

University Faculty Council Minutes for 2023-10-31

The Indiana University Faculty Council held this in-person meeting on Tuesday afternoon, October 31, 2023 in University Tower at IUPUI. With University President, Pam Whitten, as Presiding Officer and Professor Susan Popham acting as secretary, the meeting convened at 1:30 p.m.

1. Approval of minutes, April 25, 2023: motion unanimously approved.
2. Executive Committee Report
 - a. UFC Co-Chair Philip Goff started with statements about IUPUI's transition from Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis to IU Indianapolis. Notable news: influx of research resources, upgraded lecturers to teaching professors (under academic affairs), and other positive benefits to the city and the campus.
 - b. UFC Co-Chair Colin Johnson talked about the status of university life—research, teaching, service—at the Bloomington campus. Notable initiatives include AI, nanotechnology research initiative, reconfiguration of the Kinsey institute (in regards to legislative prohibited funding).
 - c. UFC Co-Chair Carolyn Schult noted several initiatives: common regional campus calendar, shared resources and initiatives, micro-credentials, community engagement, Future IU, academic re-organization (e.g., IU SB). She also noted the UFC planning session on September 12 in which top concerns were listed: AI task force, funding/budgeting re-alignment, and campus morale.
3. Presiding Officer's Report: Pres. Whitten noted some highlights from her State of the University address from Oct. 30, including personalized concierge/advising systems for students, solutions for high DFW rates which negatively impact student retention and graduation, fostering research excellence and creativity (with new, targeted investments along with long-standing research productivity), \$111 million in micro-electronic initiatives, \$250 million for research in bio-medical engineering and technology, assessing space utilization and efficiency especially to boost research space and productivity, and finally the third Strategic Plan pillar of community engagement and well-being in the state of Indiana: opening the center for IU Innovates, and other initiatives for improving public health, etc. She also talked about initiatives for increasing student and faculty diversity (e.g., Presidential Diversity Hiring initiative). She closed by reminding all of us that we remember that this is a sensitive time for our Jewish and Muslim students and faculty, and to act on the ideal that we are a university that cares. She stated the university's full support for the Kinsey Institute.
4. Provost Shrivastav spoke about the background of the Kinsey Institute over the past 75 years. He proposed that the institute be returned to its 501c3 non-profit status, which it had before 2016, which will be proposed at next week's Board of Trustees meeting. Faculty and staff will not be harmed financially by this move, and all current funds will continue to be housed in IU, as is currently the case.

5. Question/Comment Period: The floor opened for remarks from council members: Professor Need of IUB mentioned the hope that there be some consideration for a culture of attendance that might help to improve DFW rates, rather than overly scrutinizing faculty behavior. Other comments included the status of climate action committees on the IU campuses (Professor Rivas); and the need for direct and truthful information about the Kinsey Institute especially toward the state legislature (Professor Ramos); and needed data, research, and multiple solutions to the DFW rate solution.
6. Update on New Budget Model: VP Pinkney noted that the current traditional RCM budget model is being reviewed with the hope of being re-aligned and updated to fit the needs of our whole university. Phase One: funding those parts of our budget without all the complexity of transferring to something that is more transparent, predictable, and basic resources, planning and designing; Phase Two (next year) campus allocation. VP Pinkney hopes to “optimally align our needs to the resources of the IU system” while “allocating our resources to the best use possible.” Colin Johnson reminded VP Pinkney of the constitutional responsibility for the faculty to engage in this budget review and asked that the faculty be a part of this review and re-alignment process in part because it helps to legitimize the process and decisions—VP Pinkney agreed. Professor Need asked about the element of Gen Ed in the budget re-alignment.
7. Faculty Activity Reporting System Update: VP Sciame-Giesecke spoke about the current tool, Watermark DMAI, which is inefficient, difficult, and its license was expiring at the end of 2023. A one-year renewal has been granted, while we seek vendor proposals. Work group first identified current needs of functionality and spoke to the Watermark representative group, then reviewed tools and demonstrations from four other companies, and a recommendation was made to seek a more robust tool through a RFP Process involving faculty groups among the campuses: demonstration, feedback, recommendation, tentative timeline. RFP is open, and proposals are due in mid-November, then the group will review the recommendations in January. Professor Wert shared his concerns that the faculty comment time is during December, when faculty are on break. VP Sciame-Giesecke mentioned that the whole month of January could be used and perhaps pushed into February, if needed, but not much longer, as the license with Watermark ends in October.
8. Employee Relationships Involving Students: Pres. Whitten noted her dismay that we are the only Big 10 institution without a current policy. Professor Zheng noted that this taskforce was convened in 2019, with a report completed in 2021. Further revisions were made this year. Title IX officer Kincaid noted that we have a policy for which such relationships are prohibited, but the current report separates this policy and clarifies language and hypothetical situations. Issues noted and attended to in revisions: privacy concerns, government funding policy, peer institution alignment. Questions included when someone would be in violation of the policy if the exception was not granted, if a person was both an instructor and a student, timeliness of reporting, inclusion of staff in the policy and in the communication, etc.

9. ICR Research Committee: Co-Chair of Research Affairs committee, Ben Kravitz, and VP Mumper reported on the ICR allocation distribution. Initiatives include new center for Research in Innovation and Entrepreneurship, two new positions open (asst. VP for Arts and Humanities), re-design of our major equipment fund with disbursements already to some regional campuses. VP Mumper expressed his commitment to transparency about allocation of indirect costs funds and will use the retained funds for 7 purposes: mission/critical research, research and animal space renovations, research infrastructure and equipment, university-wide labs, start-up and retention packages, Strategic Plan pillar 2, required matching of external grants. Questions included continuity of employees in the research office, ICR costs for humanities-based research which have higher administrative costs (higher than NSF and NIH grants which cover more administrative and equipment costs).
10. Updates on AI taskforce: primary questions from the charge are about general principles, policy, deliverables to students and faculty, formal policies, identification of AI artifacts, improvement in teaching, research, and service at IU. Initial finding report due by March 1. Comments included the need to include graduate and undergraduate students, the need to not demonize those who use the tool in beneficial ways, the need for a centralized coordinated effort (FACET and UITS have already been working on policies, so we need to collaborate with these groups). Motion to support and approve the charge was made and approved unanimously.
11. Reviews of Core School Deans: this process should be happening at the end of the Dean's third year, but has recently fallen off (re. COVID), and the current questions are outdated. New questions have been developed to be distributed by survey to respective faculty. These questions can be reviewed at the UFC website. Motion to approve the questions was approved.

Meeting adjourned at 3:40 pm.