

MEMORANDUM

**Questions for Chancellor Ron Elsenbaumer  
Faculty Senate  
Purdue University Fort Wayne  
September 2024**

**SENATE REFERENCE NO. 24-6**

*Question*

On February 13, 2023, I asked a question about the university's plans to address the growing need for electric vehicle (EV) charging stations on campus, especially considering the frequent use of power sockets in parking garages for charging EVs (Senate Reference # 22-19). In response, Chancellor Elsenbaumer stated that the university was planning a pilot project to install a dual charging station at the Kettler dock by July 1, 2023, with plans to install similar dual stations in each of the three parking garages. Could the administration please provide an update on the status of the university's plans to install EV charging stations on campus?

*(J. Mbuba)*

*Response from Chancellor Elsenbaumer:*

The university earlier communicated the possibility of installing EV stations at several locations on campus when the City of Fort Wayne installed a large number of stations. Our plan was to participate in that program — with little to no cost to the university. However, we discovered that the contract included a clause related to land ownership for the charging stations at their locations on campus. The Purdue University legal team rejected such ownership, and as a result, the option for participating in the city's charging station program was not pursued further.

When the university looked into the cost of installation of these units, it became clear that it was cost prohibitive for the university to do this on its own because of the extraordinary cost of the charging station unit and running the 240V power needed out to the locations.

Should another partnering opportunity arise for a low to no-cost option for installation of these units on campus, then we will certainly revisit this opportunity again. Likewise, the federal government recently announced a possible plan for reimbursements for the cost of installation of electric car charging units. Should this become a reality, then we can again explore this (no-cost or low-cost) option for campus.

**SENATE REFERENCE NO. 24-7**

*Question*

Has the Office of Academic Affairs or its designee changed its guidelines for review of academic programs and begun instructing external reviewers it engages to evaluate solely undergraduate degree majors and not graduate degrees, minors, certificates, or other academic programs housed within the department undergoing review?

(S. Carr)

*Response from Chancellor Elsenbaumer:*

No. A program review entails a review of a specific academic program and is not a departmental review.

At times it is reasonable to include subsidiary credentials, such as certificates and affiliated minors, in the program review of a baccalaureate degree program. However, multiple independent degree programs that reside administratively within an academic department, such as an undergraduate and graduate program, should be subject to independent review.

As a result of this question, and the conversations that have occurred in drafting this response, it has become clear that a comprehensive review of all graduate offerings at Purdue Fort Wayne is in order. As such, in collaboration with the Director of Graduate Studies and the graduate program directors, such a review will be undertaken this academic year. The goals of this process will include: review of the quality and efficiency of curriculum delivery, currency of curricular content, alignment of program offerings with regional needs, potential opportunities for new program creation to meet those needs, and an analysis of the viability of current offerings.

**SENATE REFERENCE NO. 24-8**

*Question*

On August 23, 2024, a letter (see appendix) was emailed to some (although not all) PFW employees whose children attend the daycare center supported by the university, The Learning Community (hereafter, TLC). In this message, the VCFAA, Glen Nakata, announced that PFW would cease its support for TLC once the 2024-25 academic year had concluded and evict TLC from a PFW Foundation-owned building. While there will be time to interrogate the wisdom of this decision and its broader consequences, the letter itself raises several pressing questions that require immediate attention.

1] Were the individuals who made this decision aware that:

- a) IPFW and TLC initially entered their arrangement in order to replace child-care services that were once provided in an on-campus facility?
- b) these child-care services were intended to support (I)PFW students, faculty and staff rather than act as a "revenue generator" for the university?
- c) TLC's administration is aware of the unique scheduling challenges faced by academic workers and students and therefore provides scheduling flexibility and benefits to them that would likely not be available in other child-care facilities?
- d) as part of its relationship with PFW, its students, faculty and staff are eligible for discounts on care that would not be available at other area facilities?
- e) child-care places are at a premium in the Fort Wayne area (for instance, the current wait list at TLC is more than seventy families long)?
- f) TLC spent thousands of dollars in the past year renovating their spaces dedicated to infant care, thereby expanding the number of infant-care places that are currently in the shortest supply regionally?
- g) TLC has been a Paths of Quality Level 4-rated child-care facility for at least the past five years, the highest ranking available in the state of Indiana?
- h) TLC prides itself on being an educational institution and is thus accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)?
- i) many (I)PFW students in the Early Childhood Education program have utilized TLC as the site for their practicum studies?
- j) despite the support provided by PFW, TLC has had to raise its tuition rates significantly in the last year due to the disappearance of COVID pandemic-related federal child-care subsidies?

2] How does the decision to end PFW's relationship with TLC and thus make it even more difficult for PFW employees and students to find affordable child-care options square with the Purdue system's attempts to ease the financial burden of child-care as evidenced by the Purdue Child Care Tuition Assistance Program?

3] How does PFW's decision to end its support for employee child-care benefits dovetail with the university's attempts to "Enhance Quality of Place" as an employer, an important goal of PFW's 2020-2025 strategic plan?

***Response from Chancellor Elsenbaumer:***

There is a full understanding of how the availability of childcare impacts quality of place at Purdue Fort Wayne. Unfortunately, of the 60-plus families using the TLC center, only 11 represent PFW employees. No PFW students are currently utilizing this facility (as we were told). PFW and the PFW Foundation derive no revenue from TLC for the operation of this facility. With such a small percentage of PFW employees (0.8%) and students (0%) using the TLC facility, and no revenue being derived from it by PFW or the Foundation, should the university be heavily subsidizing this facility and assuming such a large legal liability for its operation when, in fact, it is largely being utilized by the general public? Perhaps this is the type of question and situation that would be appropriate for the faculty senate University Resources Advisory Committee to debate.

Nonetheless, the administration continues to work diligently with TLC leadership, and other childcare entities throughout the Fort Wayne area, to facilitate a transition of the current facility to a suitable childcare organization so that faculty, staff, and (future?) students with children will have smooth continuity of childcare service. It is further desired and intended that such a transition would also continue to serve as a practicum location/site for the School of Education student placements without placing the financial burden of building maintenance and liability on the university or the PFW Foundation.

At the moment, this is a fluid situation and multiple encouraging discussions are underway. As we learn more, we intend to keep impacted parties informed.

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