

On Thursday of last week the Chancellor and I met with President Daniels and the Purdue Trustees to discuss the status of negotiations regarding proposed changes to the current management agreement for IPFW as outlined by the LSA recommendations as well as the status of the review of academic programs and the academic administration of those programs at IPFW as defined by USAP recommendations 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3. While it is correct that USAP is an internal resource alignment process that preceded the external LSA process by more than a year, I came to learn on Thursday – in ways I had failed to recognize or appreciate previously – that in the minds of the Trustees these two processes are inexorably linked.

In order for IPFW to fully and appropriately respond to the expectations of the Trustees, I believe it is important that I share with you my understanding of why the Trustees consider USAP 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 an essential component of the management negotiations.

First, and not insignificantly, the Trustees have embedded the framework of their expectations in item #4 of the current management agreement extension executed on June 14 of this year. Item 4 reads:

“Both Parties [the Trustees of Purdue and IU] encourage IPFW to, and expect that it shall, continue the University Strategic Alignment Process that it has begun, and that the IPFW campus will expeditiously and rigorously examine its internal structure, as well as other items (especially involving the reduction of costs) described in the USAP Report.”

While there are many recommendations within the USAP report that deal with internal structure and costs, the Trustees are particularly focused – at this time – on the academic structure and costs at IPFW. After Thursday’s meeting I now understand why.

As we know, the LSA recommendation for a change in management structure for IPFW calls for the transference of all aspects of management of three departments to Indiana University and all the other IU academic programs to be transferred to Purdue University. As a result of both the LSA and USAP processes, the Trustees are very aware of the financial and operational strengths and weaknesses of all the academic programs and departments at IPFW. As such, they are very well aware that the Purdue Nursing Program at IPFW is both very strong and rapidly growing at the undergraduate and masters levels. They also know that the IU programs of Dental Education and Medical Imaging, while smaller, are both strong and trending in a positive direction. It is not lost on the Trustees that IPFW’s 30% decline in enrollment since 2011 would be significantly larger if it were not for the growth in these health sciences programs over the same time.

The Trustees have ultimate fiduciary responsibility for the Purdue University System. Appropriately, they take those responsibilities very seriously. The LSA recommendation calls for them to pass financial and administrative control of the three health sciences programs to Indiana University in exchange for gaining academic control of the rest of the IU programs at IPFW.

The Trustees feel obligated to ascertain if agreeing to such an exchange is in the best interests of the Purdue University System. I believe from their point of view, the LSA recommendation is an exchange of assets agreement. As I noted previously, the LSA and USAP reviews have provided the Trustees with operational-level knowledge of IPFW's academic programs in unprecedented detail. They have grave concern about the organizational efficiency and long-term viability of IPFW if it were to be stripped of the three health sciences programs.

While we can speculate as to the origins of political and economic pressure that has been and continues to be applied to the Trustees in order to encourage them to reach an agreement with IU along the lines of the LSA recommendations – our doing so does not change the operational realities here at IPFW.

The Trustees have directly ordered me to complete USAP recommendations 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3. They expect as many changes as possible will be completed by January 1, 2017 with the vast majority of other changes completed by July 1, 2017. They are not interested in a phased, multi-year approach, further study, or analysis. Importantly, while they are armed with detailed knowledge of IPFW's academic enterprise, they did not make reference to any individual program or department during our meeting.

Therefore, tomorrow I will issue a revision or addendum to the document I distributed in September. This document will identify additional programmatic contractions as well as additional organizational changes. While I will continue to solicit feedback, input, and alternative suggestions through the November 15th date previously identified, any alternative suggestions must meet or exceed the reductions described in tomorrow's document in order to be given consideration.

There are four critical aspects of this process:

First, personnel. The Chancellor and I have received, in writing, conformation from the Provost and the General Counsel's Office of the tenure and rank status of all faculty impacted by these changes, the transference of programs between universities, and any subsequent academic reorganization that will be required after a new management structure is finalized. Because of the ongoing ERIP process, it is essential to inform all employees, faculty, clerical, and support staff, of the changes that will be made in order that they may make the most informed decision about their participation.

Second, tenured faculty in academic departments that will be eliminated must find a new tenure home and establish a new supervisory relationship within that new department. For any department that is closed or merged, the current P&T criteria will remain in place for no longer than 6 years. After that time any transferred faculty will be subject to the revised criteria of their new department. Faculty who are transferred from closed programs will be expected to focus their efforts on high enrolling survey classes and other upper division courses in their area of specialization that are anticipated to be strongly enrolled. The deans and department chairs of affected departments will begin working on the process of transfer immediately.

Third, the academic deans will work with department chairs and faculty to establish a procedure for the successful completion of currently enrolled students in academic programs that are closing. For each program a credit hour and temporal threshold must be established that defines which students will be allowed to complete their current program of study. Likewise, the deans, department chairs, and faculty must work out a detailed schedule of course offerings that will allow those students to complete their courses within the minimum possible period of time. I will strongly encourage the use of summer to accelerate student progress.

Finally, I will instruct the registrar tomorrow to suspend admissions to the affected academic programs. If, as a result of input and alternatives put forward by November 15, a change is to be made to that list, I will reopen programs for admission of new students after December 1.

It falls to me to complete this task. It is the will of the Trustees that it be completed as quickly as possible in light of the timeline of management negotiations with IU. Importantly, the decisions about which programs and department to eliminate, to combine, and to maintain are local. The Trustees are fully cognizant of how difficult this will be. I do not believe they have taken this action lightly. Finally, we would be called to make changes even if there was no LSA recommendation for a change in management. The tempo and magnitude of expected changes might alter, but there is no question we would be required to make changes in response to the enrollment decline.

The task before us is difficult. It will affect many of us and our colleagues deeply – myself included. I cannot ask you to like the changes that will be made. I only ask that you recognize that my decisions are neither capricious nor easily arrived at. I feel deeply the pain of these changes – and I am sure I always will.

That being said, when the process is complete, opportunities will exist for investment in current and new academic programs and I look forward to, and am excited by those opportunities.