

From the Desk of the Chancellor – November 27

We resume our strategic planning probe questions this week with some considerations raised in my recent State of the Campus Address. I noted that a recent study by the Polis Center shows that the number of IUPUI students living downtown has increased 85% since 2005. Nearly as dramatic has been, and will be, the number of students for whom we provide on-campus housing.

Imagine: In 2002, we had only 293 beds, mainly in Ball Hall. We currently have 1,136 beds, since adding the Campus Apartments on the Riverwalk. This does not include the overflow of 266 students at Park Place Apartments. This puts us at a 123% occupancy rate! Next year, when the conversion of the University Place Hotel/Conference Center is done, we will have those students on campus (thanks to the additional 560 beds we will have). With a total of 1,696 beds next year, in little more than 10 years, we will have nearly six times the number of students living on campus as we did in 2002. And, private developers along the campus borders have plans for even more growth. Soon, we will have a substantial 24/7 community on campus and nearby. IUPUI will be a very different place, and so will downtown Indianapolis.

Consider Portland State University, where 10 percent of its student population currently lives on campus or in the neighborhood. (IUPUI's plan has been to grow to 10%. PSU plans to grow to 25%.) PSU learned that lack of nearby housing was a barrier to recruiting students to an urban campus as well as to their academic success. Now they are finding that students benefit from living on or near campus, including raising their GPAs with longer hours' access to university resources. Studies of IUPUI and its peer institutions show that there is a positive correlation between campus housing and graduation rates. Moreover, it has been good for the city of Portland. More 24-hour residents downtown has meant more demand for shops, services, entertainment, and food establishments. We're seeing that same pattern here, with new retail and dining along Indiana Avenue. Housing has enabled us to attract more out-of-state and international students also.

As with any major change, there will be risks and opportunities. What are your thoughts?

- What will more students on campus and nearby bring to IUPUI?
- What will we need to do to better serve students living on campus and in the neighborhood?
- What should your unit be doing to accommodate more students on campus more of the time?
- Where can we partner with the city on traffic, parking, public transportation, walkability, bikability?

Comments? Write chancellor@iupui.edu or plan2025@iupui.edu. For additional information and resources on IUPUI's strategic planning, visit the web site at strategicplan.iupui.edu.