

AAUP NEWS

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS - INDIANA UNIVERSITY, BLOOMINGTON

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AN INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY?

At its December 1981 meeting the Board of Trustees approved a proposal to establish an Institute for Advanced Study on the Bloomington campus. This decision has important implications for the setting of academic priorities and the allocation of funds at a time when cuts are being made in some established programs and badly needed resources are being denied in others. It is therefore particularly regrettable that the sponsors of this project did not seek the widest possible discussion in a variety of faculty bodies, especially the Bloomington Faculty Council, before taking the matter to the Trustees for approval. It is not too late, however, to ask some searching questions, to discuss them publicly, and to make sure that the function and operation of the Institute will demonstrably contribute to the essential teaching, research, and service mission of the Bloomington campus.

That these questions must be discussed now is suggested by the fact that the Institute is already beginning to drain off resources for which other programs and units are in keen competition. It has been widely reported that the IU Foundation has committed \$100,000 in seed money for the first year of the Institute's operation, and that it will continue to contribute that amount for a second and a third year. The Institute already occupies two rooms at the Poplars, and there is an active search under way for a suitable University building to serve as a permanent location. An equally active search is being conducted for an Institute director, which is now focusing on our own faculty, after the first choice--Gordon Ray of the Cuggenheim Foundation--indicated that he was not interested. But even a faculty member on part-time appointment to the directorship may be an expensive proposition at a time when hiring new faculty is all but impossible in many units.

There are indications that the debate over the cost of the Institute will be sidestepped by the argument that no general fund moneys are to be used for any part of its operation. But the fact remains that any sort of funding, no matter what its source, if channeled into the Institute will not be used to meet urgent needs in essential academic programs. If the IU Foundation has \$100,000 available, why not spend it for instance on faculty research grants, which may in the long run generate more outside funding than the Institute? Similar concerns arise when one looks at the priority rankings for the Capital Fund Campaign, in which the Institute now appears in second place with a \$10,000,000 price tag, right after \$20,000,000 for endowed chairs. Ten million more for endowed chairs, or ten million for library acquisitions, or ten million for a new theater building might well be better investments in the future welfare of this campus.

What is particularly disturbing in all of this is that after years of behind-the-scenes discussion, after Board approval, after initial allocation of seed money, and after appointment of the first Institute Fellow, the purpose and goals of the Institute for Advanced Study remain as unclear as ever. When the Concerned Titled Professors (CTP), the key group supporting the Institute, discussed this issue in the fall of 1980,

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the suggestions ranged from a concentration on basic research to giving the University a better image by sponsoring the appearance of "impressive individuals." Almost a year later, in October 1981, the CTP still had not arrived at anything resembling a coherent policy or statement of principles. There was some talk in that group about Vice President Gros Louis's idea of conducting an international conference a year after the Institute's founding, but not even the theme of such a conference has as yet been defined. More recently there have been press reports indicating that the Institute would sponsor research projects on "developing Indiana's economy, public health problems in underdeveloped countries, energy conservation, water supplies, influence of the arts on the quality of life, and broad questions of U.S. foreign policy" (*Herald-Telephone*, December 6, 1981). The recent appointment of Leonard Bernstein as the first Institute Fellow, one would assume, is related to the penultimate category in this list of possible activities, unless it indicates a revival of the earlier idea to invite "impressive individuals," or is merely the result of a decision to attach the Institute's name to an unrelated invitation issued long ago.

The Bloomington Faculty Council is slated to discuss the Capital Fund Campaign priorities at its meeting on January 19. That will be the appropriate time and place for a thorough assessment of the value of the Institute for Advanced Study. If a persuasive case can be made that it would bring important benefits to the campus as a whole in these times of retrenchment, the Council should endorse the project. But the burden of proof rests with those who have been actively advancing the Institute without public discussion and without a clearly articulated sense of purpose. If this process of public discussion is to succeed, individual faculty members should communicate their views to their Faculty Council representative, the AAUP or AFT, and the Bloomington Vice President.

The foregoing article has the endorsement of the AFT. The following one is a slightly expanded version of a press release prepared and issued jointly by the presidents of AFT- and AAUP-IUB, during the trustees' seminar in Bloomington, January 4-5.

PRESIDENT MACKEY'S ADVICE

Yogi Berra was right, according to Michigan State's President Maurice Cecil Mackey, in pointing out that if you don't know where you're going, you're apt to end up somewhere else. Describing his response to drastic cuts in state funding, Mackey told IU trustees he would have preferred more faculty input if time had permitted. He stressed the difficulty of maintaining clear lines of communication with faculty in the midst of the crisis. And he ended with the thought that IU might cope better with similar problems, because of its headstart in preparing for them.

The facts more than bear out Mackey's remarks. Last spring his outraged faculty were appealing to colleagues in schools all over the country for help in defending the principle of tenure. The issue of this newsletter for May, 1981, carried an account of the conflict by Frank Blatt, professor of physics at MSU and chair of the Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure in the AAUP chapter there. Donations made in support of Blatt's effort to set up a legal defense fund have now been returned to the senders. A court battle finally proved unnecessary, because Mackey's cavalier view of tenure antagonized not only the AAUP and Faculty Associates, but the Faculty Council, Steering

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Committee of Academic Council, University Committees on Faculty Affairs, Tenure, and Academic Policy, and many state legislators, including every member of the Senate Education Committee. None of these groups denied that Michigan State was in deep financial trouble, but all of them held that its survival was compatible with a patient effort to honor its commitments--through careful reallocation, early retirement options, inducements for temporary part-time employment, and so on. The trustees rescinded their "financial crisis" resolution, which would have permitted dismissal of tenure faculty, late in October. AAUP-MSU remains pessimistic about "the financial situation in our state and the future status of faculty at our university," and Mackey himself concedes that the scars from this war will last a very long time.

The retreat at which he spoke afforded plenty of evidence that I.U.'s trustees and administration are unlikely to repeat his mistakes. Vice President Gros Louis demonstrated that Planning for Excellence gives faculty a substantial role in gathering and weighing information on the relative merits of various programs. But the faculty still needs to clarify its share in making the decisions that are to be based on all this information. And it needs to secure its rights with a set of fully explicit procedures.

AFT and AAUP have joined in urging the Agenda Committee of the Faculty Council to schedule for the spring semester a thorough discussion of procedures to be followed in any kind of retrenchment or reorganization, including Planning for Excellence. Key features of an acceptable proposal include 1) elected faculty committees, entrusted with final responsibility for recommendations on the reduction of academic programs; 2) ample time for discussion of such recommendations, once they have been made; and 3) vigilant protection of tenure.

President Mackey, who has certainly upset many people in East Lansing, is only too apt to have an opposite, tranquilizing effect on the Bloomington faculty. Close study of his saga gives rise to the cheerful assurance that it won't happen here. The trouble is that this faculty can lose valuable ground by waiting passively to be told what *will* happen here. Bloomington's near future could be very different from MSU's recent past, without being by any means all that might be wished, or achieved. And the faculty will have itself to thank for that outcome, if it leaves the initiative entirely in the administration's hands.

Yogi Berra has a message for the faculty as well as the trustees. He once observed--in a dispute about when to turn on the ballpark lights--"It gets late early."

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