PURDUE UNIVERSITY® | University Senate

To:	The University Senate
From:	Educational Policy Committee
	University Resources Policy Committee
Subject:	On the need for a policy to define and declare an academic emergency
Reference:	1. [Integrated Emergency Management Plan](#) 2021
	2. ["Communicable Disease Emergencies and Pandemics", policy IV.A.8.](#)
	3. [Example of statement of "Academic Continuity and Emergency Grades"](#), University of Oregon
	4. ["Special Report: COVID-19 and Academic Governance,"](#) American Association of University Professors
	5. ["Report of an AAUP Special Committee: Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans Universities"](#), American Association of University Professors
	6. ["Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities,"](#) American Association of University Professors
	7. [System-Wide Policy Development Process](#)

*See also [Document 21-22 as presented in February 2022](#)

Disposition:	University Senate for Discussion and Adoption
Rationale: (revised for 21 March 2022)	Purdue University has established an Integrated Emergency Management Plan to handle changes to the operation of campus facilities if necessitated by emergencies initiated by "natural and human caused disaster" [1, p.3]. The plan is led by the Emergency Preparedness and Planning Office. This plan is reassessed annually for any necessary changes, and has a well-defined statement of responsibilities and coverage.
	Purdue University currently does not have an analogous system-wide documented plan for handling changes to academic processes and regulations during emergency conditions.
	Purdue does have a recently-adopted system-wide Policy IV.A.8 [2], "Communicable Disease Emergencies and Pandemics," where

responsibility for various campus processes are delegated from the Board to different administrative offices. In this policy, the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Diversity is delegated the authority to:

> *[…i]n consultation with other University Officers and academic leadership, establish a decision-making framework and implement actions aimed at reducing risk for operations (including temporary suspension as necessary) of the instruction and learning mission, including undergraduate and graduate student services and support, university housing and dining, faculty affairs, and student activities.*

It also delegates to the chancellors of the regional campuses:
> *[…i]n consultation with other University Officers and university-designated subject matter advisors, establish a decision-making framework and implement actions aimed at reducing risk for operations of their Regional Campus (including temporary suspension as necessary) as it pertains to undergraduate and graduate programs, campus housing and dining services, faculty affairs, the research and discovery mission, and student activities.*

However, this delegation of authority does not articulate any commitment to or recognition of responsibilities for shared governance processes, particularly in matters normally delegated to the faculty through its representative body, nor articulate any expectations for public discussion or dissemination of decision-making frameworks so developed.

It also does not articulate clear conditions or criteria that would cause the university to consider ending the public health emergency conditions and signal its return to more normal forms of shared governance.

Other universities have policies that govern the definition and management of "academic emergencies" that govern academic changes necessitated by events that disrupt academic activity campus-wide (for example, [2]).

Changes to Purdue's academic operations necessitated by COVID demonstrated the need for an academic emergency plan to be developed. Such a plan would serve Purdue University outside of the crisis conditions that COVID wrought. The plan would build on the recent lessons learned from trying to manage academic operations in a time of crisis.

Specific needs identified from the 2020-2022 period include:

1. Transparency in decision making and preservation of shared governance principles.
2. Clarity on how administrative academic decisions made on the West Lafayette campus, would relate to those at regional campuses, which in 2020-22 only variably engaged appropriate and expected processes of shared governance for making changes during the crisis conditions of COVID.
3. Definitions on change processes made by or for Purdue Global, and definition of involvement their senate or faculty leadership.

Despite many people's best efforts across the Purdue system during an unprecedented system-wide (and beyond) emergency, administrative decisions made governing academic structure during COVID were not as transparent as they needed to be, with no clear indication of the length of time a suspension of academic norms of shared governance would be in effect. This feature of academic change during COVID is not unique to Purdue [3].

This informal suspension of norms around shared governance occurred despite the assessment of the American Association of University Professors that "however cumbersome faculty consultation may at times be, the importance and value of such participation become even greater in exigent times than in more tranquil times" [p. 119, 4].

Proposal: (revised for 21 March 2022)

The University Senate requests a systemwide policy be developed for declaring an academic emergency, in anticipation of possible future events, that coordinates appropriately with Policy IV.A.8. The policy should recognize local conditions relevant to Purdue system campuses, and the autonomy of each campus in process of shared governance, among other particularities.

The policy should include a listing of any committee of decision makers, inclusive of University Senate involvement, and should establish principles inclusive of shared governance and be resonant with authoritative norms of shared governance [5], and establish a process for decisionmakers to declare and later remove an academic emergency to the representative faculty body and the broader campus (or system-wide) community.

The policy should define the individual or group of individuals who can declare an academic emergency on a particular campus, in consultation with a defined group of other administrative and representative members. Specifically, at the Purdue-West Lafayette

campus, even if the process determines that the Board of Trustees is the appropriate final body to declare an academic emergency, a decision-making body en route to that final authoritative body should include at a minimum the chair of the University Senate, and the chairs of MaPSAC and CSSAC.

The policy should include a process for academic changes conducted during the academic emergency to sunset out unless the declaration of academic emergency is renewed.

The University Senate requests that the policy developed through the Policy and Standard Development and Approval Process [6] be ratified by the University Senate, and at the faculty governing bodies at the regional campuses, before the Executive Policy Review Group considers approving the policy.

Educational Policy Committee Votes:

For:	Against:	Abstained:	Absent:
Faculty	N/A	**Advisors**	**Faculty**
Thomas Siegmund		Jenna Rickus	Todor Cooklev
Thomas Brush			Erik Otárola-Castillo
Jennifer Freeman			Li Qiao
Eric Kvam			
Alice Pawley			**Students**
Vanessa Quinn			Elli DiDonna
Libby Richards			
Antonio Sá Baretto			
John Sheffield			
			Ex-Offcio Present, but non-voting members:
Students			
Janelle Grant			Jaclyn
Olivia Wyrick			Palm (present)
			John Pearson (not present)
Advisors			
Jeff Elliot			
Keith Gehres			
Jeff Stefancic			

University Resources Policy Committee Votes:

For:	Against:	Abstained:	Absent:
Faculty	**Faculty**		Austin B. Berenda
Eugene Chan	John McConnell		Sophie Braun
Victor Chen			Laura Claxton
Lori Hoagland			Michael B. Cline
Cara Kinnally			Alan M. Friedman
Janice Kritchevsky			James Greenan
Douglas LaCount			Carl Krieger
Lin Nan			Scott Lawrance
Tony Vyn			Daniel J. Olson
Ann Weil			Juan P. Sesmero
			Neha Shakelly
			Yuan Yao