

Emergency Faculty Senate Meeting

16 February 2024

Senators present: Susan Ely, Peter Whiting, Kyle Mara, Ashley Carter, Jessica Mason, Erin Reynolds, Nick Rhew, Rob Dickes, Shannon Pritchard, Jiaying Liu, Nancy Kovanic, Todd Schroer, Shane White, Sri Dandotkar (Alternate for Brandon Field), Guoyuan Huang



Held over Zoom

- Called to order: 2:30 pm
- Senate Chair Emergency Meeting:
 - Kyle Mara reviewed the process of meeting with President Rochon, Aaron Trump and Shelly Blunt over the past week regarding Indiana Senate Bill 202. The bill impacts all Indiana public higher education institutions and has implications for the appointment of the Board of Trustees of each institution and for the tenure process. Most notable is the proposed Board of Trustees role in a 5-year review for tenured individuals.
 - The President's statement is not yet available for review, although it has been stated that he will be making a public statement on the University's behalf.
 - Kyle had prepared a draft statement for the Senate to discuss and revise, that way the Senate can release a statement on behalf of USI faculty.
 - Kyle shared the statement he worked on with several faculty (past senate chairs) for discussion.
 - Discussion was held by the group.
 - A motion was made to accept the statement as revised by the senators. It was seconded and passed unanimously.
 - Kyle will be sharing this statement at his meeting with the President and legal counsel on Monday, February 19, 2024. It is the faculty senate's intention that the senate statement would be released in conjunction with President Rochon's statement.
- Meeting adjourned with no additional business to consider: 3:18 pm



The Faculty Senate of the University of Southern Indiana values freedom of inquiry, exploration, debate, and critical thinking in the production and dissemination of knowledge. These principles are the bedrocks of education, fostering effective learning environments that encourage open and honest dialogues both in and outside the classroom. If enacted, Senate Bill 202 will unnecessarily limit the academic freedom of faculty to develop the curriculum and resources needed to prepare students for success in our diverse and global society. Furthermore, this bill will make recruiting and retaining qualified faculty and students more difficult, exacerbating the shortage of qualified educators and the enrollment challenges facing higher education institutions in Indiana. Finally, Senate Bill 202 adds another layer of administrative review to the tenure process and cedes oversight to the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, eroding a cornerstone of higher education and contributing to bureaucratic bloat and expense. The Faculty Senate continues to support faculty in promoting USI's mission of providing students with a world class education and creating lifetime learners.