

27 February 2024

Dear Senate Colleagues, a note to forward to your constituents:

Senate Bill 202 has now been voted in the affirmative by both the Indiana Senate and House. In response, we are all now in receipt of a message of reassurance from Michael Berghoff, Chairman of the Board of Trustees; Mung Chiang, President; and Patrick Wolfe, Provost. I will embrace their reassurances below and strike a note of cautious hope.

But first, it's my responsibility, as University Senate Chair, to report that no member of the University Senate, nor any campus member shared with me that the minor amendments made to SB 202 significantly altered its threats nor mollified their concerns. It also remains an oversight that SB 202's sponsors, to the best of my knowledge, did not consult the shared governance bodies of our public universities. I can say with certainty that Purdue University's Senate was not consulted. For this category of major legislation, there are no substitutes for input from the shared governance bodies of our public universities.

Of the many things to ask of our Board of Trustees and administration, is concrete assurance by written policy that Purdue University will not open the door to a free-for-all-factory of grievance that will grind down instructor and student productivity by process. This, to many, seems the acorn from which the most pernicious roots of SB 202 might grow. With that said, I recommend that each Senate colleague read what our body passed in SD 23-23. There is an advising roadmap suggested there as to how the Board of Trustees and our administration should proceed going forward.

Now, it is a fact that the chairperson of the Board of Trustees, Mr. Berghoff, President Chiang, and Provost Wolfe, find this moment important enough to write something deeper than a mere dispatch regarding the passage of SB 202. I detect earnestness, and I choose to view their statement as an explicit invitation that the University Senate will be consulted early on and throughout, as policy and procedure are developed in response to SB 202. What better moment to elevate shared governance at Purdue University?

Yours,

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