


OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

INDIANA UNIVERSITY-PURDUE UNIVERSITY
INDIANAPOLIS

MEMORANDUM

TO: IUPUI Faculty Council
Faculty/Staff of the IU School of Liberal Arts

FROM: Charles R. Bantz, Chancellor 

DATE: October 8, 2013

RE: Administrative Review, Dean of the IU School of Liberal Arts, William Blomquist

This memo summarizes the report of the Administrative Review Committee on the Dean of the IU School of Liberal Arts, William Blomquist.

Austin Agho, Dean of the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, chaired the committee. Its faculty representatives were Simon J. Atkinson, Professor and Chair, Department of Biology; Phillip Cochran, Executive Associate Dean, Kelley School of Business; Ronald Sandwina, Professor of Communication Studies; Jennifer Thorington Springer, Associate Professor of English; Irene R. Queiro-Tajalli, Professor of Social Work and Interim Executive Director of Labor Studies program; and Larry John Zimmerman, Professor of Anthropology and Museum Studies. Staff representatives were Joyce Haibe, Secretary, Department of Geography, and Genevieve Shaker, Director of Communications and Creative Services. Student representatives were Stephanie D. Harris, (Undergraduate – School of Liberal Arts) and Sarah K. Nathan (Graduate Student – Ph.D. Candidate in Philanthropic Studies).

To assess and enhance the overall effectiveness of the School of Liberal Arts, as well as the administrative performance of Dean William Blomquist, the review committee commissioned the Survey Research Center to conduct two web-based surveys of faculty, staff, and students. It also interviewed the following subgroups and individuals: staff – student affairs; department chairs and center directors; associate and assistant deans; Dean’s Advisory Council; Director of the Office of Equal Employment; and Vice President, Indiana University Foundation, Indianapolis. Four focus group sessions of students and alumni were also conducted.

Interview responses and the survey of faculty (full-time and part-time), staff, graduate and undergraduate students, and advisory board members generated very positive feedback about Dean Blomquist’s effectiveness and success in the role of dean during his tenure. Particularly notable across the various data sets was the level of praise for Dean Blomquist’s personal attributes / characteristics, the effectiveness of his professional interactions, and his overall communication skills. Dean Blomquist is a visible leader who is known and recognized and who is a presence at school functions, which is appreciated by students, faculty, and staff alike. Indeed, in the survey, among the many strengths of Dean Blomquist, leadership skills were particularly remarked upon, as was his ability to communicate a clear vision for the school, to advocate for the school, and to build beneficial internal and external relationships on its behalf.



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A key expression of Dean Blomquist's vision for the School of Liberal Arts has been his attention to the quality of the faculty, faculty hiring, and faculty retention. All were seen to be hallmarks of Dr. Blomquist's deanship to date. The dean is thought to be a good fiscal manager who works with the confines of the budgeting situation and who considers the long-term fiscal health of the school to be a priority. Likewise, he has worked to foster academic program growth and development during his tenure, with limited fiscal support, and the new programs that have come online during his tenure were perceived by some to be among his greatest accomplishments. Noteworthy also is the dean's attention to first-year student experiences, fostering strong academic programs, and advocacy for student success.

Also earning commendation is the attention he has given to the recruitment and advancement of underrepresented faculty. The dean reports 21 successful tenure and/or promotion cases of female faculty and faculty of color, with no unsuccessful tenure and promotion cases for female faculty or faculty of color since 2008. He also pointed out that 9 of the 23 department chairs are women.

The review committee made a number of observations based on the surveys, focus groups, and interviews with key stakeholder groups. Most are positive, as has been noted, but several allow for a few areas where the dean might focus attention in the future as he continues his already-sound practices. These suggestions address areas identified by some stakeholders as opportunities for growth. The order of the comments that follow should not be read to imply an order of importance or need for attention.

- While the dean's attendance at functions is valued, it should be weighed carefully against other time pressures and sometimes delegated to Dean's Advisory Committee members (who are enthusiastic to be more engaged) or to associate deans or senior faculty.
- Continuing attention needs to be paid to ongoing efforts to improve the organization of the dean's office (staffing, lines of responsibility and physical configuration). An example of a specific opportunity for improvement includes a desire for increased access to data to drive administrative practice.
- An equitable, merit-based pay system for staff and part-time faculty is an area of concern. Although efforts have been made by the dean to improve salaries for part-time faculty, a long-term strategy is needed to address salary equity issues and employment conditions among new and longer-term staff members and part-time faculty.
- Dean Blomquist's collegial and diplomatic approach was deemed effective and appropriate, but in a few instances a stronger stance might be a more effective tactic.
- The dean should be seen to take every opportunity to communicate the value of a liberal arts education, as career preparation and as beneficial for quality of life and society.

All in all, the committee concluded that Dean Blomquist is to be commended for his ability to promote high standards; communicate priorities and ideas in a clear and timely manner to faculty, staff, and other administrators; articulate a vision for the future; embrace the practice of collaboration, openness, and shared governance; encourage diversity and implement mechanisms for attracting and retaining underrepresented groups; support cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity; and demonstrate respect for all persons in the school.