

## **SubCommittee on University Issues and Initiatives (SCUII)**

**Contact:** To bring an issue, initiative, or program to SCUII's attention, contact either its current chair or any member of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.

**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, to 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 should be consulted early and often. SCUII cannot help with issues it does not know about, nor with already-completed proposals about which it gets fait-accompli notification.

In considering issues and initiatives, SCUII will first determine whether existing committees and groups can better assess the matter at hand or should be included in discussions and review. SCUII will then 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 some issues might involve non-academic units, SCUII and FSEC will interpret this scope with 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.

*31 January, 2022 (pkz)*