

## **Resolution on Indiana University-Bloomington's Commitment to Intellectual Diversity and Academic Freedom**

**Intellectual diversity** refers to the range of perspectives, experiences, and ideologies present within an academic community, fostering an environment of critical thinking, innovation, and understanding. Intellectual diversity safeguards the voices and contributions of faculty of color, recognizing their unique perspectives as integral to the enrichment of scholarly discourse. Intellectual diversity efforts are rooted in a commitment to social justice and fairness, advocating for changes in institutional frameworks to promote greater equality and empower historically marginalized groups, including faculty and students of color, as well as LGBTQ+ faculty and students.

**Whereas** the Indiana General Assembly has enacted SEA 202, politically interfering in Indiana's public colleges and universities; and

**Whereas** the provisions of this law will chill academic freedom in the classroom, weaken tenure protection, infringe upon one or more areas of the faculty's primary responsibility, restrict faculty organizing, withdraw funding for student success programs, and disrupt the accreditation process; and

**Whereas** the impact of the reporting system mandated by SEA 202 is discriminatory, disproportionately affecting faculty of color and LGBTQ+ faculty, who are often tasked with representing diversity, equity, and inclusion in university course offerings, and are thus most at risk for receiving the reprimands, demotion and termination that may result from the implementation of those provisions; and

**Whereas** SEA 202 emerged as part of a national campaign aimed at diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs in higher education, with specific clauses that could engender the type of extreme actions taken elsewhere—such as the termination of all DEI staff—that have prompted national calls for a boycott by athletes of color attending that state's universities; and

**Whereas** Indiana University is committed to fostering a broad range of perspectives, ideologies, and methodologies across disciplines, promoting research and scholarly excellence, and academic freedom, for all members of the academic community; and

**Whereas** it is the Faculty's responsibility to safeguard academic freedom and uphold the integrity of the institution's educational mission:

**Be it resolved that the Bloomington Faculty Council:**

Reaffirms our commitment to promoting and protecting intellectual diversity within the university community in order to ensure equitable representation, inclusion, and academic freedom for all faculty and students, particularly faculty of color and those from historically marginalized communities, and calls upon the President and the Board of Trustees to:

- 1) Adopt the following definition of "intellectual diversity" for all actions flowing out of the passage of SEA 202 by the Indiana General Assembly:

**Intellectual diversity** means recognizing, respecting and valuing the diversity of lived experiences, cultural backgrounds, and scholarly contributions within the academic community in order to foster an environment of critical thinking, innovation, and understanding. Intellectual diversity encompasses three essential elements:

- **Equity and Inclusion:** Maintaining an inclusive environment where all faculty and students, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or other identities, feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute to scholarly discourse;
  - **Representation:** Actively recruiting *and retaining* faculty and students of color and those from other historically marginalized groups in order to reflect the diversity of society and enrich scholarly discourse in teaching, research, service and governance;
  - **Academic Freedom and Due Process:** Upholding academic freedom and due process as essential in fostering intellectual diversity, allowing faculty and students, including those from communities of color and other historically marginalized communities, to freely explore and express their ideas, theories, and research findings without fear of reprisal or censorship.
- 2) Work closely with university faculty at all levels of the institution, using procedures defined by the Bloomington Faculty Council and fairness and due process standards established by the AAUP, to develop policies and procedures for implementation of all sections of state statute amended by SEA 202, guided by:
- a) the three fundamental principles of intellectual diversity (equity and inclusion, representation, and academic freedom/due process);
  - b) the right and responsibility of departmental faculty, particularly those of color, as subject matter experts, to determine what lies within the scope of appropriate instruction for their academic discipline or assigned course of instruction; and
  - c) a principle of maximizing the compatibility of new reporting procedures and faculty evaluation required under SEA 202 with already existing university structures and policies governing faculty evaluation, tenure and promotion, and grievance and appeal processes.

*In its implementation of these new procedures, Indiana University commits through intentional policies and practices to uphold principles of fairness, dignity, and equity, recognizing and valuing the diverse lived experiences, cultural backgrounds, academic freedom, and scholarly contributions that enrich the academic community.*