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The First 40 Years

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A brief history of Sangamon State University and the University of Illinois Springfield.



The First 40 Years

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NOTE: The content of this brief history was taken from the Archives of the University of Illinois Springfield and from the newsroom of the office of campus relations. In many cases, the text in this document is linked to copies of the original information on the university website or elsewhere.

Introduction

In 1960, a group of central Illinois citizens, united in their goal of [bringing a four-year university to the capital city](#), formed the Springfield Committee for Higher Education.

As committee member Dr. Jacob A. O. Preus remarked years later, “We lamented being included with Bismarck, North Dakota; Pierre, South Dakota; and Juneau, Alaska, as the only state capitals without four-year schools.”

There was not the first attempt to bring such an institution to Springfield, but it was successful. Legislation creating Sangamon State University (SSU) was signed in 1969. The first classes were held in 1970, which is considered the founding year. The first commencement ceremony was held in 1971. Sangamon State University was acquired by the University of Illinois in 1995, and became known as the University of Illinois at Springfield (UIS).

In 2010, the campus celebrated the [40 Year Anniversary](#) of the university. The following brief history was written to mark the event.

“A Senior University in Springfield”

On July 14, 1967, Illinois State Senate Bill 955 authorized a “Senior University in Springfield.” It would be almost two years before the legislature took further action on the matter, but work continued behind the scenes.

The list of people involved in creating the university is quite long. There is also a plaque that still hangs in the Hatmaker Room on the administrative floor of the Public Affairs Center that attempts to recognize the university’s many founders.

In September 1968 the Illinois Board of Regents chose the name Sangamon State University for the proposed institution and in February 1969 the Academic Planning Committee held its first meeting. Finally, on June 10, 1969, [Public Act 76-131](#) officially creating Sangamon State University was signed into law by Governor Richard Ogilvie. The Regents received a \$1 million appropriation to buy land and begin developing a campus.

SSU was a child of its time. Conceived as an “upper-level” three-year institution, a “capstone” to the state’s community college system, it offered junior, senior and graduate courses and had no freshmen or sophomores. Sangamon State’s mandates included being a “truly pioneering segment of public education” (as set forth in the Master Plan for Higher Education in Illinois) as well as Illinois’ public affairs university, a mission facilitated by its location in the state capital.

On September 1, 1969, **Dr. Robert C. Spencer**, dean of the Graduate School and chairman of the Political Science Department at the University of Rhode Island, began work as SSU’s first president. His charge was to put together a university, and he had little more than a year to do it. His background as a former state senator in Vermont helped to emphasize the public affairs role of the new university in Illinois.



Also in the fall of 1969, the university established a physical presence with offices in the Myers Building in downtown Springfield. Construction of the campus on Shepherd Road on the southeast edge of Springfield began the following June. Though rain delayed things and the real campus wouldn't be ready for another month, SSU held classes for the first time on September 28, 1970, as 45 charter faculty members began teaching 811 charter students in temporary quarters in the First United Methodist Church. [An article in the State Journal-Register](#) published on January 1, 1970, profiled the new university and its prospects..

[Karen Hasara](#), who was the second person in line to register for classes and later would become a state senator and Springfield mayor, and then the first UIS alumna on the University of Illinois Board of Trustees, would say later many times that the establishment of SSU/UIS was the greatest thing to happen to Springfield in the last quarter of the twentieth century. "I truly believe this school has changed our community for the better more than any other event of our time," Hasara said at the [2009 Illinois Springfield commencement](#).

A Child of Its Time: The 1970s

President Spencer's vision for the new university became apparent during that first year. "We must assemble a community of teachers and scholars who are not only professionally and technically competent, but who are persons of humanity, culture, and literacy," he said, adding, "This is not as simple as it looks..."

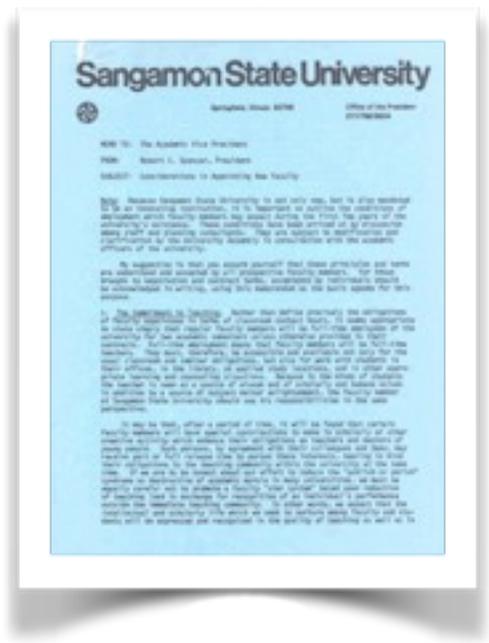
Spencer further pledged that SSU would be an innovative institution, but noted those innovations would be ruled by the classical obligations of a university. "We shall, at the same time, be both very ancient and very modern," he said.

The famous "blue memo" dated December 1970 and so named because it was written on blue paper, outlined Spencer's considerations for appointing the faculty and stated in part "...because in the minds of students the teacher is seen as a source of wisdom and of scholarly and humane values in addition to a source of subject matter enlightenment, the faculty member at Sangamon State University should see his [and her] responsibilities in this same perspective."

Both the organization of and the curriculum offered by the new university reflected a similar world view. In 1970-71 the first Guide to Sangamon State University outlined four University Programs:

- Communication in a Technological Society (CTS)
- Work, Leisure, Poverty and Power
- Justice and the Social Order (JSO)
- Environments and People (ENP)

CTS was "devoted to questions of science and human problems, modes of communication, and the social and ethical issues created by technological development;" Work, Leisure, Poverty and Power focused on "problems of poverty



and power and the uses and abuses of leisure;” JSO’s “unifying perspective” was an “inquiry into the ways in which society is ordered and directed;” and ENP examined “the questions of man’s biological, physical, psychological, social, economic and political environments and the problems they entail.”

More “traditional patterns of study” were provided by Disciplinary Programs: Biological Sciences, Economics, English and Comparative Literature, History, Mathematics, Political Studies, Psychology and Sociology. Students enrolled in these programs were expected to work with their advisers to develop a course of study that matched individual interests and professional objectives.

To cultivate this spirit of innovation, openness and adaptability, faculty and students were expected to question the learning process and to test new and old techniques of teaching. Independent study was encouraged as much as possible. The entire campus community was asked to investigate the social, technological, environmental and moral questions of the times.

Further, in keeping with the belief that people who “experience academic problems should not be marked with a sense of failure for their adult lives,” the student evaluation system was generous in allowing for “second starts and personal renewal and change... Grades, when used, record student successes rather than failures.”



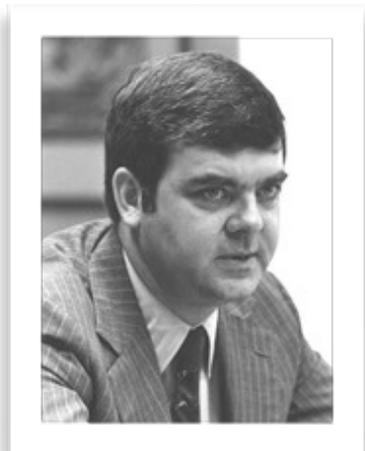
Awareness of public affairs was also fostered by University Week, later called Intersession. Presenting multidisciplinary perspectives on topics of general interest, these popular colloquia were held each year between the winter and spring quarters and combined daytime class meetings with public lectures in the evening. The topic for the very first [University Week in May 1971](#) was “The Year 2001” and iconic science fiction writer [Arthur C. Clarke](#) gave the keynote address.

[Brookens Library](#), dedicated in May 1976, was the first permanent building on campus.

SSU's first major change in leadership occurred early in 1978 as Dr. Spencer announced his resignation and returned to the faculty.

Almost from the beginning, Spencer's presidency had been marked by contentious relations with much of the faculty, including allegations of hypocrisy and administrative "power grabs." He would later [characterize this in his memoirs](#) as "a series of misunderstandings" that were never resolved.

In March that year, Acting President John Keiser delivered a State of the University Address in which he noted that sharpening the focus on public affairs and health professions mandates had helped SSU to progress. Keiser called for public affairs to be an over-arching consideration in all the university's endeavors, for such a stance would "broaden and strengthen rather than limit" teaching, research, and services. He also said that it was time to "redefine" the concept of SSU as an upper-division university with a statewide capstone mission to community colleges.



In September 1978, [Dr. Alex B. Lacy Jr.](#), director of the Division of Public Programs, National Endowment for the Humanities in Washington, D.C., became SSU's second president.

In one of his first public statements, Lacy noted that one of his top priorities as president would be to consolidate the university's gains and improve public relations and programs within the university.

Other immediate concerns included meeting increased pressures from the legislature, and expanding enrollment through the state's community colleges.

Lacy added that he saw institutions like Sangamon State as setting the trend for the future of higher education.

More Firsts, More Growth: The 1980s

In September 1982, President Lacy delivered a State of the University Address calling for a major revision of the University's Master Plan and announcing the formation of a task force to conduct a feasibility study of his proposal to create a research center in public policy and administration on campus.

Lacy said this plan would set the stage for SSU to become a national center for the study of government, politics and public policy. In his vision, he said, the revised Master Plan would give the campus "a much stronger international focus" in teaching and research efforts, effective methods to help the state with economic development, and continued growth and development of the sciences within the total curriculum.

He further noted that it was important for SSU to support some of its newer programs, such as Women's Studies and Labor Studies, "which promise great things for the future. We will still emphasize public affairs, teaching, and innovative educational programs," he said. "The trick will be to devise programs to meet those mandates in the coming decades."

Some [milestones of the 1980s](#) included the first on-campus student housing (dedicated in August 1980) and, just a month later, the opening of the much-anticipated Public Affairs Center, the campus' second permanent building.

The PAC soon became a resource for the whole community. In addition to classroom and office space the Public Affairs Center housed the university's TV Office, Continuing Education Office, and an auditorium with nearly 2,000 seats. In February 1981, the auditorium hosted its first event – a sold-out performance of Hal Holbrook's "Mark Twain Tonight!"

Since 1981, Sangamon Auditorium has attracted more than a half-million guests to shows including:

Mummenschanz
Ray Charles
George Carlin
David Copperfield
Mel Torme
Bob Newhart
Harry Belafonte
Peter, Paul and Mary
Art Garfunkel
Johnny Cash
STOMP
Cats
Jerry Seinfeld
Bill Cosby
Riverdance
David Sedaris
Donny Osmond
Marie Osmond
Garrison Keillor
Buddy Guy

As the decade neared mid-point, SSU welcomed its third president when [Dr. Durward Long](#), a former scholar-in-residence at the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, took office on July 1, 1984.

The times were changing and SSU was changing too. Though probably not many people realized it at the time, a big step forward was taken in March 1985 as the campus' personal computer network opened in Building H. The lab area featured eleven IBM personal computers with a shared disk storage system and printer. Users supplied their own 5.25 inch double-sided, double-density floppy diskettes, and faculty could schedule sessions in the lab with 15 days notice.



In 1986 the Literature program became the English program, a response to decreasing student demand for specialized literature courses and increasing interest in writing.

That year SSU further expanded its reputation when the Prairie Stars men's soccer team won its first NAIA national championship, an achievement they would repeat in 1988 and again in 1993. The men's soccer program was the primary intercollegiate athletics sports program at SSU in the 1980s and 1990s, under the direction of [head coach and Athletics Director Aydin Gonulsen](#), one of the most [colorful and successful characters in SSU history](#).

In October 1987 the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges granted SSU reaccreditation for the maximum 10 years. At the end of the fall semester, some 225 undergraduate students were named to SSU's first-ever Deans' List.

In December 1989, the Illinois Board of Higher Education formally approved the creation of [SSU's Institute for Public Affairs](#), and J. Michael Lennon, publisher of Illinois Issues magazine, was chosen to be its first executive director. Housed within the School of Public Affairs and Administration, the institute coordinated the

university media units (Illinois Issues magazine, public radio WSSU, and the Television Office including SCAN-17), with two research centers (the Center for Legal Studies and the Illinois Legislative Studies Center) and two internship programs (the Illinois Legislative Staff Internship Program and the Graduate Public Service Internship). Other units included a survey research office, a training unit for government employees and a publications unit.

A new beginning: The 1990s

In the summer of 1990, President Long presented “[Sangamon State University at Twenty and a Look Ahead](#)” to the Board of Regents. The plan focused on efforts to recruit a more diverse student body and once again the Regents heard that to compete for students more effectively, the university should consider changing its upper-division status by admitting freshmen and sophomores.

But perhaps the need to step up recruitment seemed less compelling in 1990 as [enrollment broke 4,000 for the first time](#). The lucky 4,000th student was James R. Dayringer, who came in to sign up for a couple of English classes and left with free tuition and fees for the semester, two tickets to an Auditorium performance, an athletic bag, and a special t-shirt.

Nine new student apartment buildings opened, adding space for 96 students and bringing campus housing capacity to 316. Director of Housing Jim Korte noted at the time, “We’re not just building housing.... Prospective students will see us not just as a place to take a few courses, but as a place to call home.”

President Long oversaw the campus’ [20th anniversary celebration](#) in mid-September, an event that featured a full schedule of events for the whole family and concluded with a more formal reception at the Hilton Hotel and a concert by the Chicago Symphony. Long stepped down a few months later after six years in office.

[Dr. Naomi B. Lynn](#) dean of the College of Public Policy and Urban Affairs at Georgia State University, took over as the fourth president in July 1991.

Besides a change in leadership, that year’s events included U.S. Rep. Richard Durbin’s announcement in October that House and Senate negotiators had agreed to provide \$700,000 for preliminary engineering and design work for the extension of 11th Street from Stevenson Drive to Toronto Road. President Lynn welcomed the news, saying the



extension would ease traffic congestion and increase safety for those who travelled to and from SSU and Lincoln Land Community College. The new 11th Street entrance would be the campus' "front door" and plans got underway to design and raise funds for a [formal entrance marker](#) at the site. Today, nearly twenty years later, the full 11th Street extension is still not complete, as the city of Springfield continues to negotiate to buy the last parcels of land needed to build the road.

The Board of Regents approved SSU's plan to construct yet more on-campus housing, providing space for another 125 residential students, even though the university had opened a new apartment complex the previous year. Officials pointed out that there was a waiting list of students who wanted to live on campus.

In June 1992, the SSU Weekly addressed widespread rumors that followed a legislative hearing on reorganizing the "system of systems" that had governed public higher education in Illinois since 1969. President Lynn's office also issued a memo in which she assured the campus community that SSU's response to the final report would be "based on concern for the university's academic programs, for the welfare of its faculty, students and staff, and for its impact on the Springfield community that has supported us for 22 years."

The following February President Lynn sent another open letter to the campus, this time in response to Governor Edgar's State of the State Address in which he endorsed his task force's recommendation to eliminate the Board of Regents and the Board of Governors. Lynn said that if the General Assembly decided to accept the governor's recommendation, "We must be prepared to assess the implications of that change for our institution." She added that either way, SSU would continue to thrive.



A year later, on February 28, 1995, Governor Edgar signed into law [legislation that reorganized higher education in Illinois](#), and in the process made Sangamon State University the third campus of the University of Illinois. The merger was originally scheduled to take place on January 1, 1996, but lawmakers moved it up to July 1, 1995,

to coincide with the beginning of the state's fiscal year. Thus was born the University of Illinois at Springfield. The political details about how this happened is well-chronicled by Jack Van der Slik, a retired UIS political scientist, in his book [Intruding on Academe](#) (2001, SIU Press).



The fact that technically it no longer existed didn't stop SSU from hosting a gala celebration marking its 25th anniversary in September 1995. Again, the State Journal-Register published an entire supplement marking the occasion.

In January 1997 the Board of Higher Education approved a proposal – pending with them since 1989 – allowing UIS to offer the campus' first doctoral program, in Public Administration. That program took off, and the first person to earn the Doctorate in Public Administration from UIS was [Mark Andrew Franklin in December 2002](#).

But that November the IBHE was at a stalemate on another proposal, this one for Capital Scholars, a move that would admit first-year students into a four-year baccalaureate program. The 7-7 vote (a failed vote) put the university's plan for Capital Scholars on hold but also showed there was strong support for the program and kept hopes alive.

Discussions about admitting first- and second-year students had been taking place on campus since the mid-1980s, and in 1992 SSU had begun planning with Lincoln Land Community College to establish an honors college. Those plans were deferred as SSU joined the U of I system, but they would be put to good use at last on October 5, 1999, when [Capital Scholars](#) received the IBHE's unanimous approval. It was not the honors college partnership with Lincoln Land, but rather, an independent all-UIS program that was the turning point in the university's move toward becoming a younger, more residential campus and embracing all the changes that such a move would bring.

“One of the top small public liberal arts universities in the nation”

In the first 10 years of the new century, UIS continued on an “upward trajectory” of growth and development. In fact, the campus blossomed, and many highlights of the time are profiled in [Looking Back: A Decade in Review](#), compiled by the university’s department of public relation..



There was a new chancellor – [Dr. Richard Ringeisen](#), who had been senior academic officer at East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, who took office in April 2001– as well as new buildings and a growing national reputation. The curriculum was redefined. Some trappings of more “traditional” campuses, such as endowed professorships and distinguished chairs, sprang up. Greater diversity in the student population gave new energy to campus life, and a sharper focus on service learning and the arts brought new opportunities to engage with the community. Signs of this evolution – some of them subtle, some not – were

everywhere.

On August 22, 2001, a group of about 120 students arrived for the 2001 fall semester who would change the campus forever. These were the much-anticipated Capital Scholars, a select group of highly motivated, high-achieving first-year students. James Stuart, the program’s founding director, explained in an interview with the *State Journal-Register* that great care had been taken to develop for these students a multidisciplinary curriculum in which classes would be team-taught by as many as five faculty from varying academic backgrounds in order to examine issues from a number of perspectives. In fact -- with titles like “Writing for Cultural Literacy,” “How Do You Know? Exploring Human Knowledge,” “What Is Good? Exploring Values and Tradeoffs,” and “What Is Power? Exploring Control, Cooperation, and Self-

Determination” -- some courses offered to the charter group of Cap Scholars might have seemed familiar to the charter group of SSU students more than 30 years earlier. [The September 5 issue of the UIS Weekly](#) featured photos of the first move-in day at Lincoln Residence Hall.

All admitted [students were able to register online](#) for the first time in summer 2001, after the Management Information Systems and Public Administration programs had given the process a test run the semester before. Registrar Diane Long was perhaps understating things when she noted, “A distinct advantage is that large numbers of students can register at the same time.”

The concept of civic engagement, growing in importance nationally and never far from the original mission of Sangamon State, received a boost when the Institute of Public Affairs conducted the [benchmark survey of civic engagement in Illinois](#) at the turn of the century and released its results at the Illinois Civic Engagement Conference in Chicago in 2001. This was an effort spearheaded by the institute’s Richard Schuldt and Barbara Ferrara, along with Ed Wojcicki, publisher of *Illinois Issues* magazine.

In June 2002, UIS received a \$500,000 [grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation](#) to expand its online degree programs. At the time, UIS offered three complete degrees and more than 100 courses online. The grant was to be used to develop six new online degree programs, primarily in the arts and sciences, over three years. Under the leadership of Ray Schroeder, UIS would become a national and international leader in online education, a phenomenon that first boomed in the first ten years of the 21st century.

In late March 2003, Chancellor Ringeisen unveiled [the National Commission on the Future of UIS](#), designed to answer two questions: Where will UIS be in 10 years? and What does UIS aspire to be in 10 years? Approximately 200 faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends served on 13 task forces to explore those questions. Members were to assume that by 2013 UIS would have 6,000 on-campus students, 2,000 of them residential; adequate state resources; increased private giving; and a recreation/fitness center in full use.

Exactly one year later, in March 2004, UIS was presented with the Campus Outreach Opportunity League’s [first-ever Idealism in Action Award](#) made in recognition of efforts in community service, activism, service learning, and socially responsible

careers. UIS had established an [Office of Student Volunteers and Service Learning](#) in 2002, and under its auspices there was a groundswell of events (such as UIS Cares Day), participation in national programs (like Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week and a chapter of United Students against Sweatshops), and awards to faculty members to develop service learning courses – all of which offered students, faculty and staff a chance for community service at many levels.

The landscape of UIS changed forever in 2004 and 2005 when [University Hall](#) opened and the colonnade was established as the north anchor of Quad. In just a few years, [the colonnade became the most-photographed](#) as well as “the picture” that tells everybody, “This is UIS.”

The commitment to serve at the national level was demonstrated when Hurricane Katrina struck in late August 2005. At that time, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation was already considering a proposal submitted by Ray Schroeder for a national conference on the use of online learning technologies to keep students “in class” in emergencies when campuses might be forced to shut down for extended periods. The storm’s devastating impact across several states prompted Schroeder and Burks Oakley, director of U of I Online, to ask the foundation to put the idea into effect immediately. [The result was the Sloan Semester.](#)

Ties between the campus and the local community were also strengthened in September 2006 when the quad served as the kick-off site for a progressive celebration of [Bearing Witness: The Art of Preston Jackson](#) – a citywide exhibit of works by the renowned Illinois artist. With a display of Jackson’s bronze figurative works in the Visual Arts Gallery, UIS was one of four major art venues in Springfield to take part in the nearly two-month program. Other sites were the Illinois State Museum, Springfield Art Association, and Prairie Art Alliance.

General Education Curriculum

Meanwhile, [UIS had become a four-year university](#) in the fullest sense in September 2005 when the [Board of Trustees approved a new general education curriculum](#) effective for the 2006 fall semester. This meant UIS would be able to admit larger numbers of freshmen and sophomores since these students could now choose to enroll in the existing Capital Scholars Program, which had been renamed the Capital Scholars Honors Program, or in any undergraduate program available on campus.

Karen Moranski, interim associate vice chancellor for undergraduate education who had spearheaded the effort to develop the new curriculum, [explained in an interview](#) that despite differences in admission requirements, the guiding principles for both sets of Capital Scholars were to provide students with the basic skills and knowledge to become lifelong learners as well as engaged citizens. When the final registration figures for fall 2006 were tabulated, a record 253 freshmen (up 83 percent over the previous fall) was cited as one major reason behind the highest enrollment ever (4,761).

But the campus was not content to rest on even these laurels, and UIS soon set out in pursuit of another bold vision: to become one of the top five small public liberal arts universities in the United States.

It was in this vein that Chancellor Ringeisen spoke to a group of students in Lincoln Residence Hall in late March 2006. He outlined six goals – Academic Excellence, Enriching Individual Lives, Making a Difference in the World, Strengthening Campus Culture, Enrollment and Retention, and Resources and Infrastructure – that formed the basis of a [new strategic plan](#) developed after more than a year of discussions among representatives drawn from across campus. This was the university's first comprehensive strategic plan in 14 years.

The entire campus celebrated the [official opening of the new Recreation and Athletic Center](#) in September 2007. The sixth major permanent building constructed at UIS, the center was funded primarily by student fees, as well as a \$1



million gift from the Hoogland Family Foundation of Charles and Kathleen Hoogland. In his remarks at the ribbon-cutting, Chancellor Ringeisen thanked the “forward-thinking students” who years earlier had voted to accept assessment of additional fees to help pay for the facility.

In May 2008, two of UIS’ online masters degree programs – in Computer Science and Management Information Systems – were [rated among the top dozen “Best Buy” programs](#) nationally in a survey conducted by GetEducated.com.

In August 2008, U.S. News & World Report’s 2010 Edition of America’s Best Colleges [ranked the University of Illinois Springfield as the best public university](#) – master’s category – in the state of Illinois, and the fourth best public university in that category in the Midwest. The top rankings were also awarded in 2009 and 2010.

The prestigious rankings placed UIS at 22 on a list of 142 top public and private colleges and universities in the 12-state Midwest region that includes, in addition to Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Kansas, Nebraska, and North and South Dakota. The rankings put UIS in the top 15 percent of universities in the Midwest.



“We are on the right path, in bold pursuit of our strategic vision to become one of the top five small public liberal arts universities in the nation,” said Chancellor Ringeisen.

[In March 2010](#), Chancellor Ringeisen announced that he would retire in the coming fall. At a subsequent [news conference](#), Ringeisen observed that when he began his tenure at UIS some nine years earlier, the university was just starting down the path toward becoming a full-fledged, four-year university.

Now, he said, “Newcomers to Springfield just take it for granted that there’s a four-year institution out here on the south side of town.” Noting that was perhaps the thing he would be proudest of when he stepped down, Ringeisen added, “I’m absolutely confident that UIS has a great future.”

The Springfield campus welcomed the 18th president of the university of Illinois, [Dr. Michael J. Hogan](#), during a ceremony on May 13, 2010. “Standing here at this wonderful liberal arts college I know exactly how it touches you, what it means to you and I look forward to continuing and building on that tradition,” said Hogan.

The university's [39th commencement ceremony](#) was held in May 2010; more than 1,190 students received bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees.

In June 2010, the University of Illinois Springfield welcomed nearly 200 political scientists from around the country and the world to central Illinois during the 10th annual [State Politics and Policy Conference](#) (SPPC), an event organized by Chris Mooney, UIS political science professor. The conference began with a roundtable featuring four former governors from different states. Former Governors Jim Edgar (R) of Illinois (1991-1999), Madeleine Kunin (D) of Vermont (1985-1991), Parris Glendening (D) of Maryland (1995-2003) and Bob Taft (R) of Ohio (1999-2007) took part in the discussion.

In July 2010, the university was named a full-fledged member of the [NCAA Division II in the Great Lakes Valley Conference](#). The baseball program was one of many new sports added in the process of becoming a full NCAA member. As of this writing, UIS offers 11 sports including men's and women's soccer, basketball, golf and tennis; men's baseball; women's softball; and women's volleyball.

The 40th anniversary celebration began in August 2010. Also in August, after years of planning and discussion, the university officially cut the ribbon on its new [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning \(LGBTQ\) Resource Office](#). In September, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs ([CACREP](#)) awarded accreditation to three programs in the [UIS Department of Human Development Counseling](#). Also in September, the online Master of Arts in Teacher Leadership (MTL) program received the [2010 Outstanding Online Program Award](#) from the Soan Consortium. And U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) held a news conference at the UIS campus to discuss the [College Textbook Affordability Act](#). Durbin authored the legislation, which went into effect in July and was designed to bring down textbook costs for financially struggling students.

In September 2010, as the university began various events to commemorate the 40 year anniversary, the total number of [enrolled students reached 5, 174](#), an all-time record.

In October 2010, [UIS student volunteers collected a record 8,354 pounds of food for the Central Illinois Foodbank](#). The canned food drive was part of the UIS Holiday Stars Project, a campus-wide service initiative giving focus to UIS' efforts to make a difference in the local community during the holiday season. Also in October, the [UIS colonnade was selected as the 2010 Official City Ornament](#). The Ornament was the eighteenth collectible design in a series depicting local landmarks and events. In an effort to encourage fellow students to recycle, [a group of freshmen painted a recycling mural](#) at Founders Residence Hall. .

As of November 1, [Dr. Harry J. Berman became the Interim Chancellor of the University of Illinois Springfield](#). Dr. Berman was the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost for the university since 2005. As interim chancellor, [Dr. Berman identified four major points of focus](#): international programming, community college outreach, community engagement, and instructional resource management. Dr. Berman appointed [Dr. Lynn Pardie as the interim Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Provost](#) of the university effective January 2011. Since 2006, Dr. Pardie had served as the Associate Vice Chancellor for Graduate Research and Education.

In November 2010, international students at the university were honored through a new [display of sixty-three foreign flags](#) in the Public Affairs Center. The flags represented the countries from which students had traveled to attend UIS over the past forty years. Also in November, the [Downstate Illinois Innocence Project received a major grant](#) to clear downstate Illinois innocence cases where DNA testing might decide the outcome.

In December 2010, the university [partnered with the Illinois National Guard to educate troops being deployed to Afghanistan](#). Faculty and troops discussed Afghanistan's history, culture, public health needs, and economic structure.



To better reflect the status of the university as the third campus of the University of Illinois, a new wordmark was adopted in January 2011.

In February, the new Illinois Springfield baseball team was victorious in its first game. The university's 40th Commencement Ceremony was held in May 2011.

Through change, much remains

Founded in 1969 as Sangamon State University, and later becoming the University of Illinois Springfield, the school has awarded more than 32,600 bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees over the last 40 years.

Alumni are living in all 50 states and 44 foreign countries. In Sangamon County alone, the university has 9,709 living alumni members. The university has educated 28% of the college-educated workforce residing in the city of Springfield, Illinois.

After four decades, the strengths of this campus' past have become the strengths of its future, and many hallmarks of the original institution are still evident:

- A strong liberal arts curriculum with a focus on public affairs
- Relevant professional programs
- Small class size
- Students who receive individual attention
- Student access to internships and other “real world” experiences
- Faculty who are actively engaged in their disciplines, and who know their students by name

Building on the foundations laid by its first community of administrators, faculty, staff and students, the University of Illinois Springfield moved into the 21st century by preparing for new challenges ahead.

As of this writing, just as Dr. Spencer outlined so long ago, the university is both ancient and modern, honoring the idea that each individual, each discipline, provides a unique contribution, that making a difference in the world is a shared responsibility.

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Acknowledgments

The content of this brief history was taken from the Archives of the University of Illinois Springfield and from the [Newsroom](#) of the office of campus relations. In many cases, the text in this document is linked to copies of the original information on the university website or elsewhere.

If you'd like to learn more about campus history and traditions, stop by the [Archives](#) office on the lower level of [Brookens Library](#), or visit its website.

You may also want to read [The Physical Development of Sangamon State University, 1969-1995](#), by Richard R. Williams, longtime director of physical planning and operations.

See the following page for a list of Internet links used in this brief history.

Donna McCracken, who compiled the information in this brief history, enrolled at SSU in 1972 (or maybe '73) and, as a student and staff member, was on campus for most of the events outlined here. She retired from the Campus Relations office in 2009.

List of Internet links used in this brief history

Public meeting to discuss new college:

www.uis.edu/archives/1960.html

40 Year Anniversary website:

www.uis.edu/40years/

Governor signs bill to create SSU:

www.uis.edu/archives/govsigns.html

SJ-R article about opening of SSU:

www.uis.edu/about/history/SSUopens.html

Karen Hasara:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karen_Hasara

Hasara's commencement address 2010:

www.uis.edu/commencement/2010/hasara.html

The Blue Memo:

http://collections.carli.illinois.edu/cdm4/browse.php?CISOROOT=/uis_cmparch

1971 SSU Organization Chart (pdf):

www.uis.edu/about/history/documents/SSUchart1972.pdf

Guide to SSU:

http://collections.carli.illinois.edu/cdm4/browse.php?CISOROOT=/uis_cmparch

University Week described in issue of The Spectrum (pdf):

http://collections.carli.illinois.edu/cgi-bin/showfile.exe?CISOROOT=/uis_cmpnews&CISOPTN=67&filename=103.pdf

Arthur C. Clarke:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_C._Clarke

Robert C. Spencer, Interview and Memoir (pdf):

www.uis.edu/archives/memoirs/SPENCER2.pdf

1977 and 1978 copies of the SSU Journal (pdf):

http://collections.carli.illinois.edu/cgi-bin/showfile.exe?CISOROOT=/uis_cmpnews&CISOPTR=6&filename=20.pdf

1980 and 1981 copies of the SSU Journal (pdf):

http://collections.carli.illinois.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/uis_cmpnews&CISOPTR=9&CISOBOX=1&REC=14

Brookens Library 1976 - 2006:

http://collections.carli.illinois.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/uis_cmparch&CISOPTR=62

1984 and 1985 copies of the SSU Weekly (pdf):

www.uis.edu/archives/campus_news/SSU%20Weekly%20v01%201984-85.pdf

Aydin Gonulsen hired (pdf):

www.uis.edu/about/history/documents/gonulsenhired.pdf

1989 and 1990 copies of the SSU Weekly (pdf):

http://collections.carli.illinois.edu/cgi-bin/showfile.exe?CISOROOT=/uis_cmpnews&CISOPTR=17&filename=37.pdf

SSU presents future plans (pdf):

www.uis.edu/about/history/documents/futureplans.pdf

Student enrollment breaks 4,000; 1990 and 1991 copies of the SSU Weekly (pdf)::

http://collections.carli.illinois.edu/cgi-bin/showfile.exe?CISOROOT=/uis_cmpnews&CISOPTR=18&filename=38.pdf

SJ-R article about 20th anniversary:

www.uis.edu/about/history/impact.html

New entrance marker:

www.uis.edu/newsbureau/entrance_marker_april.pdf

1995 copies of the SSU Weekly (pdf):

http://collections.carli.illinois.edu/cgi-bin/showfile.exe?CISOROOT=/uis_cmpnews&CISOPTR=22&filename=42.pdf

Intruding on Academe: The Assertion of Political Control in Illinois by Jack R. Van Der Slik:

<http://books.google.com/books?id=C4RNMaZkbb8C&lpg=PP1&ots=0TNAzambDL&dq=Intruding%2520on%2520Academe&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&f=false>

An application of the theory of reasoned action to the Illinois General Assembly: Predicting voting intention regarding dispersal of the tobacco settlement monies, by Franklin, Mark Andrew:

<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=727402611&sid=6&Fmt=2&clientId=77083&RQT=309&VName=PQD>

The Capital Scholars Honors Program at UIS:

www.uis.edu/caphonors/

Looking Back: A decade in review at UIS (news story):

http://news.uis.edu/2009_12_01_archive.html

Chancellor Richard Ringeisen:

www.uis.edu/chancellor/

2001 UIS Weekly (pdf):

[www.uis.edu/archives/campus_news/UIS Weekly v17 2001.pdf](http://www.uis.edu/archives/campus_news/UIS_Weekly_v17_2001.pdf)

Online registration:

www.uis.edu/pressreleases/may01PR/05_30_01a.htm

Illinois Civic Engagement Project:

<http://cspl.uis.edu/OfficeOfExecutiveDirector/CivicEngagement/index.htm>

Sloan Grant to UIS:

www.uis.edu/pressreleases/june02PR/06_14_02.htm

National Commission on the Future of UIS:

www.uis.edu/pressreleases/mar03PR/03_27_03b.htm

Commitment to service:

www.uis.edu/pressreleases/apr04PR/04_20_04.html

Volunteer and Civic Engagement Center:

www.uis.edu/volunteer/

Construction of University Hall:

www.uis.edu/universityhall.html

The Colonnade (photo):

www.flickr.com/photos/illinoisspringfield/3010946688/in/set-72157608739080295/

The Sloan Semester:

<http://sloansemester.org/>

UIS hosts artist Preston Jackson:

www.uis.edu/pressreleases/sept06PR/09_15c_06.html

UIS becomes full four-year university:

www.uis.edu/pressreleases/sept05PR/09_09_05.html

General Education curriculum:

www.uis.edu/generaleducation/curriculum/index.html

UIS Strategic Plan:

www.uis.edu/strategicplan/

Recreation and Athletics Center opens:

www.uis.edu/newsreleases/2007/09/26-

[UIScutsribbontoofficiallyopennewRecreationandAthleticCenter.html](http://www.uis.edu/newsreleases/2007/09/26-UIScutsribbontoofficiallyopennewRecreationandAthleticCenter.html)

Computer science program ranked 'best buy:'

www.uis.edu/pressreleases/apr05PR/04_28_05.html

Best public university in Illinois:

<http://news.uis.edu/2008/08/us-news-world-report-gives-uis-top.html>

Ringisen set to retire:

www.uis.edu/newsbureau/2010/03/uis-chancellor-ringisen-set-to-retire.html

Welcome Dr. Hogan

<http://news.uis.edu/2010/05/michael-j-hogan-presidential.html>

UIS graduates nearly 1200

<http://news.uis.edu/2010/05/uis-graduates-more-than-1190-students.html>

State Politics and Policy Conference

<http://news.uis.edu/2010/06/state-politics-and-policy-conference.html>

UIS named to NCAA Division II

<http://news.uis.edu/2010/07/uis-named-full-fledged-ncaa-division-ii.html>

New LGBTQ Office

<http://news.uis.edu/2010/08/uis-cuts-ribbon-on-new-lgbtq-resource.html>

HDC program receives accreditation

<http://news.uis.edu/2010/09/three-human-development-counseling.html>

MTL receives online award

<http://news.uis.edu/2010/09/uis-honored-with-two-national-awards.html>

Senator Durbin's textbook affordability legislation

<http://news.uis.edu/2010/09/us-senator-dick-durbin-discusses.html>

Record enrollment

<http://news.uis.edu/2010/09/uis-sets-record-with-5174-students.html>

Student food drive

<http://news.uis.edu/2010/11/uis-students-collect-record-8294-pounds.html>

Official City Ornament

<http://news.uis.edu/2010/10/uis-colonnade-selected-as-2010-official.html>

Freshmen recycling mural

<http://news.uis.edu/2010/10/uis-freshmen-paint-recycling-mural-at.html>

Berman named interim chancellor

<http://www.uis.edu/chancellor/berman/remarks/statement.html>

Berman points of focus

<http://www.uis.edu/chancellor/berman/remarks/majorfocus-20101101.html>

Pardie named interim vice chancellor of academic affairs

<http://news.uis.edu/2010/10/lynn-pardie-named-interim-vice.html>

Flag wall honors international students

<http://news.uis.edu/2010/11/uis-dedicates-flag-wall-honoring.html>

Major grant for Downstate Illinois Innocence Project

<http://news.uis.edu/2010/11/uis-downstate-illinois-innocence.html>

UIS partners with Illinois National Guard

<http://news.uis.edu/2010/12/uis-partners-with-illinois-national.html>

More history of SSU-UIS:

www.uis.edu/about/history/

www.uis.edu/newsroom/archives.html

40 Years Anniversary website:

www.uis.edu/40years/

University of Illinois Springfield:

www.uis.edu/