

UIS leader is 'hopeful' for future

By **KATHRYN REM**

STAFF WRITER

kathryn.rem@sj-r.com

Having celebrated its 40th year in 2010, the University of Illinois Springfield — founded as Sangamon State University — is looking ahead to the next 40.

But, like all institutions of higher learning, the future is clouded by bleak economic conditions.

"If I were going to say one word to describe the outlook for UIS in 2011, I'd say 'hopeful,'" said Harry Berman, interim chancellor of the university.

"We're coming off of some wonderful things. This fall, we had a 5 percent increase in enrollment, and in August, we were named the fourth-best public university in the Midwest in U.S. News & World Report (2011 America's Best Colleges)," he said.

The number of online classes is rising; 25 percent of attendees are now online students.

With an increase in students, Berman is hoping developers will take a new look at the business potential of the campus-town area south of the city near Lake Springfield.

"We have 1,100 students living on campus, we have students working on campus and we're optimistic that there will be more interest among developers," Berman said.

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— INTERIM CHANCELLOR
HARRY BERMAN

campus, which has about 200 international students. An international program is slated to bring 12 undergraduate students from Vietnam in the fall.

"We think there is potential for growth in other countries," he said, adding that relationships are being built with students in China.

But the future is not all rosy.

"I have to say the area of concern continues to be the economic situation of the state of Illinois. We have had reductions from the state over the years. The past couple of years, there's this matter of a cash-flow problem — whether we receive the money that's been appropriated. Our wish for the new year is that the governor and legislature develop a plan for fixing the state's budget."

Among other things, that could help UIS's athletic program. In August 2010, UIS became eligible to compete as a full member of the NCAA Division II Great Lakes Valley Conference.

The NCAA membership means all UIS student-athletes will sign national letters of intent, the university will be eligible for NCAA enhancement money and millions of dollars in postgraduate scholarships are expected to be available to students.

The baseball program was one of the new sports added in the process of becoming a full NCAA member. 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.

On the administrative front, chancellor Richard Ringeisen retired at the end of October and a permanent chancellor is expected to be named this year.

The former Sangamon State University took its current name in 1995. According to the school, Sangamon State/UIS has educated 28 percent of the college-educated work force residing in the city of Springfield.

Kathryn Rem can be reached at 788-1520.

University of Illinois Springfield

■ **Degree programs:** 23 bachelor's, 20 master's, 1 doctoral

■ **Offered online:** 300 classes

■ **Enrollment:** 5,174 students

■ **Full-time students:** 51 percent

■ **Gender:** 46 percent male, 54 percent female

■ **Illinois residents:** 86 percent

■ **Students living on campus:** 1,100

■ **Campus size:** 746 acres

■ **Living alumni:** 31,360, including 9,710 residing in Sangamon County