

Faculty Senate/Council “Top 10” Faculty Initiatives – November 2016 (11/16/16 revision)

1) Paid pregnancy/parental leave throughout the university

Currently, many faculty members work with their department administrators to arrange leave for a new birth or adoption of a baby. In some cases, this means teaching extra courses before or after the birth/adoption leave period allowed by FMLA. A more uniform UI system for well-defined paid pregnancy/parental leave is desirable.

2) Raise the tenured/tenure-track to student (UG & grad/professional) ratio in each college

In order to remain competitive among our peer institutions and better serve our students, it is highly desirable to increase the number of tenure-track faculty relative to the number of students on our campus. This should be benchmarked to our peer institutions.

3) Invest in faculty hiring, competitive startup packages, and continuing research/scholarship support

UI needs to improve its ability to competitively hire and retain faculty. This is a particular challenge in disciplines that require substantial capital equipment. Without attention to this issue, we will lose the ability to train our undergraduate and graduate students by actively engaging them in cutting-edge research. It is also important to provide support to recruit and retain top-notch faculty in areas that typically do not have large pools of available external grant funding.

4) Increase the annual operating budget for the Senate Budget by \$15K per year

The Faculty Senate operates with a modest annual budget of \$16K that primarily covers expenses for Senate officers to attend Board of Regents meetings and the Big Ten Academic Alliance shared governance meeting, as well as to host the annual Faculty Council / Administration Retreat. We are frequently asked to sponsor important campus activities, but without financial resources, it is impossible to do this. A small increase in budget will provide the resources necessary for the faculty senate to develop and to cosponsor events that will bring the campus together around issues of common importance. This will allow us to more effectively contribute to strong UI shared governance.

5) Create a “Big Ideas” Program consisting of about a dozen multidisciplinary courses

These courses would be designed around themes and topics of current interest and importance, rather than focused in specific disciplines. They would be taught by teams of faculty, whose multidisciplinary research/scholarship collaborations would allow students to address complex problems in innovative ways.

6) Reinvigorate support and resources for the Graduate College

Reinvest in the Graduate College so that it can enhance its mission of helping graduate programs successfully train graduate students. Graduate students receive critical training and career preparation through their graduate careers at UI. Reinvestment in the Graduate College would enhance our ability to help students graduate in a timely fashion, and to prepare them to enter the job market.

7) Develop Faculty Scholar and Global Scholar awards programs

These faculty developmental leave programs will enhance the ability of our faculty to develop and to sustain successful cutting-edge research programs. Developmental leaves should be targeted to successful research active faculty, particularly those recently tenured who show great promise. In developing such programs, it will be important to establish processes to identify and quantify concrete beneficial outcomes for the faculty member and for the university.

8) Increase advanced undergraduate course offerings

One of the most important ways we train our students is to provide advanced upper level courses. These are the courses that will distinguish our students after they graduate and enter the work force, or continue in graduate training. Each college and discipline should develop and maintain a reasonable number of upper level, low enrollment courses.

Faculty support for initiatives of importance to our students

We wish to express our strong support for initiatives put forth by students that are important for the entire university community.

a) Focus on student mental and behavioral health. This will require campus wide awareness education on trauma, its impact on behavioral and mental health, and how to address these health issues.

b) An important topic is safety on our campus for students. Clear attention to student safety on and off of campus, particularly at night, is very important. Programs such as Nite Ride are helpful to keep students safe after late night university exams.