

Bloomington Faculty Council, Student Academic Appointee Affairs Committee Meeting

October 24, 2023

2:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Sassafras Room, IMU

Present: Carolyn Calloway-Thomas, David Daleke, Allen Davis, Amanda Diekman, Jodi Kutzner, Jon Macy, Joshua Paschal, Sara Stefani, David Taylor

Regrets: Elijah Beaton, Michael Courtney, Deborah Snaddon

- The meeting was called to order by Carolyn Calloway-Thomas at 2:00 pm.
- The committee began with a welcome from the Carolyn Calloway-Thomas, and then each member of the committee present introduced themselves.
- Updates from David Daleke, Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Health Sciences and Dean, IU Graduate School
 - David Daleke gave a summary of the administration's activities over the past couple of years as related to graduate education, as well as laid out some of the current programs and initiatives. These updates included the following points:
 - Over the past couple of years, the administration has been putting together the IUB 2030 Strategic Plan. The Task Force on the Future of Graduate Education was also convened. The Task Force's mission was to identify major issues related to graduate education going forward, both immediate issues and long-term.
 - The task force comprised 6 committees; 170 people participated in the task force. In the fall of 2023, the task force merged with the Strategic Plan as part of its graduate education pillar.
 - Many of the task force's recommendations were carried into the Strategic Plan, but some were not. The task force's report was pared down to what can currently be seen on its website. In the Strategic Plan, the Graduate Student Success Pillar was merged with undergraduate student success. There is currently no separate section for graduate students in the Strategic Plan. However, we need to make sure that none of the recommendations from the task force are left behind or remain unaddressed.
 - Additionally, the Graduate School was reorganized. Rather than having a university-wide Graduate School, it is now campus-based. In this respect, its structure is more like other institutions.
 - For a while, James Wimbush served as both the Dean of the Graduate School and the Vice Provost for Diversity, Equity and Multicultural Affairs, but in 2022 he stepped down as the Dean and moved fully to the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

- There was a search to find a replacement for Wimbush as the Dean of the Graduate School. On May 1, 2022, Daleke was appointed the new campus dean for IUB. At first, the change in structure for the Graduate School didn't mean a change in operations. The Graduate School was – and still is – tasked with tracking academically the two graduate degrees that IUB confers, the research-based MA and the PhD.
- Three main areas of activities and initiatives have emerged for the Graduate School: 1) Excellence in academics; 2) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives to attract and retain a diverse population of students; and 3) Career and professional development, an area that emerged from feedback that was received on the Strategic Plan. The Graduate School is implementing several initiatives related to these areas.
- In the first area, excellence in academics, the Graduate School has some funding available for students. There have also been other conversations with leadership and administration about financial resources and the institution. As she has stated, President Whitten is emphasizing the need for scholars to apply for grants in order to bring in funding to the university. There have been discussions about demographics and the fact that over the next several years, the general population will begin to decrease and taper off. This means that there will also likely be an accompanying decrease in the number of undergraduate students entering college, and therefore a decrease in the amount of tuition money paid. At the same time, expenses for the university will continue to rise. The current predictions are still unclear as to which areas will be hit the hardest by this decrease in student population (i.e., public versus private schools, the Midwest versus the coasts, etc.).
- One possible solution to increase enrollments at IU, and therefore tuition, is an increase in MA programs. There are several ways to do that: first, the creation of high-volume MA programs that are either all online or are hybrid programs, in that they contain both an online component and an in-person, on-campus component. Second, building more MA programs, and more programs are starting to be developed. There are currently 24 programs, and 27 more are in the pipeline. Third, get students who are enrolled as undergraduates to pick up a master's degree as well through accelerated MA programs or what are known as "plus" programs (i.e., 3 years + 2 years for BA + MA). Daleke is in favor of these kinds of combination Bachelors and master's programs that are tuned in to a very unique career. They set up training for students to be ready for a career. The Graduate School is working on this with the Vice Provost for Enrollment.
- In the area of professional development, the Graduate School is working with the AAU and the PhD Education Initiative to track career paths of PhDs graduates. The goal is to find out what current graduate students think they need for their further career. The Graduate School already has a 20-year snapshot of their PhD graduates: 60% land academic jobs, but in various positions – some are faculty, some are in administrative positions, etc. The

other 40% get jobs in other sectors, including NGOs, the government sector, private sector, etc. There have been recommendations from the AAU about informing students about alternative career paths.

- Through the reorganization and task force activities, it also became apparent that there is a need for improved career coaching and career preparation. The Graduate School had been working on that need with the Walter Center, but the need was too high, and the center was overwhelmed. An Assistant Dean for Student Development was hired and Brandi Smith who does career coaching at the Graduate Career Center. These hires have doubled the amount of career coaching on campus, but the Graduate School needs to build on that more. The Graduate School needs to shift its focus from just PhD to MA students. About 1/2 of students are in MA programs. Daleke has created a student advisory board, which consists of about 12 student leaders from different graduate student groups. They meet for lunch about once a month, and the recurring topic of conversation is career development.
 - The mentoring center is also reimagining itself and establishing formal programs with other units on campus. It has emerged that there is a need for an ombudsperson for graduate students. This position needs to be independent from other university units, and although it will be affiliated with the mentoring center, it does not report to them. The position will focus on listening to students and recommending services and people. One fact of the position will be to listen to students who are having issues with their mentors.
 - Another issue that has come up for many students is the increase in housing costs in Bloomington. The cost of housing is an issue across the Big 10, and Daleke is meeting with other officials from Big 10 schools about it.
 - These remarks concluded Daleke's updates to the committee, although he stated that there are several other issues that need to be addressed as well, but he would limit his remarks for this first meeting.
- Discussion and brainstorming on issues and concerns.
 - BFC SAA Affairs Committee was given an information sheet that, among other things, contained three assignments for the 2023-2024 committee. Calloway-Thomas stated that the first of these, "Establish collaborative working relationships with campus level administrators, especially the Dean of the Graduate School," has already been achieved, as evidenced by the Dean of the Graduate School's (Daleke's) membership on this committee. Calloway-Thomas then suggested we move on to a discussion of Daleke's updates and brainstorming on any issues or concerns that came up during the updates.
 - Joshua Paschal stated that a lot of points in the IUB Strategic Plan are good, but the average SAA is frustrated with the Strategic Plan. Almost nothing is said in it about the cost of living in Bloomington, there are just statements about the need for the university to get more tuition money. In general, graduate students and their particular needs and concerns are almost completely absent from the Strategic Plan.
 - Paschal also brought up the higher administration's attitude to the graduate students' desire to organize and form a union. Even after the discussions held last year, the higher administration and Board of Trustees has indicated that, in essence, they do not

consider themselves beholden to recognize any sort of graduate student union or its demands. But as Paschal pointed out, there is a card drive going on now, and they have already had over 1,000 cards signed by graduate workers. Paschal said that several prospective graduate students who visit campus ask about whether IU grad students are unionized, and the lack of one seems to be a concern to them. In the long run, a lack of graduate student unionization will possibly affect IU's competitiveness in attracting new graduate students.

- Jodi Kutzner echoed Paschal's comments and the support for a graduate student union. In relation to President Whitten's emphasis on turning the tide more towards research, a lot of graduate students can't afford to live in Bloomington, and so they want to get their degree and leave as soon as possible. There is a desire from administration to do research and receive grants, but they don't have the time or the money to focus on that. If the university wants students to do research and apply for grants, then they need to give students the time and money to be able to do that, especially PhD students who are teaching and also trying to complete their dissertations. There is a lot of pressure to apply for grants, but they just don't have the time to do that.
- Daleke stated that this committee is the right group to work on these particular problems and to follow up on some of the task force's recommendations that were taken out of the Strategic Plan. There has been a charge to gather data on student stipends.
- Calloway-Thomas stated that access to good, affordable housing is a real need. Calloway-Thomas also reflected back on what Paschal and Kutzner had said, that there is a concern among graduate students that the university won't maintain their promises. A union could function as a safeguard to make sure the university follows through on its commitments.
- Paschal also stated that, regardless of a union, SAAs are frustrated with the stipend. There are also inequities among departments – for example, in terms of the amount of travel funds offered, etc. As long as the stipends lag behind, especially in relation to the cost of living in Bloomington, IU's competitiveness will be affected.
- Sara Stefani addressed Daleke's comments about the administration's view that increasing the number of MA programs is a solution to increasing tuition money. Stefani pointed out that students enrolled in the professional degree programs are also paid low wages and that this issue was discussed recently at an IU Libraries meeting. Students studying to get their MLS degree and work in a library must have work experience in a library environment, but the salary for library jobs is \$11.15, which many students find insufficient for living costs. The low wages and stipends in general are also a problem for diversity, equity, and inclusion because international students who come to IU on J-1 visas are required to work on campus if they need to work. Federal regulations prohibit them from working anywhere but on campus if they need to work, and so they also feel the impact when wages and stipends are low and have no other option.
- Jon Macy asked whether the task force recommendations that were taken out exist anywhere. Daleke confirmed that the task force's report exists, and Calloway-Thomas asked him to forward a copy of that report to the committee members.

- Allen Davis has talked to many SAAs in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, and they have voiced the same concerns as Paschal and Kutzner. Allen affirmed support for SAAs and the desire to assist them.
- Calloway-Thomas mentioned the concept of “Responsibility-centered management.”
- Daleke said that every five to seven years, the university reevaluates its budget. With responsibility- centered management, the budget is in the hands of different centers. But other models are available. The question of whether to adopt another model will be an issue for the BFC. Will they continue with responsibility- centered management or leave it?
- The committee planned for the next meeting and a schedule for the rest of the semester. There will be meetings on November 7 and November 28, and the time for both meetings was set for 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm. For the November 7 meeting, Calloway-Thomas asked the committee members to consider point 2 of the committee’s assignments: “Continue to advance priorities for improving the experience of SAAs laid out by the Task Force on Graduate Education, as well as those identified in the IUB 2030 strategic plan.” Daleke will send the committee members the task force’s report, and committee members should please be ready to brainstorm about any issues and concerns about point 2. Calloway-Thomas also asked Paschal to confirm that approximately 1000 or more graduate students favor a union and asked Paschal to get the pulse of the students and any recommendations they have.
- The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:05 pm.