Saint Xavier University
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Saint Xavier University has productively collaborated with the Town of Gilbert over a number of years to bring comprehensive faith-based higher education to the East Valley. Our vision and that of the Town has been to “create increased opportunities for a diverse community of ethical, motivated and socially engaged learners who are prepared for 21st century careers.” In Illinois and in Arizona we recognize that building and maintaining an educated workforce is critical to the economic development of a thriving community.

Unfortunately, that same important mission which has forged the mutuality of our partnership with the Town of Gilbert now makes us particularly vulnerable to the distressed state of higher education funding allocated to college students enrolled in Illinois, the increased cost of educating a diverse student population, and small initial enrollments on the Gilbert campus. In particular, the year-long Illinois budget impasse has resulted in lack of full funding of the Monetary Assistance Program (MAP) awards for FY16 -- awards that are made to high need students in public and private colleges and universities throughout the State of Illinois. Regrettably, the lack of a state budget at the conclusion of the current legislative session means that MAP funding for FY17 also remains uncertain. The impact of the current fiscal situation in Illinois also now impacts our efforts in Arizona.

Following a careful and thorough consideration of all these factors, the University’s Board of Trustees was compelled to conclude that the University no longer is in a position to further invest in the maintenance of a sustainable presence in Gilbert while also meeting its responsibility to preserve its mission, ensure the continued viability of the Chicago campus and educate students to which SXU has been dedicated for 170 years. The University therefore, will begin the process of transitioning out of Gilbert and bringing academic programs to a close. Mindful of all the principles on which SXU-Gilbert was launched, the University’s transition process will include the following:
• Personal meetings with all students who have enrolled in SXU programs during the week of May 30 so as to ensure that their best interests are served through the continuation of classes in the summer and fall of 2016 (online and on site), and that they receive thorough information regarding options for degree completion and credit transfer opportunities. These meetings also will fully comply with the Higher Learning Commission’s (HLC) requirements to implement an individual academic program plan to ensure a smooth transition.

• Work in close collaboration with the Town of Gilbert to ensure that an appropriate university partner succeeds SXU at the site; a partner that will continue to further the desire of the Gilbert community to be a vibrant locus for high quality postsecondary academic programs.

• Collaborate with the Town to ensure that the SXU-Gilbert site continues to serve as a critically important host site for civic, educational and community activities, thereby also ensuring the University’s full presence during transition.

After so much work developing so many important relationships to launch this initiative, the decision the University had to make was most difficult. Saint Xavier University always will value the Town of Gilbert, the many community constituents with which we have worked, and most importantly, the students we have been privileged to serve.