

Faculty Senate Statement of the Academic Program at the University of Louisville Prepared by Enid Trucios-Haynes, September 2018

The selection of a new President at the University of Louisville in May 2018 signals a renewal of our commitment to the central pillars of the University: academic excellence; research, scholarship and creative activity; community engagement; diversity, opportunity and social justice; creative and responsible stewardship. Dr. Neeli Bendapudi's appointment provides an opportunity for faculty to work with a new administration to advance our academic mission and avoid being mired in past leadership transgressions.

The commitment of faculty to the academic mission of the University of Louisville including its status as a Research One University recognized for community engagement mission is part of our identity. We understand that this commitment is essential to attract talented faculty, and outstanding students.

Redbook 3.4.2 requires the Faculty Senate to prepare an annual statement reviewing the academic program of the University and other concerns of the faculty, and making appropriate recommendations. The Faculty Senate fulfills this important responsibility as the official representative of the faculty responsible for eliciting and expressing the opinions, suggestions, and for making recommendations all matters affecting faculty welfare.

The Faculty Senate possesses valuable institutional knowledge and a unique long-term, institution-wide perspective. The Faculty Senate shares this broad perspective with other senior leaders, including the Provost and President and, therefore, occupies an important role in assessing the University's academic program as well as reviewing University policies.

Academic Mission of the University: The academic mission at the University of Louisville is strong. The faculty is dedicated to advancing academic excellence, and supporting our academic mission by creating new knowledge in the form of research, scholarship and creative activity. Our students, staff, and faculty work collaboratively to connect with our community and advance their interests for our society as a whole and to address social justice issues. We are committed to the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. As Dr. Bendapudi often notes all of our efforts must advance these values as we make the University of Louisville a great place to learn, to work and to invest.

The strength of the academic mission of the University of Louisville comes from the extraordinary dedication of faculty, staff and administrators. Newer and long-term campus community members have weathered numerous and successive budget reductions, and have found ways to continuously advance the mission of the University. However, we must recognize that continuing budget cuts may threaten our ability to advance the central pillars of our academic mission.

Shared Governance: Shared governance is elemental to advancing the academic mission of the University of Louisville. This core value of universities is critical to academic freedom, and ensures better decision making at all levels of university operations. Academic freedom includes the freedom to express views about academic and research matters, economic welfare issues, and changes to administrative structures or policies.

The faculty, staff, students, senior leadership, and the Board of Trustees are the key constituents in shared governance at the University of Louisville. The Faculty Senate recognizes that most decisions having a university-wide impact will impact faculty welfare. We look forward to providing valuable advice and consultation to our new President, Neeli Bendapudi, and her administration.

Opportunities to Enhance Shared Governance:

- Enhance shared governance with the Board of Trustees through annual or bi-annual “town hall” sessions
- Continue President’s “town hall” sessions on academic issues, budget and other matters as well as the ongoing consultations with representative bodies (Student Government Association, Faculty Senate, Staff Senate)
- Create consistent and transparent upper level administrator hiring procedures, including presentations to the campus community when appropriate (an established practice used in the past)
- The Faculty Senate should continue the existing collaborative relationships with COSW, CODRE and the AAUP chapter.
- The Faculty Senate can increase the engagement of other faculty constituencies including probationary, term, and part time faculty, as well as affinity groups representing LGBTQ faculty, faculty of color, women faculty and others.

New Academic Initiatives:

(1) Innovative Certificate Programs and Other Entrepreneurial Efforts: The budget cuts and realignments of the past three academic years have spurred faculty and deans to identify opportunities to expand enrollment. All are eager to participate in budget changes that support innovation. The Faculty Senate, through the work of the Planning and Budget

Committee and Academic Programs Committee, supports innovation in its review of proposals for new programs, centers and institutes.

Opportunities: Creative approaches for new programs have emerged in 2017-18. Public-private partnerships have been created for certificates and other programs. For example, the College of Business proposed a program to offer certificates to members of an international organization involving a unique tuition-sharing arrangement with the organizations. These kinds of initiatives are innovative and the Faculty Senate's review of these proposals ensures that there is wider discussion of unique arrangements. The Faculty Senate can expect to review many new proposals from other colleges and units.

Challenges: We must ensure that new initiatives, especially those lacking new funding, do not risk underfunding existing programs. Underfunding existing programs could create a downward spiral leading to lower enrollments which itself could be used to justify closing programs.

(2) Student Recruitment and Retention Funding: Proposals to increase student enrollment and retention have been funded with one-time funds through the Provost's Office. Units now have the opportunity and challenge of continuing to fund those initiatives in future years using their existing budgets. Online education is another mechanism for increasing enrollment. A draft plan to expand online enrollment was developed by the Delphi Center in 2017-18. The Faculty Senate looks forward to participating in the development of a final plan. We also must recognize that new academic initiatives may involve the termination or suspension of existing academic programs.

Termination and Suspension of Academic Programs, Centers and Institutes: The Faculty Senate's role in evaluating the academic program of the University of Louisville includes proposals to create, suspend, and terminate programs, centers and institutes. These proposals are initiated primarily by faculty at the unit level; however, program closure and suspension can be raised by the Kentucky Council for Postsecondary Education. The Faculty Senate, with its broad institutional knowledge, examines the impact of these proposals on the University's academic mission, faculty welfare, and the unit.

The Provost's Office and the Faculty Senate have an established process to review new proposals for academic programs, centers and institutes. The termination of programs, centers and institutes happens infrequently and, therefore, no established procedures exist. The Faculty Senate addressed this lack of procedures through joint meetings of the Academic Program and Planning & Budget Committees in consultation with the Provost's Office. The Faculty Senate adopted the "Guidelines for Program Closure or Suspension" at our June 27, 2018 meeting and shared these with the Provost's Office.

Redbook 3.4.2 explicitly states that proposals to establish or terminate any degree-granting program "shall first be submitted to the Faculty Senate for a recommendation." The Senate bylaws require review by the Academic Programs Committee of "any academic program being proposed for elimination, or those for major alterations in structure." Our bylaws

provide the Senate Planning and Budget Committee with authority to evaluate “budget matters pertaining to academic programs and priorities.” The Senate review process includes review by both Committees, the Executive Committee, and presentation to the full Faculty Senate. The role of the Faculty Senate, as reflected in our bylaws, is based on the authority provided by Redbook 3.4.2.

The new Guidelines address all program closures and terminations including those causing the termination of faculty appointments due to “financial exigency or bona fide discontinuance or reduction of a unit, a department, a program or a service” (Redbook 4.5.2). The Guidelines set forth criteria incorporating those used by the Faculty Senate and Provost’s Office to evaluate new proposals for programs, centers and institutes. The Guidelines also include the Redbook criteria involved in the review of the termination or suspension of a unit, a department, a program or a service leading to faculty appointment terminations. These criteria include “consideration of the range of course offerings of the institution, the importance of the program to the academic objectives of the unit, faculty status, affirmative action, and the prospects for future funding from all possible sources.”

The Faculty Senate supports the evolution of our academic mission to adapt to the opportunities available to current and future students. We also recognize that budget imperatives will likely require the faculty to consider the termination of programs, centers and institutes as the University of Louisville charts its course for the future.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: The University of Louisville must continue to advance diversity, equity and inclusion within our faculty and staff ranks and the student body. Not only is this the right thing to do, but it also is necessary to attract the best students and most talented faculty. Changing student demographics within Kentucky and throughout our nation require expanded efforts to recruit and retain students and faculty. The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education measures our progress on diversity, equity and inclusion, and the state’s performance model provides funding for these efforts. The Faculty Senate, and the faculty as a whole, will need to partner with the senior leaders and the central administration on these efforts.

Budget Planning: The complexity of the University’s budget, and the recurring and sometimes unpredictable budget cuts demand continual faculty attention. The Faculty Senate Planning and Budget Committee, jointly with the Senate Executive Committee, provide advice and consultation on budget matters.

The University advances shared governance by including the Faculty Senate *before* decisions are made. There are opportunities for more faculty input. In some instances, unexpected budget cuts may occur at a time when faculty input is limited. The Faculty Senate encourages senior leaders to make every effort to include faculty input in all budget discussions and planning. One longstanding inclusive budget planning mechanism has been a budget advisory committee with broad representation formed by either the President or Provost.

Opportunities for Enhanced Faculty Input:

- Unit budget advisory committees with faculty representation. Many but not all units have such a committee.
- A university-wide committee is a valuable mechanism to examine budget issues and assess the university-wide impacts; one that promotes shared governance. This provides an opportunity for input *before* decisions are made.
- Continue regular meetings with the CFO by Senate leadership, and joint meetings with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and the Planning and Budget Committee with the Chief Financial Officer during the budget development process.
- The State's Performance Funding Model provides a new opportunity for the University to assess efforts in the key focus areas: STEM-H degrees, students of color (referred to as URM-underrepresented minorities), first generation college students, and economically disadvantaged students.

Challenges:

- The overall impact of successive years of budget reductions have forced many units, departments, centers and institutes into a reactive mode with few opportunities for strategic decision making or long-term planning.
- Meeting performance funding metrics in the current academic year (STEM-H degrees, students of color (referred to as URM-underrepresented minorities), first generation college students, and economically disadvantaged students).

In conclusion, the academic mission of the University of Louisville is strong. The faculty are committed to advancing our mission and innovating for our current and future students. We can accomplish this through robust shared governance mechanisms. We look forward to working Dr. Bendapudi during this exciting time of renewal.

**Respectfully submitted,
Enid Trucios-Haynes
Chair, Faculty Senate
September 4, 2018**