

Illinois Institute of Technology

Meeting of the Faculty Senate

Briefing Notes: Background and Timeline

Background Context

On Friday, July 17, President Echambadi announced a recommendation of a declaration of financial exigency to the Board of Trustees, and a need for a reduction in total compensation of around \$47 million. There was no question-and-answer session between faculty and the president: rather, this was followed by a UFC Town Hall discussion among faculty. A further town hall among faculty was held on Monday, July 20. And a full meeting of the UFC was held on Wednesday, July 22, at which a resolution to the Board of Trustees via the Office of General Counsel was approved. This resolution was considered in the board's session that opened Thursday, July 23 and has now been concluded with the trustee decision to unanimously approve the administration plan.

Timeline of adjacent events

July 17: The President announced his intent to recommend a declaration of financial exigency. UFC holds an open Town Hall.

July 20: UFC holds an open Town Hall. A petition with adequate signatures is submitted to the Faculty Senate to convene a meeting.

July 21: The Law School passed a 32-point motion of no confidence in the Provost and President, 37–1.

July 22: UFC meeting held, UFC submits resolution to the Board of Trustees.

July 23: The Board of Trustees went into session.

July 26: The Chair of the Board of Trustees communicated with the UFC Chair that the board had unanimously approved the President's plan and expressed confidence in the Provost and President.

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Briefing Notes: Faculty Feedback

This document summarizes suggestions that were submitted to an anonymous online form for inclusion in the Faculty Senate agenda, and also incorporates direct feedback to Senate leadership.

1. Faculty Feedback on Votes Regarding No Confidence (President, Provost, CFO)

A significant share of submissions call for a vote of no confidence in the President, Provost, and CFO — enough that these likely should be considered at the same stage of the meeting, though please note that a) the tone of opinions across the three offices varies and there is likely a need to consider the offices separately and b) the Board of Trustees notification of Sunday, July 26 unanimously offers full support for the administration and the plan. Rationale cited across submissions includes:

- A viewpoint that leadership withheld information about (or failed to respond to) the university's financial condition for an extended period before disclosing it.
- The expectation that a no-confidence vote would put the Board of Trustees and AAUP on notice with regard to risks to the university's shared governance — with one comment noting this could open the door to unionization if governance continues to be sidelined.
- Specific criticism of the President for allegedly lacking a communicated long-term vision over several years, for public comments minimizing foreseeable enrollment risks (with a comparison to enrollment trends at University of Illinois institutions), and for language in an internal announcement that one respondent characterized as pre-emptively deflecting blame.
- A recurring question about whether the exigency declaration itself is being used to preserve leadership's position rather than solely as a financial necessity.
- Widespread verbal feedback, along with the motion of no confidence from the Chicago Kent College of Law, shows concerns about whether senior academic leadership is jeopardizing university and departmental accreditations, in terms of transparency, consultation, and building a new organizational structure that can pass regulatory muster.
- A related proposal (not strictly a no-confidence motion, but adjacent) that any future declaration of financial exigency should automatically and immediately terminate the President, Provost, and CFO.

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- A view that even a motion that fails on a vote would create a formal record that faculty raised the issue, rather than implying tacit acceptance of how the crisis has been handled.

2. Feedback on the Restructured Colleges/Schools

- Concern about the professional impact of disciplinary redesignations of faculty, with a comment noting that removal of existing disciplinary designations eliminates the institutional record that supports accreditation
- Concern that the selection of leadership for newly restructured colleges/schools may have lacked transparency, and been driven by personal relationship more than institutional need
- Concern of insufficient feedback from faculty to obtain a clear picture of where the university can or cannot up-scale revenue
- Concerns of negative impacts of restructuring upon accreditation statuses

3. Requests for Operational Transparency on Layoffs

Respondents are asking for the senate/administration to share:

- A timeline for planning and executing layoffs.
- Whether voluntary departures or retirements will be counted toward layoff targets.
- How "success" of the layoff process will be defined and measured.
- Targeted layoff numbers by category/unit.
- Contingency plans — for both favorable and unfavorable scenarios — covering how the university intends to respond to market, faculty, staff, and student reaction once exigency and layoffs are public.

4. Research Administration Concerns

A marked decline in research administration functionality — citing vendor blacklisting, sponsor dissatisfaction, and recruitment/procurement breakdowns — and states that

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repeated concerns raised directly and through UFC meetings have not produced meaningful Provost-level action.

5. Communication and Timing Pressure

A concern that uncertainty about contracts, job status, and teaching assignments is increasingly costly as the semester approaches, and asks that upper administration commit to more frequent, open communication with UFC — framed as a matter of basic consideration for faculty and staff.

6. Additional Agenda Proposals

A suggestion to explore donation/transfer of university land, IP, and related infrastructure to the state in exchange for debt relief, arguing the university's mission scope isn't sustainable without outside support.

7. Retention economics

Concern that recent declines in student retention and recent dismantling of university-wide retention support structures by the Office of the Provost are weighing down on university revenue.