

Question Time

IPFW has rightly touted its metropolitan campus status. This status fits IPFW's long-term argument that we provide a comprehensive set of programs from Indiana University and Purdue University that provide the people of this region with an excellent education.

The chancellor's extensive list of academic achievements at the Convocation are only highlights of numerous classroom, research/creative endeavor, and service success of our faculty. IPFW faculty are doing tremendously in meeting the primary responsibility of a university: to educate, produce knowledge, and engage the community. In fact, on page one of USAP's First Year Report, none of the seven global themes critiques or makes any suggestion about education in the classroom or faculty scholarship, which is good news since this is what the university is here to do first and foremost. The seven global themes actually highlight administrative improvements that are desperately needed.

During the Convocation, the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs discussed the development of signature programs or signature clusters. It is hard to see how this fits directly with any of the global themes, especially since enrollment management is just beginning to be addressed and details or plans on the other six global themes identified by USAP have not been shared or developed. One USAP theme is clearly being met: alignment with regional needs. Our metropolitan status change means that we can and should continue to provide the region with a comprehensive set of Indiana and Purdue degrees and programs as we already do well.

Given this, could the chancellor and Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs provide more information on the signature programs or signature clusters that were discussed at the IPFW Convocation on August 24, 2015?

Won't this branding effort potentially be at odds with IPFW's long-standing mission to be a comprehensive regional-now metropolitan-university?

Specifically:

- If we move to designate some programs as "signature" programs, doesn't this imply that some programs are lesser programs?
- Won't we be injuring some of our own programs by our own branding?
- What metrics are we using to decide what is signature and what isn't?
- Have other universities done this?
- Has there been thought of a pilot program?

More importantly concerning our strategic planning and USAP's themes, why would we rebrand academic units when the primary responsibilities of faculty are being successfully met? Why not address the seven global themes-administrative in nature-first before disrupting the academic mission of the university and creating departmental winners and losers?

Michael Wolf  
Department of Political Science