

**To: President Pamela Whitten, Provost Rahul Shrivastav and Vice-Provost Carrie Docherty; The Indiana University Board of Trustees**

The arrival on campus of SEA 202 represents one of the most significant challenges our university has ever faced. It subjects all instruction to a surveillance system and fundamentally changes the institution of tenure. IU faculty and students understandably feel deep concern, bordering on fear, for the future of our institution and their place within it.

The University Alliance for Racial Justice (UARJ), comprised of over 200 IU faculty, staff and students committed to justice and equity, has analyzed the administration's interim 202 implementation policy, resulting in the [\*Critical Brief on SEA 202\*](#). Based on that analysis, UARJ working groups crafted [\*Protect IU from 202\*](#), six critical priorities identifying gaps in current policy and outlining critical directions. We urge you to examine both documents and are happy to respond to any questions you may have.

Most important at this point in time is establishing a collaborative process to refine, clarify and amend the interim policy to maintain the values and principles of our university. *We hope for and expect a transparent process of shared governance* to carefully and collegially consider how *together* we can meet the requirements of the law without compromising our solemn responsibility to preserve academic freedom and preserve and honor the diversity of our community.

The committee structure of the Bloomington Faculty Council represents an ideal forum for exploring, not just how an a priori set of policy recommendations can be handed down and uncritically implemented by faculty, but how those policies can be refined, adapted and where necessary amended through shared governance, to honor and protect the fundamental values of our university.

In particular, we draw your attention to priorities 2 and 5. Two sources of information must be reported by Indiana University to the legislature by this Sunday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, detailing all funds spent on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and documenting all possible descriptions of diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. *It would be a sign of good faith if the administration were to share the document that will be submitted with the entire campus community prior to its submission.*

That information must be placed in the context of national controversy concerning DEI in higher education. Although we fervently hope otherwise, it is reasonable to fear a future wherein the DEI witch-hunts that have befallen flagship universities in [Florida](#), [Texas](#), [Missouri](#), and [Kentucky](#) become Indiana's future as well. We urge two public statements as you submit the September 1<sup>st</sup>. First, *reassure the campus that there are no current plans from the university to close diversity, equity and inclusion programs or fire DEI staff anywhere within the Indiana University system.* Second, *announce that you will resist any attempt by the Indiana General Assembly to use the data currently being submitted to close diversity, equity and inclusion programs or terminate diversity, equity, and inclusion staff.*

It will be tempting to transfer such staff to different departments to preserve their job security: We urge you to resist that course. The experience of other universities suggests that, *even once transferred*, those employees can be [tracked down and terminated](#). The experience of Florida universities almost guarantees that blanket layoffs of DEI staff and termination of DEI programs will trigger a [massive out-migration](#) of faculty and students of color, other marginalized groups, and all those committed to social justice and fairness in their research and teaching. We hope you share our serious concern that such an eventuality would almost certainly doom the President's \$30 million Diversity Initiative.

Among Indiana University's proud traditions is a history of standing firm in support of intellectual freedom, fairness and justice. President [Herman Wells' support](#) in the 1940s for the establishment of the Kinsey Institute was a courageous and to many at that time an unpopular position. In 1954, five IU students initiated what became the [Green Feather](#) movement, resisting the threats of McCarthyism that endangered the nation. Administrations since then have worked *together with students and faculty* [to support peaceful protest during the Vietnam War](#), [bring an end to racial covenants among IU fraternities](#), and [end university support for apartheid](#).

In that spirit, using collegial and shared governance structures that have defined our history, we believe that our administration, faculty, students, and staff can work together to meet the challenges posed by SEA 202. In so doing, Indiana University could become a model for other campuses across the nation, standing firm together to preserve academic freedom, honor our diversity, and truly protect Indiana University.

Sincerely,

Russ Skiba, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, School of Education

For The Steering Committee of the University Alliance for Racial Justice