

An Open Letter from the IUPUI Faculty to the Next President and Trustees of Indiana University

Throughout IUPUI's thirty-eight year history, its faculty has been of one mind in striving to build a strong and cohesive campus that offers first-rate under-graduate, graduate, and professional educational opportunities in the largest population center of the State. IUPUI has become a national force in higher education with a substantial and growing national and international reputation. It is recognized as being one of the nation's top producers of graduate professional degrees and has received national honors for its innovations in serving first-generation undergraduates.

IUPUI's role within Indiana University has changed dramatically over the past two decades. As one of two major research campuses of Indiana University and the place of intersection for a wide range of IU and Purdue programs, IUPUI has had the ability and flexibility to innovate and to shape its core academic programs in Liberal Arts, Science, and Engineering to complement and enhance its professional programs. This in turn has led to the creation of several exciting new fields of study and many successful research programs that are truly interdisciplinary and highly collaborative across many areas and specialties, including prominently the life and health sciences. Through the discovery and application of knowledge, teaching at all levels, and engaging and building partnerships with the communities it serves, IUPUI has become a major driving force in the economic and cultural development and the internationalization of central Indiana. Indeed, the faculty in Indianapolis firmly believes that IUPUI's role in the future of IU is set by its mission as the life and health sciences campus of the University; by its urban location in the business, geographic, political, and media center of Indiana; and by its energetic, collaborative and entrepreneurial culture that thrives on innovation and change.

There is every reason to be optimistic about IUPUI's future, given its past achievements and its abundance of opportunities for even greater accomplishments. In response to the IU Board of Trustees' announcement of its Agenda for a Future of Distinction for Indiana University in January 2006, the IUPUI faculty affirmed its unequivocal support for the Trustees' desire to advance the University's research endeavors, especially in the life sciences and related disciplines, to ensure that IU will be counted among the "great research universities" worldwide. The IUPUI faculty has also been supportive of the Trustees' effort to enhance IU Bloomington's mission and build on its strengths and assets. The Trustees, however, also stated that "IUPUI should become a top-rated university in its own right, mainly in the areas supporting its current strengths ... [while] other areas of IUPUI will support its current urban university [mission] serving a large urban student body." This statement seems to suggest that the Trustees believe an effective strategy for Indiana University to achieve distinction can be crafted by relying solely on the research strength of the Bloomington campus and that of the IU School of Medicine on the Indianapolis campus, while other academic units of IUPUI will be relegated to chiefly teaching local students. The IUPUI faculty respectfully rejects this view.

IUPUI is an integrated campus with many of its core academic programs generating significant external research funding, alone and in collaboration with its professional schools. The potential for research growth on the IUPUI campus is unparalleled. This growth must not be curtailed by a vision of the campus that limits growth to predefined areas and excludes the integration of research with undergraduate, graduate, and professional education. Citizens of Indiana in general, and the city of

Indianapolis in particular, deserve a strong and integrated urban campus of Indiana University where world-class research and under-graduate and graduate education not only thrive, but act synergistically to increase the quality and breadth of the University's research and education missions. Also, the most effective way to strengthen the professional schools on the IUPUI campus, including the IU School of Medicine, is to enhance the research base and to increase the already high degree of collaboration among all academic units on the IUPUI campus.[†] The next IU President and the Trustees must therefore recognize that IU Bloomington and IUPUI are two strong and complementary research campuses, each with its own identity and mission. In order for Indiana University to achieve greatness, both campuses must be recognized, valued, and supported as equal partners.

Since the announcement of the Agenda, the Trustees have made a number of changes in the administrative structure of Indiana University—including the addition of the title of CEO of IU Bloomington to the President's portfolio—ostensibly to bring it in line with other public universities that have only one major campus, and to provide greater leadership focus for IU Bloomington. The IUPUI faculty urges that the next President be given the freedom to examine afresh IU's administrative structure as well as academic practices. Questions must be raised whether IU's recent move towards increased centralization at a single geographical location is the best way to serve the long-term interests of the entire University. A case in point is the plan currently under discussion to create a highly centralized grants and contracts administration. Given the size and strength of IU Bloomington and IUPUI, we believe that the University would be better served with a more flexible campus-based structure designed to be responsive to the distinctive needs of the faculty on each campus. Efficiency requires that the leadership of administrative and academic units be located where there is the greatest concentration of activities and opportunities. The resulting new structure of IU must provide *all* campuses with the freedom for creative and efficient growth responsive to, and serving the needs of, their respective constituencies and communities.

The next President must measure achievements not by historical status or past accomplishments, but rather by the ability of each campus or academic unit to seek out new challenges and collaborative opportunities to advance the interests and prestige of Indiana University. This will require resisting a sense of entitlement of any one campus or segment of the University. Indeed, IU's future greatness depends on how successful the next President and the Trustees can be in supporting the missions of *all* IU campuses and developing fully the combined potential of the Bloomington-Indianapolis core.

We thus respectfully request that the next President, at the first opportunity available after his or her appointment, engage with the Indianapolis faculty and administration in an earnest conversation on how IUPUI can contribute, as a partner with IU Bloomington, to a future of distinction for Indiana University. We also request that the next President make it one of his or her highest priorities to examine the current administrative structure and academic practices and work to remove all impediments that would stand in the way of IUPUI becoming all that it can be.

The entire IUPUI faculty, across all disciplines, sincerely wants the next President to succeed. We therefore stand ready to help leverage the complementary strengths of IU's founding campus in Bloomington and its vibrant urban campus in Indianapolis for the greater common good of the University and the State of Indiana.

[†] For a snapshot of the breadth of interdisciplinary collaborations at IUPUI, see the recently announced list of projects (http://www.iupui.edu/administration/acad_affairs/07_01_fundedsignaturecenters.pdf) receiving funding under the Signature Center Initiative.