

April 15, 2022

Dear Interim Chancellor Klein,

We, the IUPUI Faculty Council Executive Committee, write to ask you to convey to President Whitten our deep concern about the need to postpone implementation of the proposed restructuring of the research enterprise at Indiana University.

While we understand and appreciate many of the goals set forth in what was proposed via budget hearings, and while we remain agnostic rather than antagonistic about its efficacy in increasing research across IU, we are deeply concerned about whether local aspects of such a far-reaching change have been considered. The faculty at IUPUI, who are deeply invested in research that is often of a unique nature, need time to deliberate and advise the administration about the ramifications of such a change. This would also allow time for a response to the concerns we have already identified and specific questions we have already asked.

We also assert that that there are constitutional concerns at stake here; that complex change cannot be made by simply lumping such diverse campuses into one budget and then considering how things will work after the fact; that IUPUI has unique needs and practices in regard to research that might not fit a one-size-fits-all approach; and that this proposed restructuring is part of a larger context of changes that have harmed our campus.

Constitutional Requirement for Consultation

The Constitution of the Indiana University Faculty clearly delineates the areas where faculty have legislative and consultative authority. In the case at hand, the consultative authority is at play:

Section 2.3: Consultation of the Faculty

The Trustees and administration should consult the faculty concerning:

- A. Planning and decisions regarding physical resources.*
- B. Budgets.*
- C. Faculty compensation and benefits.*
- D. Establishment of administrative offices affecting the academic mission, and appointment and review of administrators filling those offices.*
- E. Any other aspect of University operations having an impact on the academic mission.*

Consultation of the faculty shall be through representatives authorized by faculty governance institutions. Consultation should occur sufficiently in advance of action to permit faculty deliberation.

In this case, B, D, and E are impacted by the proposed restructuring. As research is a basic responsibility of tenure-track and some types of non-tenure track faculty and is

part of the University's academic mission, our representative units need to be consulted early enough in advance of research restructuring to permit deliberation. That was not followed. Indeed, while we have repeatedly requested that process be acknowledged, it has been ignored, pushed back to a point after a restructuring has already occurred. That is clearly in violation of the Indiana University Constitution and outside the bounds of shared governance.

Complex Change

This is a large organizational change. For change to be truly transformative, it must involve all constituencies. Universities are complex, particularly in the loose way that different parts are coupled—pulling or pushing at point A can have unforeseen effects on B and C. Alterations in research structure will likely redound to Indirect Cost Recovery distribution—which would directly affect individual schools, departments, centers, and labs. The goal of the larger research enterprise to better facilitate research and even focus some research efforts is laudable. However, we must do so without hurting existing and successful structures already deeply engaged in research.

This is the reason the Constitution calls for consultation. IUPUI has many engaged and expert faculty who would welcome the opportunity to become involved in this planning and eventual change. We are relatively young and nimble institution; we do not fear change. Change achieved via consultation will have strong legitimacy and broad cooperation. Every plan bold enough to be transformational has some unknowns and will encounter problems—but thoughtful planning, use of organizational change research, process legitimacy, and cooperation can take us past those problems, as long as we begin in a consultative manner.

Community Engagement

Research across Indiana University is varied and often tied to distinct and unique local circumstances. That is definitely true in Indianapolis. About half of our external funding falls under “service grants,” if we use the OVPR definitions that are largely tied to ICR rates. However, many of those grants have major research projects within them. How will they be handled? Will they receive administrative support and internal funding under a restructuring? We have formally asked these questions in writing but have not received a response.

We are concerned about the potential impacts of a restructuring on our unique mission, including DEI scholarship and community engaged research. Not only is this mission central to our charter, but it has also come to define us nationally. Becoming and remaining a premier urban research university is based on relationships with non-federal funders. We have aligned our expertise to those funders' concerns, which are, like ours, community focused. Without a fully thought out proposal on research centralization that we have had a voice in shaping, we fear this restructuring will not take our unique situation into full consideration, might undercut those relationships

with the community and the funders who have worked with us, and could undermine our strong commitment to urban community engagement.

Context

We would be remiss if we failed to convey that our reticence to accept an unseen restructuring proposal, about which faculty were not consulted, is tied to years of budgetary and research changes that have harmed our campus. The decision to count federal grant dollars from the IUSM on the Bloomington campus (while leaving those researchers on our faculty count) has had a devastating effect on our long goal of reaching R-1 status. This precludes us from multiple grant opportunities that would benefit our faculty and our students. In Indianapolis, we sit with our Med School colleagues on committees, tenured on the same campus, investigators on the same grants that count in IUB's column. This is wrong. We think it would be a good thing for Indiana University to have two R-1 campuses. We cannot help but be dubious about claims that restructuring research will benefit IUPUI in the context of what has been done in the recent past.

Therefore, we request that any plans for restructuring be delayed until faculty can play their constitutional roles in the process. Again, we are aligned with many of its goals and remain agnostic about its possible overall effects. We need time to study, continue conversations with OVPR, and deliberate about our local needs and stakeholders. We propose that local task forces be established in Indianapolis and Bloomington and that several members from each of those task forces form a UFC task force to look at the system-wide advantages and disadvantages of a restructuring. This could be accomplished over the summer and fall and would give faculty confidence in a plan that could be transparently presented early in 2023.

Respectfully,
The IUPUI Faculty Council Executive Committee