

The ad-hoc Bylaws Review Committee recommends the following action items for consideration by the Faculty:

Creation of standing Community Outreach and Public Engagement Committee

Current situation:

The current SLA committee for external relations is an ad-hoc committee.

Proposal:

Create the Community Outreach and Public Engagement Committee as a new standing appointed committee.

Section 4.X. Community Outreach and Public Engagement Committee

1. The Community Outreach and Public Engagement Committee, a student and public facing committee, shall help publicly promote scholarship, academic programs, and liberal arts values; work with appropriate university offices in identifying marketing and branding strategies focused specifically on the School of Liberal Arts; and help build the reputation of the School to increase majors and promote donations, scholarships, and sponsorships.
2. The Committee shall be composed of seven members: four appointed faculty members, a designated Executive Committee representative, a non-voting School administrative officer designated by the Dean, and a student.

Rationale:

Given the realities of higher education in the 21st Century, a regular standing, out-facing committee devoted to promotion of the School—its faculty, its students, its programs, and its vital role in the community and state—is a critical necessity. Just like other committees that oversee and advise on policy matters largely under the direction of the Dean’s Office, with corresponding Associate Deans (committees on Faculty Affairs, Student Affairs, Undergraduate Curriculum and Standards, Graduate Affairs, Budgetary Affairs, Research Affairs), this committee will give faculty oversight to faculty-operated, externally-facing activities while providing faculty feedback to the Dean’s Office representative. The committee will be charged with designing and implementing action plans relevant to and beneficial for the value of the liberal arts, and its activities should help produce increases in enrollments, declared minors and majors, and gifts, as well as more generally educate the public on the vital role of the liberal arts. Rather than a short-term fix for a transitory challenge, this committee should be constituted as a standing committee so that its work may develop over time, especially by establishing long-term connections with regional partners (e.g., IPS and township schools) and with sources of external funding and gifts. It should work to establish ongoing projects and programs for enhancing the visibility of the school and its unique contributions to the community, and it should work with the staff of Enrollment Services to initiate a systematic program for recruiting students to the School of Liberal Arts. As an outcome of a standing committee, work will extend from year to year, building on previous years’ gains, and providing continuity for multi-year plans and projects.

Known and expected benefits:

There are excellent examples of how faculty in liberal arts colleges and universities across the country have taken positive steps to promote the value and benefit of a liberal arts education. This committee can focus on the most successful of these models, adapting them to the specifics of the IU School of Liberal Arts, and recommending specific courses of action. Furthermore, this committee could work to enact specific goals set forth in the School's strategic plan and stated vision. With a standing committee dedicated to activities that promote and publicize the excellent work of the School to various audiences, the efforts to attract college-bound students to our programs should be more successful, and, as a result, enrollments at all levels of coursework should increase over time. Furthermore, a growing number of scholarships and experiential opportunities from area partners will also enhance recruitment efforts, and attract more academically talented students to our programs.