Everything you always wanted to know about the Purdue University Senate*

*BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

What is the Purdue University Senate?

“The University Senate is the governing body of the faculty.”

The voting members of the Purdue University Senate include representatives from the faculty of the West Lafayette and regional campuses as well as Purdue Student Governments and three administrators.

What are the powers and responsibilities of the University Senate?

“It has the power and responsibility to propose or to adopt policies, regulations, and procedures intended to achieve the educational objectives of Purdue University and the general welfare of those involved in these educational processes.”

The faculties through their representatives in the University Senate have the power and responsibility to:

“Fix the academic calendar and the general policies for scheduling classes;

Establish policies for the University and student participation in athletic affairs; and

Review and approve the academic degree titles conferred by the University and the general requirements for the several curricula of the University leading towards academic degrees and nominate all candidates for such degrees.”
The University Senate also advises the Purdue University President and Board of Trustees on a variety of issues.

**Are there limitations to the power of the University Senate to establish the curriculum?**

“The power to develop curriculum, course content, instructional and examination procedures, and undergraduate degree requirements, and to nominate candidates for these degrees is delegated to the various school faculties of the University.”

**What is the role of the Purdue University faculty?**

The members of the faculty are the creators and transmitters of knowledge, culture, and values. These values include a respect for the endeavors of the human mind in all of its manifestations, for cultural and ethnic diversity, for the natural environment, and for human dignity, especially that of the less fortunate in the United States and around the world. The faculty is assisted in this task by staff members and administrators. The students of the University are active participants in this endeavor. The Purdue University Senate takes seriously the responsibility of representing faculty, staff, and student interests.

**Isn’t education just about preparing people for the workforce?**

NO! There is no doubt that a Purdue University education does make an excellent preparation for employment. However, the belief that a Purdue University education should be preparing people for today’s jobs is absurd. We are preparing people for the rest of their lives including employment for many years in the future. There is undoubtedly a role for technical education, but the purpose of a Purdue University education is to facilitate the intellectual and emotional growth that leads to lifelong learning. The University Senate stands for these principles.
What are the major objectives of the University Senate?

To ensure that students have a high-quality education, that research in all areas represented by the faculty is supported and respected, that Purdue University employment practices are a model of beneficence, that cultural and ethnic diversity be supported, and that Purdue University actions and decisions are based on science and data.
UNIVERSITY SENATE

FACULTY ARE THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

PLEASSED NO MAJOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

BOARD OF TRUSTEES TOPICS

LILLY HALL

GALLUP PURDUE

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

HOTLINE

_Panel Discussion--Thursday, November 10th from 1:30-3:00pm
Lawson Room 1142.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

NOT WALMART

WORK WITH PROVOST

LACK OF VALIDITY OF STANDARDIZED TESTS

MORE VALUABLE INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION

PROMISED BY 3 SENATE COMMITTEES FOR LAST SENATE SESSION OF SEMESTER

BUDGETARY AND HUMAN RESOURCES TRANSPARENCY

AT ALL LEVELS OF ORGANIZATION

DEANS/DEPT. HEADS ANSWERABLE TO FACULTY

SHARED GOVERNANCE

AT ALL LEVELS OF ORGANIZATION
BENEFITS REVIEW

BEST INTERESTS OF FACULTY AND STAFF

ATHLETICS OVERSIGHT

NCAA

POST-PURDUE HEALTH

ATHLETICS FOR EVERYONE
What does the Senate accomplish?

Had the privilege attending dedication of Morris Levy Playground dedication at Patty Jischke Early Care and Education Center

Recent meeting of Big 10 Academic Alliance Senate Leadership
Accomplishment?
Autism Benefits
Persistence of individual and Senate backing

Board of Trustees members at Senate meetings/regular meetings with leadership
Lilly, undergraduate laboratories, education not economic development, importance of liberal arts, importance of research, faculty voting member of BoT

Academic Affairs Committee

Regular meetings of Chairs of Standing Committees, reconstituted active Faculty Committees. Encourage Chairs likewise, Address Regional campus issues

Met with Student leadership APSAC (CSAAC couldn’t make meeting but future), coordination on issues of mutual interest, meeting with Deans
Lots of positive feedback and suggestions about agenda—also other issues. Thanks for having people identify themselves.

Good relationship with President Daniels and Provost Dutta
Working through Senate Committees on
Academic Excellence
Academic Integrity
Academic Rigor
Tobacco-Free Campus Policy

Commitment to Diversity

Can’t say the same for Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer
No meetings/ignores input/directives that mean Senate is evaded (Funds Management Project)

Resolutions

Highlight Resolution on Immigrants, International Students & Scholars and Visitors

Anticipate resolution on teaching evaluations at next meeting

Final note on procedure—Bylaws, Resolutions are labeled “For Discussion” at one meeting—feedback, potential changes. Next meeting, Chair of submitting Standing Committee can request postponement, not another discussion. Next meeting—“for Action”. Motion for vote is followed by discussion.
Remarks of the Chair of the Purdue University Senate

November 21, 2016

It’s Our Fault

Academic Excellence

Unit Level Discussion

COACHE survey

Transparency/Responsiveness

Senate Document 16-01—in anticipation

Other documents circulating campus—I encourage you to consider adding your signature

All 13 other Big 10 Campus administrations issued campus-wide affirmations
Mostly Presidents—some jointly with Senate leadership—I have indicated to President Daniels my willingness to participate in such a joint letter

I acknowledge that the Provost sent a letter to the directors of our cultural centers

IPFW

Visit
Colleagues,

Welcome to the first meeting of the Purdue University Senate of 2017! I have never had so many people ask me to address so many issues at one Senate meeting.

The leadership has endeavored to make the Senate a more robust and effective organization. We have a more active Committee structure, and I have instituted regular meetings of the Chairs of the Standing Committees. I have been engaged in meeting with each of the Deans of the Colleges and have regular and highly cordial discussions with the Provost and the President to discuss the concerns of the Senate and the faculty, although I have not yet had a private meeting with President Daniels this calendar year. I believe that there is an enhanced appreciation of the value of shared governance.

I will begin with one example. At our November meeting we passed Document 16-04 expressing our concern about a breach of the principles of shared governance with respect to IPFW. Our intervention has been recognized as effecting concrete changes as well as promoting an environment where more effective shared governance will be the rule at IPFW in the future. The IPFW Senate passed a resolution that included the following text:

WHEREAS, the Purdue Faculty Senate has passed a resolution supporting the rights of IPFW faculty; and
WHEREAS, Purdue Senate Chair David Sanders visited IPFW over the course of two days to learn more about the current crisis and to become better informed about faculty concerns; BE IT RESOLVED, that on behalf of all IPFW faculty, the Senate express its thanks and appreciation to all those who have advocated for the rights of the faculty, and who have defended the highest principles of university shared governance and academic due process.

I also received a letter from which I will quote.

Dear Dr. Sanders,

I am writing to you to thank you for leading the efforts of the Purdue Faculty Senate to advocate on behalf of IPFW faculty. As a result of these efforts, which included the November Purdue Senate resolution and your visit to our campus, we were able to successfully advocate for the reinstatement of the Women’s Studies program at IPFW, which I have directed here for the past seven years.

While the reinstatement of Women’s Studies is merely a small victory and while major issues with due process and shared governance remain on this campus, there is now the possibility of reaching a mutually beneficial resolution to the crisis as a result of your efforts and the efforts of others advocating for the right of IPFW faculty to have a predominant voice in any major decisions involving the curriculum and academic programs.
President Daniels has also acknowledged that the earlier process was flawed and has committed to fuller faculty participation in critical decisions at IPFW in the future.

As most of you are aware I have advocated for a reform of our teaching effectiveness evaluation process. We have a governing document (97-9), which lays out a holistic process. Unfortunately the only part of the document that has been widely implemented is highly defective. We have a resolution on this issue today.

The Senate recently cosponsored a well-attended forum on academic integrity. It is ultimately up to the faculty to take measures that reduce opportunities for students to infringe on academic honesty and to report infringements that do occur. It is unfair to both the honest students and sends the wrong message to the less honest students if we do not do so. Along with a committee that is investigating this issue, we also have ongoing committees studying academic rigor and academic excellence.

I have been asked by faculty, students, and alumni to address the 2017 Annual Letter to the People of Purdue from Mitch Daniels. I will do so with the objective of introducing some topics for thought, and therefore I will only be able to discuss a few points. President Daniels begins his discussion of higher education with the citation of a number of opinion poll results for which he has provided references. Unfortunately I read the references. Even more unfortunate was the fact that President Daniels or the individual assigned to obtain the information has
repeatedly misread the data. If anyone is interested I can supply the facts. My objective now is not to engage in an argument but to indicate that matters are not as dire as one might have been led to believe.

President Daniels has mentioned the expansion of massive open online course or MOOC enrollments. I see most MOOCs as nothing more than VTs, video textbooks. This comparison leads me to two concepts. If our large classes (and we are being pushed into teaching larger classes) are no better than a video textbook, then they deserve to be replaced. I know that many of the best teachers among my colleagues teach large classes, but just standing in front of a large room and lecturing is really not sufficient. Second, as instructors we need to be engaged in more effective deployment of the textbooks that we do assign to our students, and it is my intention to organize a forum and materials that provide best practices in this field.

The mention by President Daniels of the titles of courses that others might mock was of especial concern to some of my colleagues. In a time when the faculty is being urged to be more effective marketers in order to increase class size it seems counterproductive to be attacking what might be successful advertising strategies. I could imagine that “Witchcraft and Possession” might be a literature course where *Macbeth*, the writings of Nathaniel Hawthorne, and *The Crucible* are discussed or an anthropology course on how witchcraft rituals and attitudes towards witchcraft of different cultures have evolved over time.
I would like to congratulate the Senate and the Equity and Diversity Committee on their prescience in passing Document 16-01 Value of Immigrants and International Students, Scholars, and Visitors to Purdue and Community in October of last year. I would also like to applaud President Daniels recent forceful and unequivocal statement on the Executive Order concerning immigration. I have advocated for more effective faculty governance structures at every level of the University organization. In this context I would like to acknowledge the recent statement of the College of Liberal Arts Faculty Senate on Working For A Climate Free Of All Forms Of Discrimination.

Others from our University have made their stances on the nominee for Secretary of Education known. As much as it pains me to be questioning the appropriateness of the inclusion of a woman in a cabinet that is stunningly and overwhelming Caucasian and male I believe I represent the positions of many when I state that the nominee for Secretary of Education is unqualified and should not be confirmed.

An especial concern is her stated noncommittal attitude towards an effective tool that the previous administration has generated concerning predatory for-profit colleges. I have referred to for-profit colleges as a carbuncle on the body of higher education. A major portion of the “student-debt crisis” and the crisis of confidence in higher education is a result of the notoriety of the failures of for-profit colleges to provide meaningful
education and of the lack of employment success of students. It has been suggested that I am obsessed with for-profit colleges and am unfamiliar with the underlying statistics on student debt or success. It is true that there are other challenges including the reluctance of state legislatures to fund adequately their state institutions of higher learning. Nevertheless, to say that an educator who is concerned about for-profit colleges is unduly obsessed is equivalent to saying that a cancer researcher who focuses on tobacco smoking or a climate researcher who focuses on anthropogenic greenhouse gas generation is unduly obsessed.

I do not have time to discuss all of the matters that have been suggested as topics today. I believe that others are likely to express their opinions on them at the meeting today, and I encourage them to do so. I will conclude with just a few words.

The forces of unreason, untruth, and intolerance have been unleashed and provided with a powerful and ear-piercing voice that opposes everything for which we in education stand. It has been suggested that we compromise with those forces or maintain our silence. I reject those approaches. We must redouble our efforts to advocate for our values including insisting on the importance of education as a positive good independent of its economic benefits.
Colleagues,

Welcome to the February meeting of the Purdue University Senate! You will hear soon about a number of areas of Senate committee activity. Two items of my presentation represent a continuation of the discussion from the last meeting. First, we will be voting on a resolution concerning teaching evaluation. The authors of the legislation that we considered at the last meeting have responded effectively to the comments made by you, and we have an improved resolution that is deserving of your support. All concerned recognize that this measure is not the end of the process of reinforcing the teacher-evaluation methodology.

The second topic to which I return is that of the titles of classes. It is easy for someone from outside of education to ridicule our objects of inquiry. I ran across a Purdue Exponent article with the title “Dragons in Space.” It described a Purdue course called “Dragons: Myth and Literature.” It is not difficult to envision someone with a superficial understanding of education adding this course to a list of those with risible class names. The irony of the situation is that one of the instructors is a distinguished scholar who was the presenter at a recent session of the Presidential colloquia to which President Daniels asked me to extend his invitation to attend to you. I have no doubt that the Dragons course is a serious academic endeavor that is worthy of praise rather than disdain.

Many of us have had the privilege of a well-rounded college education. When I was an undergraduate I took all the courses required for a History major, although the degree I ultimately received was a Bachelor of Science in Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry. I learned that authoritarian governments shared four power strategies. They included scapegoating foreigners, immigrants, and ethnic minorities, assailing the media, assaulting the independent judiciary, and attacking academia. The current manifestation of this undermining of these core, free-society institutions is a product of a long-term endeavor. It is merely the shameless nakedness with which the pursuit of the antidemocratic goals is occurring that is new.

I know there are some who will dismiss my words as mere “politics.” Nevertheless, it is clear, as the University Senate and President Daniels have affirmed, that the safety and wellbeing of our international and immigrant students IS our concern. The subversion of public belief in the existence of factual information IS our concern.
It is not sufficient for us merely to express our opposition to the inversion of rational discourse that we observe in the body politic. It is not adequate only to demolish the false equivalencies that defenders of demagogy employ.

I have often urged the thesis that scientists in particular and academics in general need to think deeply about their vocation and to articulate effectively the product of their meditation. In brief I would like to share what I propose as a declaration of principles.

We are committed to the principle that every object in the natural world or human society is potentially worthy of our investigatory efforts.

We are committed to the principle that freedom of inquiry and freedom of expression are essential components of a free society and that they thrive in coexistence with a democratic republic.

We are committed to the principle that education is an end in itself and not reducible to a means to some other end.

We are committed to the principle that we take seriously the responsibility of transmitting the culture and highest values of American society and the society of other nations to our students.

We are committed to the principle that diversity in all of its manifestations is not simply tolerated but embraced as the major contributor to the richness of the human experience.

We are committed to the principle that it is frequently the counterintuitive insight that is the most productive.

We are committed to the principle that both individual and collective endeavors should be valued.

We are committed to the principle that we are training individuals for meaningful participation as leaders in society by providing them with enhanced capacities for critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, empathy, and lifelong learning.

We are committed to the principle that, despite the fact that technology causes problems as it solves others, there is no existing alternative to science as a means for rational interpretation of the natural world and making plausible predictions about its future behavior.

We are committed to the principle that our obligation to conduct our scholarly mission extends beyond the academic environment to educating society and the world at large.

I am sure that there are many of you who would like to augment or amend these principles. They are proposed as a stimulus for cogitation; I hope you will consider them in this spirit. I welcome your contributions.