PROPOSED REVISION (Draft 1.0, 4 November 2021; pkz)
Engagement of Faculty Senate in assessing university-wide issues, initiatives, or
programs: SubCommittee on University Issues and Initiatives (SCUII)

SubCommittee on University Issues and Initiatives (SCUII)

**Rationale.** Significant issues that impact a broad portion of the university will always
arise, and faculty engagement with these is an important part of effective shared
governance that moves the institution forward. Because the Faculty Senate generally
has a full agenda and meets only several times per year, it is important that a means
exist for faculty, staff, and members of the administration to consult in a timely fashion
over issues that arise outside the normal framework of university operations, or do not
fall directly within the purview of existing standing committees and units.

Moreover, when proposals are made for major new initiatives and programs, a
consultative process helps establish a sense of faculty-administration cooperation in
moving the University forward. Faculty review and ultimately Senate endorsement on
behalf of the faculty can greatly help new programs be successful through helpful
suggestions and most important, broad campus support and engagement.

The Faculty Senate Subcommittee on University Issues and Initiatives (SCUII) exists to
facilitate consultation about issues arising, including proposed major university
initiatives and programs (which should also be reviewed by SCUII on behalf of the
Senate).

**Charge.** Issues and initiatives can be brought to SCUII either directly by members of
the administration or the faculty, or by referral from the Faculty Senate Executive
Committee (FSEC). SCUII and FSEC will coordinate and track ongoing discussions and
reviews.

To effectively address issues and shape successful initiatives, for enable effective
shared governance, and for SCUII and the Senate at large to be able to offer
constructive engagement, it is critical to emphasize that SCUII and FSEC be consulted
early and often. SCUII cannot help with issues it does not know about, or already-
completed proposals about which if gets late fait-accompli notification! [this paragraph
might go on the web description only, maybe as part of a how-to FAQ?]

In considering issues and initiatives, SCUII will first determine whether existing
committees and groups can better assess the matter at hand, or should at least be
included in discussions and review. SCUII will then act to either discuss the issue and
make a recommendation directly, or coordinate a broader review process that might
include consulting other groups, organizing information sessions such as town halls, or
gathering data and information. SCUII will also monitor the formation of proposed new
committees and consult with FSEC over possible alternatives (consistent with R&P
limits on the formation of new committees and similar service roles).
With respect to larger initiatives and new programs, SCUII’s role is not to shape them but to help provide input at two stages (1) Very early in the development of a potential initiative or alteration to University operations (before funds are expended, steps are taken, or faculty are consulted), SCUII can help by acting as a sounding board for the potential idea and by making suggestions about a consultative process. (2) Once a mature and fleshed-out proposal exists, SCUII can provide a more formal review of the proposal. This might include organizing input sessions for stakeholders, assessing projected funding and staffing impacts, and writing a formal report that in some cases can serve as the basis for a Senate vote to support the proposal or not.

SCUII will act in best faith to act in a timely fashion to prepare a recommendation or issue a report, scaling its response to the urgency and magnitude of the matter under consideration.

**Scope.** Issues and initiative that should come to SCUII will vary in scope and time sensitivity. Generally, they will have one or more of the following attributes:

- cross-College or at least cross-departmental
- involve and impact a significant number of faculty, staff and students
- involve significant budget changes or allocations that could have broader impacts
- significantly change the culture and operations of the University
- not fit within the scope of any single existing Senate or Faculty committee

Given that Colleges do not have formal faculty-governance structures and given that many issues might involve non-academic units, SCUII and FSEC will interpret this scope with some flexibility.

**Key Principles.** SCUII will analyze issues and initiatives with an eye towards their fit with or impact on Lehigh’s priorities and vision for the future. Four key principles will guide discussion:

- in the spirit of shared governance and full engagement, are proposed responses to issues or new initiatives based on a complete and unhurried consultative process that thoroughly examines impacts?
- how does the issue or initiative impact Lehigh’s commitment to diversity and inclusion?
- how does the issue or initiative relate to Lehigh’s focus on the highest standards of academic rigor?
- are proposed initiatives consistent with our vision of what Lehigh’s research and educational portfolios should be in the future?

**Outcomes.** Depending on the scope of the matter, responses from SCUII could range across the following:

- direct informal response or recommendation, including referral to other groups
- placing the matter on the Senate agenda for broader discussion
• before responding, organizing town halls and other consultations; gathering data
• writing a formal report assessing the issue or initiative
• proposing a Senate or even a full-faculty vote of endorsement on responses to an
  issue or on an initiative

Membership. Core membership of the subcommittee consists of four members of the
Faculty Senate, one of whom is an active member of FSEC. For any particular matter,
SCUII can choose to temporarily expand its membership to include informed members
of the faculty at large, including faculty who are advocates of initiatives as well as those
who are impacted or express serious concerns.