

The **Alliance of Distinguished and Titled Professors** of Indiana University is an organization of professors (active and emeritus) holding distinguished rank, a titled professorship, or an endowed chair (<https://alliance.iu.edu/>). The mission of the Alliance is to “preserve and enhance Indiana University’s excellence in research, teaching, and service.” In accord with our organization's purpose, we express our serious concern to Indiana’s elected officials and others that if SB202 becomes law, it will be detrimental to excellence at Indiana University excellence.

We agree, in principle, with SB 202’s goal to ensure that faculty “help the institution foster a culture of free inquiry, free expression, and intellectual diversity.” Indiana University appoints and supports scholars in their pursuit of increasing and disseminating discovery, knowledge, and understanding in and across many disciplines, provides spaces where students can experiment with ideas without worrying about ideological boundaries or mandates, and offers places where teachers stimulate students to explore freely without inculcating anything other than the value of intellectual curiosity and disciplinary rigor and ethics. Yet SB202 is not the right way to achieve that goal. In its effect of undermining tenure, academic freedom, and rigorous intellectual inquiry and exchange, it threatens to erode excellence not only at Indiana University but at all public institutions of higher education in the state.

Loss of excellence in research, teaching, and service to the profession and the community at Indiana University is especially threatened by some provisions in the bill:

Any change in the composition of IU’s Board of Trustees that increases the voice of party-affiliated appointees makes its authority susceptible to politicization that endangers the stability of the university whenever elections shift political power by party. Since universities by their very nature are enterprises designed and managed for the long run, unforeseeable shifts in the Board’s make up are bound to have negative effects on providing the necessary strategic planning and subsequent execution successfully. Moreover, decreasing the number of alumni/ae on the Board of Trustees silences the voice of those current and former students SB202 seeks to protect.

SB202 goes further than that by stipulating the creation of a policy that provides that a faculty member may not be granted tenure or a promotion by the institution if, *based on past performance or other determination by the Board of Trustees*, the faculty member is “unlikely to foster a culture of free inquiry, free expression, and intellectual diversity within the institution.” This mandate lacks clear definition not only as to the criteria by which the Board of Trustees denies tenure or a promotion but also how this determination can be reached fairly, practically, and in a timely manner.

The intrusion of a Board of Trustees composed primarily of political appointees into IU’s well-established and well-documented pre- and post-tenure review of faculty will have a chilling effect not only on the current faculty and their retention, but especially on the recruitment and retention of new faculty, young scholars just beginning to demonstrate their potential as well as those already known to be the best in their field. In pursuit of excellence, IU vies with universities throughout the United States for top talent in a very competitive market. Why

would a potential star come to IU instead of another institution that lacks a “political correctness” test as expressed and demanded in SB202? And why would accomplished researchers and teachers decide to remain at IU when they are being sought out by other institutions?

Moreover, excellence would be irreparably lost because, rather than enhancing free expression, SB202 would inhibit expression of ideas in the classroom. Specifically, faculty who challenged students to think about a concept with which even one student disagreed could be brought up on charges that they were not supportive of “intellectual diversity.” This provision in effect declares “open season” for students and university employees to accuse faculty with differing views with violations of SB202 policy that can result in demotion, pay reduction, or termination. Why would the current faculty want to stay at IU and why would prospective faculty candidates come to an institution where they risk demotion, pay reduction, or termination?

Collectively, the members of the Alliance of Distinguished Professors and Titled Professor have invested countless years into Indiana University and its many students and the Alliance’s mission is to “preserve and enhance Indiana University’s excellence.” SB202 will diminish excellence at Indiana University, and we urge you to reject it.

The Steering Committee of the Indiana University Alliance of Distinguished and Titled Professors

(This letter represents the opinion of the Alliance Steering Committee and does not represent the official policy of IU or its Board of Trustees.)