S. audience and testing it in Chicago’s Englewood neighborhood, which is home to roughly 25,000 Chicagoans.

In Englewood, life expectancy is well below the national average at only 72 years, based on 2014 data. The average in Chicago is 77 years, and 79 years in the U.S.

Englewood is a predominantly black community with most households headed by single females. Compared with citywide rates, residents of Englewood experience four times the homicide rate and double the rate of infant mortality. Infant mortality rates are already three times higher for black babies in the U.S. than white or Latino babies.

The pilot project will test the adapted health situation analysis with up to 100 reproductive age women (ages 18 to 49) and their families in Englewood. Researchers will connect with women through the Mile Square Health Center clinic in Englewood or community organizations. Women engaged in the pilot will be scheduled for a home health analysis visit, the first of its kind in the U.S. The Cuban physicians will consult with the researchers, who have been working with the Cubans since their arrival in early fall.

The researchers will use the assessment to get an individual- and community-level picture of overall health, and to note the social and environmental factors that affect health and health behavior.

The goal is to use the information as a foundation for enhancing provider awareness of home life and environments, and for addressing maternal health and infant mortality outcomes, such as low birth rate and pre-term births. The researchers plan to attach the information to the electronic health record and use it as the catalysts for a community debate.

Following the assessment, women and families in the pilot will be stratified into one of four groups based on health risk. As practiced in Cuba, they will be recommended for a range of home and office visits based on their health assessments. For example, those assigned to a group of participants who are presumed healthy, will be recommended for one office consult. Up to three home or office visits will be recommended based on risk factors, diseases and disabilities.

Villamarin, Dr. Berta Maria Bello Rodriguez, Dr. Sonia Maria Gonzalez Vega and Nemesis Perez Martinez, a nurse, are scheduled to be in Chicago through December.

A $1 million grant from the Kellogg Foundation funds the project.

**By Jackie Carey — jmcarey@uic.edu**
UIC launches $750M fundraising campaign

By Sherri McGinnis González — smcginn@uic.edu

UIC launched “IGNITE: The Campaign for UIC,” on Saturday, Oct. 28. Hundreds of friends, alumni and donors attended the kickoff rally and celebration to support the university’s strategic priorities and master plan.

“IGNITE will be designed to move our university and our city into the future,” said UIC Chancellor Michael Amiridis. “The IGNITE campaign will join us together in rallying around our priorities and purpose, and raising the funds it will take to achieve our ambitious plans and become the model for public higher education in the 21st century,” said Amiridis.

The goal of the campaign is to raise $750 million to benefit UIC. As of Oct. 15, the University of Illinois Foundation has received commitments of more than $295 million in gifts, grants and pledges.

Through IGNITE, the university will raise funds to provide student scholarships, support new endowed faculty positions to retain and attract top scholars and researchers, equip faculty with the latest technologies for teaching and research, and build new facilities to improve the physical infrastructure of the campus to meet the growing needs of students and the community.

With the help of philanthropy, we plan to build a Computing, Design, Research and Learning Center in Engineering; a Visual and Performing Arts Center in the College of Architecture, Design and the Arts; a new outpatient surgical care center for UI Health; and a new home for our College of Business,” said Amiridis.

The campaign, which will continue through 2022, will also fund research in key areas of excellence such as the human brain, social disparities, urban infrastructure, and functional and regenerative materials, and develop programs and partnerships to advance global health.

Recent gifts leading up to the launch of the campaign include $7.2 million from College of Nursing alumna M. Christine Schwartz to renovate student-centered spaces and create an advanced simulation learning center; $5 million from Herbert and Carol Retzky to create the first deanship at the UIC College of Pharmacy; $3 million from the Isadore and Sadie Dorin Foundation to establish an endowed scholarship fund for high achieving Cook County high school students and to rename the UIC Forum the Isadore and Sadie Dorin Forum; and $5 million from UIC alumnus and Los Angeles Dodgers outfielder Curtis Granderson to build the Curtis Granderson Stadium.

UIUC is Chicago’s only public research university, with over 30,000 students, 15 colleges, a hospital and a health sciences system. The campaign “will ensure UIC is best positioned to meet the needs of a growing student population, drive life-changing discovery, and strengthen our connections to the communities we serve,” said Amiridis.

At the kickoff event, the university also announced the formation of a new UIC Alumni Association to connect and engage with its more than 250,000 alumni.

Congratulations graduates!

You are now among a community of more than 260,000 alumni worldwide. We are here to help you engage with your alma mater, and with one another, in meaningful ways.

Your success is important to us. As you pursue your goals, please

Visit us at advance.uic.edu to find upcoming events and volunteer opportunities, read about our services and catch up on news.

Connect with us on Facebook at facebook.com/uicalumni,

Follow us on Twitter at @UIC_Alumni and Instagram at @UICAU Alumni.

And don’t forget to update your information at go.uic.edu/update.