

**TO:** President Michael McRobbie  
**FROM:** IUPUI Research Affairs Committee  
**RE:** Final Report of the New Academic Directions Committee

The Research Affairs Committee (RAC) of the IUPUI Faculty Council joins you in your commitment to investing in excellence throughout Indiana University. We wholeheartedly agree that a critical analysis of the administrative and academic structures that contribute to the university's mission and faculty productivity is necessary to make strategic decisions for the future of our institution. We have reviewed the report and commend the intent to create a "more nimble organization" that will allow us to achieve the vision of IU as "one of the great research universities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century." Indeed, we recognize the need to address structure and policy in our academic mission, which is part of our committee's charter. However, we would like to address some of the recommendations of the New Academic Directions report. Below we outline some critical questions and issues regarding the implications for research on the IUPUI campus. Because our committee's goal is to **improve the environment for research at IUPUI**, it is our responsibility to share our concerns about the report with you.

### **Recommendation 1**

The RAC concurs that future resource allocation decisions must take into account multiple, sometimes competing, factors while ensuring that research remains a priority. As the IUPUI campus generates a significant amount of external research funding, it is critical that the university continue to invest in research infrastructure that serves the IUPUI campus and its research mission as the state's urban research university.

### **Recommendation 3**

The major points made under this recommendation center around realignment of academic units to facilitate educational programming. Nevertheless, there are several potential reforms that bear upon research at IUPUI.

The RAC acknowledges that barriers to research across disciplines, departments, schools, and campuses do exist. However, there is no evidence in the report that supports the claim that "individual faculty identify with a department or school, more than the university." This statement may reflect the perception held by members of the committee, but does not have a basis in the reality of our experience at IUPUI. The implications of this statement are that any questions raised or concerns voiced can be dismissed as self-serving and divisive. Such a response is antithetical to the university, which values diversity of opinion, and ultimately is detrimental to the process of investing in excellence.

#### **Recommendation 3 (a)**

A number of examples of how this recommendation could be achieved are given in the committee's report. Although not intended as policy changes, per se, several of these have troubling implications from our interpretation. These examples present interesting questions about current university practices; yet raise concerns that must be resolved. The RAC strongly urges the president to seek broad input from faculty on both campuses in determining the answers.

Tenure and Promotion Policies. Faculty peer review is the foundation of excellence at Indiana University. Maintaining the role of departments or schools in tenure and promotion is

required in order to preserve the integrity of the process. Diminishing the role of the departments and schools also has the potential to put faculty in jeopardy through lack of the strong support system within the departmental or school.

Centers and Institutes Policies. Since the time the New Academic Directions report was completed, a new university policy on research centers and institutes has been circulated. This policy was initially developed without sufficient faculty governance input. Our committee met with AVPR Jose to discuss the areas of the policy that were of concern and submitted proposed revisions to the policy. At this time, the final policy has not yet been released. We point to this situation not to ascribe blame to any party, but as an example of how the *lack of transparency and shared decision making can contribute to unnecessary delays in policy change*. We urge the president and administration to actively engage faculty through appropriate faculty governance structures and other means on all decisions that may have an impact on faculty research productivity.

### **Recommendation 3(b)**

The RAC believes opportunities for increasing faculty research can be achieved by (a) reducing unnecessary structural barriers fostered by current resource allocation models, (b) enhancing existing strengths and collaborations, and (c) fostering innovative partnerships. We believe this can be accomplished by creating an infrastructure that reduces administrative burden while maintaining local campus control and accountability. The concept of intermediary structures is appealing, insofar as they retain the distinctive research mission of each campus to ensure excellence and leverage existing strengths without imposing centralized control of resources. (NOTE: the document gives a good example of the unintended consequences of centralized control on page 38 in the discussion of Travel Management.)

Specific restructuring to achieve strategic enhancement are proposed. Those that bear on the research mission of IUPUI are discussed below.

Environmental Sciences. The report overlooks the role that the Center for Earth and Environmental Sciences in the Department of Earth Sciences at IUPUI can play in developing environmental science at Indiana University. The document speaks only of IUB and SPEA. The CEES at IUPUI had an innovative research and development partnership with Veolia Water Indianapolis that could serve as a model for community partnerships and alternative funding streams to support research. In addition, CEES has had partnerships (some still ongoing) with the Indianapolis Parks Foundation, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA), and at the national level USDA, NASA and the US Geological Survey, not to mention a very viable partnership with a water research center in Berlin, Germany. The CEES is mentioned in the context of academic programming for sustainability studies, but the potential contribution of the center in research is overlooked. The oversight is troubling as the RAC sees this as an example of the committee's failing to recognize and embrace the assets on the Indianapolis campus.

Health Sciences. The report presents no compelling rationale or logic to support the recommendation suggesting development of a health sciences campus administratively separate from the rest of IUPUI, especially the School of Science. An extensive list of arguably comparable institutions and their organizational structures is included in Appendix D without any context for the data presented. The report provides no analysis of the effectiveness of any of the schools identified in terms of research outcomes (nor any that pertain to clinical care or medical

education). Creating a new “campus” will add unnecessary new layers of administrative oversight and is inconsistent with the goal of streamlining processes for enhanced efficiency. A health science campus that excludes chemistry, computer science, biology, physics, mathematics, and biomedical engineering, to name a few, leaves a large intellectual and practical hole that cannot be filled solely by existing medical school resources. Furthermore, this proposed action raises an important question about the ramifications for the academic mission of the rest of the IUPUI campus. One fear is that those schools not central to the mission of health sciences would be "consolidated" with core schools or some like structure that would be located in Bloomington. In the current funding environment, the result is not likely to mean moving faculty from "non-central" schools to Bloomington, but is more likely to mean that these schools would be starved of funds to the point that they could be closed as ineffective.

The RAC believes the consequence of implementing this recommendation would be enormously detrimental to research at IUPUI. Clearly, a major strength of the IUPUI campus is its health sciences research, yet a number of non-health IUPUI schools (e.g., Science, Engineering and Technology, Informatics, SPEA, and Liberal Arts) are engaged in research that is critical to IU’s pursuit of excellence in research and creativity. For example, the School of Engineering and Technology provides strategic research for local industry in the Indianapolis area. Substantial research funding comes from local industry such as Rolls Royce, Delphi, and Allison Transmissions, among many others. An initiative to focus the research mission of the Indianapolis campus on the health sciences neglects the current and future contributions of the non-health-sciences schools and disregards IUPUI’s mission of civic engagement and commitment to translational research. We strongly urge the president to convene a group of all stakeholders, including faculty from all schools at IUPUI, to conduct an extensive study of the implications of this decision - much like the process surrounding communication studies on the Bloomington campus (Appendix B). Furthermore, this group should apply the criteria previously articulated under Recommendation 1 and the principle that any structural change should not weaken or harm another school (see discussion of #8 School of Philanthropy in this report) to any decision that is made. An alternative is to simply designate the Indianapolis campus as the Health and Life Science campus, a role it currently plays.

An example of how the Health Science campus could have detrimental effects is the case of regenerative biology and medicine at IUPUI. This field is being developed in one form or another in several universities and is growing fast. It is not synonymous with biomedical engineering, though it overlaps to a certain degree. It is driven more by the basic biological sciences: cell and molecular biology, chemistry (particularly polymer chemistry and the chemistry of small molecules), and bioinformatics – all with a strong presence *outside* of the School of Medicine or other health science schools. IU has all the components to expand its current research portfolio and academic programs in this area, and develop a technology transfer base around it. The impact of separating the health sciences from the rest of IUPUI may, in fact, hinder the advancement of the promising area of research.

#### **Recommendation 4**

This recommendation focuses on achieving efficiency in academic programming on the IUPUI and Bloomington campuses, rather than research productivity. However, the suggestion that combining the School of Liberal Arts and the School of Science at IUPUI would achieve enhanced administrative efficiency (primarily through coordinating the large undergraduate education mission of the two schools) has implications for research. There are no apparent gains to the research enterprise that can be had from such a re-organization. More to the point, the merger concept is unworkable because it would create an IU/Purdue chimera within a

chimera. The merged unit would be a nightmare to administer, given the differing policies of IU and Purdue that extend from top to bottom in education and research. The dean would be dealing with two sets of university administrators with an outcome that would prevent the unit from developing any potential it might have. Furthermore, regardless of what decision is reached about the College of Arts and Sciences on the Bloomington campus, the trend nationally in research universities has been to separate these colleges into Colleges of Science and Humanities. The primary reason for this is that once beyond a certain size, units become unwieldy and too many competing interests make it difficult to respond to challenges or opportunities in a nimble and flexible way. Again, we urge the president to commence a broad-based study of any merger that balances any potential gains in efficiency through reduced administrative costs for undergraduate education with the need to maintain and enhance research and external funding, which is key to IU's mission. Furthermore, it is essential that any discussions that address the status of any Purdue School should include the Faculty Senates of the schools in question.

### **Recommendation 5**

Inefficient and counterproductive rules and policies need to be changed so that the university supports and encourages the development of new research centers and initiatives and provides efficient support for contracts and grants. The RAC applauds the commitment to improve the service-orientation of administrative units, removing unnecessary policies and streamlining procedures as embodied in the document. Furthermore, the RAC believes that such actions are important to preserve the autonomy of the IUPUI campus with its distinctive research mission and to support the work of the IUPUI faculty in pursuit of that goal.

### **Conclusion**

As outlined above, the recommendations in the New Academic Directions report have several serious negative implications for research on the IUPUI campus. One likely explanation is the fact that important constituents of the campus were not represented on the New Academic Directions committee. There are 21 committee members: 66% were from Bloomington, 33% from Indianapolis. Of the Indianapolis members, 63% were from the School of Medicine. Notably, five faculty members from Bloomington Arts and Science were represented, but only one from IUPUI was included. Even more notably, there was no representation from the Indianapolis Schools of Science or Engineering and Technology, as if these schools do not exist, although one could make a case that Science was represented by a committee member who was transitioning from Medicine to Science. In short, the committee was dominated by IUB (and to a lesser extent, Medicine), as so often transpires when matters germane to both campuses are under discussion. One factor in the recommendations and decisions promulgated in this report was to "leverage existing IU resources." The lack of a sufficiently representative committee has serious implications for our campus, if the committee is unaware of just how strong and diverse those resources are on our campus.

In summary, while much of our response appears strongly critical of the overall proposal, it is because we are passionate about the future of IU, as dedicated members of this community. We cannot emphasize enough the need for that future to include all schools at IUPUI. We are encouraged by the commitment of the president to creating a stronger university. We look forward to working with the administration to build new academic structures that reduce barriers to research, develop policies to support rather than burden faculty engaged in research, and create an environment that will continue to retain and attract the most talented faculty to our great university.