

Resolution of the University Faculty Council to the Board of Trustees

Executive Summary

Adopted July 22, 2026

The attached resolution is the product of a broad and rapid faculty consultation. In the five days following the July 17 announcement, the University Faculty Council held two town halls, received 48 responses through an open feedback form, and received written submissions from individual faculty and staff as well as formal collective responses from faculty of nine colleges, schools, and departments. Nearly 100 distinct comments and suggestions were individually assessed, and every factual claim in the resolution was verified against primary sources.

The faculty does not write to contest the Board's ultimate governance authority, and does not dispute that the university is under severe financial stress or that difficult steps are necessary. The Council takes no position for or against the declaration of financial exigency on its merits, because faculty have not been given the information a decision of this magnitude requires — and neither silence nor a bare yes-or-no vote would fairly represent the faculty's position.

The faculty's concern is the difference between urgency and haste. Over the past fourteen months, the information and influence available to faculty narrowed even as the university's deficit figures grew — from \$47 million to \$60 million for FY26, and to over \$100 million for FY27. A declaration this close to the fall semester — which begins August 17 — creates withdrawal, reputational, and enrollment exposure that may deepen rather than resolve a financial crisis. The university also has HLC and ABET accreditation visits scheduled this year, amongst others, on whose named criteria reductions of this scale would bear.

The resolution makes seven requests of the Board:

Each of these requests is a brief summary of the full request in the resolution and is an invitation to partner with the Council, whose standing with the faculty the consultation record above reflects.

1. That the Board's response to these requests be shared directly with the faculty.
2. A real and ongoing faculty role in the restructuring process, through a joint advisory body that draws on the faculty's documented professional expertise and participates in decision-making — with Board representatives welcome in the working groups.
3. That students and staff, who have had even less voice in this process than faculty, receive timely and accurate information.
4. That the Board defer its vote for a short period, during which the UFC Finance committee receives the complete financial model and underlying data to evaluate independently and report findings and recommendations to the BOT.
5. Should the Board nevertheless declare exigency, that it follow AAUP guidelines.
6. Proportionate reductions between academic functions and senior administration; protection of essential staff functions; no new senior administrative appointments except essential vacancies; reduced senior administrative compensation as shared sacrifice; separation dates set with benefit cycles in mind.
7. Reinstatement of a direct line to the faculty's perspective at Board meetings, an arrangement that has historical precedence.

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A Faculty Recommendation on the Declaration of Extraordinary Financial Exigency and the State of Shared Governance at Illinois Tech

Adopted July 22, 2026

To the Board of Trustees of Illinois Institute of Technology:

We begin by clarifying our understanding that the ultimate governance responsibility of Illinois Tech rests with the Board of Trustees, and we do not write to contest that authority. We write because the Faculty Constitution gives the University Faculty Council a role in making recommendations on matters including declarations of financial exigency, and because a decision of this magnitude deserves to be informed directly by the faculty's perspective, not only the administration's.

The university is under severe financial stress, and we do not dispute that difficult steps are necessary. The Illinois Tech faculty has always been ready and willing to contribute to the university's smooth functioning, and over the past year has gone above and beyond in its teaching, research, and service despite a near-paralysis of administrative offices and a near-complete exclusion from the decisions that affect it. For the reasons set out below, there is doubt in the faculty that the university's current academic leadership is equipped to successfully carry out a process as consequential and delicate as financial exigency.

This resolution is the product of a broad and rapid faculty consultation. In the five days following the July 17 announcement, the Council held two town halls, received forty-eight responses through open feedback forms, and received written submissions from individual faculty and staff as well as formal collective responses from faculty of nine colleges, schools, and departments. More than ninety distinct comments and suggestions were individually assessed, and every factual claim carried into this document was verified against primary sources before inclusion.

I. Faculty Perspective on the University and Its Leadership

Why This Moment Demands Unusual Care

The faculty does not dispute the university's urgency; what concerns it is the difference between urgency and haste. The timing itself carries real risk. A declaration this close to the start of the fall semester, with students already registered and international students still navigating the visa process, creates exposure the university may not be able to absorb — withdrawals, reputational harm, and the kind of enrollment contraction that may deepen rather than resolve a financial crisis.

The university also faces institutional and program-level accreditation reviews this year. Reductions of significant scale, and a process seen as bypassing shared governance with limited consultation and communication, bear on named criteria in those reviews: HLC Core Components *2.A. Ethics and Integrity*, *2.B. Transparency*, and ABET *Criterion 6 Sufficiency of Faculty*, amongst many others related to student outcomes and delivering on the mission of the university. The university has spent more than a year preparing its HLC Assurance Argument; action of this scale, taken now, would create a documented inconsistency between what has just been represented to the accreditor and the institution's actual state. Beyond institutional accreditation, the Law School, Business School, Counseling, and Clinical Psychology programs hold program-level accreditation from the ABA, AACSB, CACREP, and APA, respectively. For the ABA-, CACREP-, and APA-accredited programs, accreditation bears directly on graduates' eligibility for licensure. A declaration of exigency also creates exposure with

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lenders, suppliers, and donors, as well as the Department of Education, which oversees federal financial aid.

A Pattern of Shrinking Faculty Involvement

This is not a concern that began with this week's announcement — it is traceable across the past fourteen months.

- The faculty was told in May 2025 that a ten percent cut had already been achieved and that no layoffs were planned.
- By August 2025, the faculty was warned of serious headwinds and a hiring pause with no specifics.
- In October 2025, the faculty was given a \$47 million deficit figure for FY26 — disclosed at a Finance Committee meeting and a Council meeting drawing more than 130 faculty — with no breakdown despite direct requests — and that same month the President and Provost wrote jointly to the community that none of the difficult decisions ahead, including ‘right-sizing the organization,’ would be made ‘without broad input from across our entire community of faculty, staff, and students’ (University Budget Update, October 28, 2025).
- In December 2025, the faculty was told by the Finance Committee itself that personnel reductions were coming and that faculty needed to be involved.
- In February 2026, the faculty was shown portions of a first financial analysis, while administration admitted it had no finalized plan.
- In March 2026 the Council formed a Faculty Liaison Committee as the vehicle for faculty consultation on the financial situation. It met with the administration in March and April with limited information sharing; despite the committee’s requests, no meetings were held over the summer.
- In April 2026, the faculty was presented a general restructuring framework at an all-faculty meeting — attended by more than 250 participants — which faculty found arbitrary.
- In July 2026, faculty learned of the recommendation of exigency with no opportunity to ask questions. The president delivered a 25-minute presentation through Teams with no mechanism for feedback.

At each step, the real information and influence available to faculty narrowed even as the university’s own deficit figures grew, from \$47 million to \$60 million for FY26 and over \$100 million for FY27.

The pattern reflects an erosion of shared governance, in which faculty ideas have been sidelined and faculty committees have functioned as decoration rather than as genuine partners in decision-making. This exclusion might have been easier to accept had it coincided with the university’s improving fortunes. Instead, it has tracked the university’s decline step for step, culminating in a crisis now serious enough to bring the institution to the point of exigency.

A Pattern in How Academic Restructuring Has Been Conducted

The Faculty Handbook charges the university’s academic administration with “creating and supporting an outstanding community of faculty and students” and “providing a working environment that

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facilitates scholarly achievement.” The faculty raises the following pattern because, in practice, it has fallen short of that charge.

In April, academic administration held a series of six meetings over successive days with select groups of faculty to solicit feedback on the reorganization and the placement of certain units. Each session lasted 30 min to an hour; none was followed by meaningful consideration. When an academic restructuring framework was subsequently presented to the full faculty in April 2026, faculty found it vague and disconnected from the questions raised in the earlier feedback sessions. Several units developed their own proposals for how they might be reorganized, and the faculty does not believe that they were considered in good faith. Accounts subsequently received by the University Faculty Council describe a compressed faculty evaluation process, during which academic leaders were only given a few hours to present a case for their entire faculties.

The faculty of Illinois Institute of Technology represents an underutilized resource in this restructuring process. Across our schools and colleges, this faculty includes accomplished attorneys, credentialed financial analysts, economists, entrepreneurs who have founded and led companies, strategists who have advised some of the largest companies and organizations, and scholars whose expertise spans organizational behavior, urban planning, data science, architecture, and virtually every discipline implicated in a complex institutional transformation. Faculty members have attempted to provide input and help, but that expertise has not been leveraged — decisions affecting every member of this community for years to come were made instead by a small group of administrators, without the benefit of that collective knowledge. The Council's own Finance Committee, without up-to-date data or access to administration's models, performed an independent analysis of the university's financial position, and its conclusions have subsequently proven largely accurate — further evidence that faculty expertise has been available and yet not drawn upon. Nor is the faculty's willingness to help in doubt: its record of shared sacrifice during the COVID pandemic, sustained despite substantial reductions in administrative support, stands as precedent for what genuine faculty partnership in difficult institutional decisions looks like.

The Timing of This Announcement

The President's meeting on Friday, July 17, 2026 was the first mention to the faculty at large of even the possibility of declaring financial exigency — six days before the Board is scheduled to vote. No opportunity was provided during that meeting for faculty or staff to ask clarifying questions of the President. The news was presented, and then the Teams session immediately ended. New interim dean appointments were announced only hours before that meeting, underscoring how little advance notice has accompanied even critical leadership decisions.

Basic operational questions remain unanswered. The first concerns timing: when exigency would be declared, how long it would last, and whether reductions in force would take effect days before the fall 2026 semester, which begins August 17, twenty-five days after the scheduled Board vote. The second concerns continuity for students and research: how student services, advising, course assignments, and class sizes would be maintained; how ongoing research work, including PhD training, would continue; and what would happen to active research grants and the doctoral advisees of any terminated faculty. The third concerns day-to-day operations: whether adjunct budgets will change, so faculty can be informed of changes to their teaching schedules, and who now holds signature and permission authority where it was formerly a chair or associate chair.

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The July 17 presentation stated that positions to be reduced would be ‘identified by mission need’; by what process, on what criteria and data, and with what role for unit leaders that identification will be made has not been described. No faculty member has yet received new appointment letters, historically distributed around June 1. Regardless of the timing of any vote, faculty need these answers now in order to serve students.

The six days between the President’s July 17 announcement and the Board’s scheduled July 23 vote did not allow all the elements of the faculty’s normal deliberative processes to run — specifically, the Faculty Senate, whose procedures require one week’s notice to convene, could not have met within the window at all.

Why the Faculty Cannot Offer an Informed Recommendation

For these reasons, the University Faculty Council does not believe it is currently in a position to recommend for or against the declaration of financial exigency on its merits, and we do not believe that silence, or a bare yes-or-no vote, would fairly represent the faculty’s position. What we can tell the Board is that the faculty has not been given the information a decision of this magnitude requires.

The AAUP’s recommended regulations — the national norm where internal rules are silent — permit terminations on financial grounds only for a demonstrably bona fide exigency that less drastic means cannot alleviate, with an elected faculty body participating in that determination (Regulation 4c).

II. Requests to the Board

The faculty’s requests of the Board, presented below, are consistent with the administration’s own stated commitment to inclusive transparency.

1. That the Board’s response to these requests be shared directly with the faculty.
2. That the faculty be given a real and ongoing role in the restructuring process, consistent with the Faculty Constitution’s provision for shared governance, through a concrete mechanism: a joint advisory body or task force that draws on the faculty’s professional expertise and participates in decision-making, rather than only receiving information. The Council welcomes the participation of experienced Board representatives in the restructuring working groups.
3. That students and staff, who have had even less voice in this process than faculty, receive timely and accurate information about decisions affecting them: for students, how any reductions would affect their courses and their progress toward their degrees; for staff, how any reductions would affect their positions, responsibilities, and benefits.
4. That the Board defer its vote for a defined short period (30–60 days), because the faculty has not received information sufficient to evaluate the necessity, scope, or consequences of exigency. During the deferral, the administration is requested to provide the UFC Finance Committee the complete financial model and underlying data with a minimum two weeks to review — covering the causes of the financial challenges as well as the proposed responses, and a clear implementation plan — under confidentiality agreement if required, and that Board representatives meet directly with UFC leadership without administration intermediation.

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5. That, should the Board declare exigency, it follows the guidelines of the AAUP (American Association of University Professors).
6. That reductions be proportionate between academic functions and senior administration — by which we mean cabinet-level and officer positions — consistent with the administration's own July 17 commitment to prioritize administrative, operating, vacancy, and benefits actions before deeper reductions to the academic enterprise; that reductions be designed to protect essential staff functions, whose degradation faculty have experienced firsthand; that no new senior administrative appointments be made during the exigency period except where a vacancy is essential to operations; that senior administrative compensation be reduced over that period as a matter of shared sacrifice — a publicly acknowledged step that would contribute to rebuilding trust; and that separation dates for any departing employees be set with benefit cycles in mind — including tuition remission and tuition exchange — so that employees who enrolled in good faith do not forfeit benefits by a matter of days. The faculty regards staff as colleagues, and makes these requests with the whole community in mind.
7. That the Board reinstate a direct line to the faculty's perspective at Board meetings, historically provided through the presence of UFC leadership, so that the Board's understanding of the university's day-to-day functioning is not filtered through a small group of administrators.

Adopted by the University Faculty Council on July 22, 2026, and transmitted by the Chair of the University Faculty Council to the President and the General Counsel of the Illinois Institute of Technology, for distribution to the Board of Trustees.