

UI Faculty Senate Statement on Recent Center and Institute Closures and Reductions

At a time when the University's ability to realize the best version of itself is limited by budget constraints, we must capitalize on our strengths and act more cohesively than ever to achieve the University's Strategic Plan. For the University's central and collegiate administration, that means fully embracing the practice, as well as the principle, of shared governance. For the Faculty Senate, this means being prepared to contribute our many resources to this joint effort to make informed decisions that benefit our institution. Shared governance has a strong history at Iowa. Building upon this culture of shared decision making is essential to face the many challenges ahead.

The decision making process that resulted in the expedient closures of multiple centers and institutes, including furloughing more than 30 staff, raises many concerns and deviates from this tradition. The Faculty Senate takes strong exception to this breach of shared governance. Principally, the problem lies with the lack of collaboration and communication with the faculty which has obscured what should have been a transparent—and *shared*—process. Notably, these unilateral actions run counter to the recent AAUP sanction removal. The effort to remove the sanction was spearheaded by the Faculty Senate and has been recognized nationally for producing positive shared governance interactions with the University's upper administration and the Iowa Board of Regents. By stark contrast, in the present case the administration largely ignored the opportunity to solicit meaningful input by faculty and other key stakeholders, forfeiting the opportunity to formulate creative solutions that may have prevented the closure of certain centers and institutes and may have allowed some programming to stay viable.

The Faculty Senate pledges to support our colleagues and wishes to assist them in finding solutions when dealing with the effects of the closures. We will remain alert to negative repercussions that the closures and reductions have on faculty activity, especially with regard to the university's research, teaching and outreach missions. When budget shortfalls are defining what is possible at the University, we must call upon our collective expertise and have a shared process to manage fiscal retrenchment.

The newly empanelled Shared Governance Advisory Task Force on Academic and Research Centers, Institutes, and Activities offers a viable, process-based solution going forward. This task force will convene during the fall semester of 2018 and will practice shared governance directly by reviewing recommendations from deans and vice presidents on possible closures, consolidations, and opportunities for expansion or other realignments throughout the academic and research enterprise.

The Faculty Senate affirms that the University of Iowa, as a state-supported, world-class research university, is obligated to generate knowledge and translate insights into improving the lives of all Iowans. We in the Senate are encouraged by the initiation of a combined effort to guide the University through a challenging time. We uphold collegiality, communication and collaboration as values that are essential to fulfilling the university's missions of teaching, research, and outreach.