

FA News: Restructuring Settlement (2/26/2019)

We are happy to announce that the FA has signed an agreement with the administration to settle most of our grievances about restructuring. The gist of the agreement is this: the administration has agreed to withdraw their restructuring proposals for a number of proposed schools, and in return we agree to drop our grievances about those schools. The proposed schools involved are the following:

- Architecture, Art & Design
- Humanities (including Africana Studies)
- Media, Communication and Performing Arts
- Social Science and Multicultural Studies

The settlement also has important consequences for the proposed School of Management & Marketing; the proposed School of Human Sciences; and the proposed School of Engineering. A full summary of the settlement can be found at this link:

<https://siucfa.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/settlement-summary.pdf>

I would be happy to share the formal document with anyone who requests a copy.

This agreement is a major victory for shared governance. It also demonstrates the value of a faculty union. As a union, the FA can bargain legally binding agreements with the administration, and see to it that those agreements are kept.

Without the contract's Article 9, the restructuring process would have gone very differently indeed. The Montemagno administration was eager to transform every unit on campus in a matter of months. The administration was most enthusiastic about the shared governance that they imagined taking place only after faculty were arranged in new schools, and had to come to terms with those new arrangements, whether they had supported them or not. The administration appeared undaunted by votes opposing the elimination of departments by faculty in units, by the Faculty Senate, Graduate Council, and both undergraduate and graduate student governments.

But Article 9 ensured that faculty were full partners in this process. Where faculty agreed that the proposed changes were in the best interest of their program and their students, they have moved forward. Neither faculty nor the FA oppose changes that makes sense. But where faculty opposed the administration's plans, the proposals have, for the most part, been redesigned or put on hold.

So the union secured faculty the opportunity to have a real say about the future of SIUC. But had faculty, students, and community members not rallied to share their concerns about the proposed restructuring, that opportunity would have been lost. In other words, the union's legal authority made the views and votes of faculty, students

and others count. To his credit, Montemagno himself came to realize that he had to respect dissenting views, backed as they were by the faculty union; talks on this settlement were initiated before his death, and he was clearly on board with the basic idea of the agreement.

This settlement is not the end of the restructuring process—nor does it resolve all of our concerns about that process. The agreement does not cover grievances concerning the proposed School of Analytics, Finance, and Economics; the School of Education; or the School of Physical Sciences. Those grievances will go to arbitration, absent an agreement between faculty and administration to resolve them. And while the settlement prevents the administration from introducing any new merger plans for the rest of this year, they have made it clear that they are not done with restructuring, including in the areas covered by the agreement.

Nor does the settlement address the issue of our final college structure, or the administration's plan for a lengthy transitional period during which many schools will operate outside the college structure, leaving other colleges in pieces. Many faculty who otherwise support the foundation of schools in their areas reject this approach. And faculty in areas not yet formed into schools face a still more uncertain future. SIUC is now an interim university, with an interim structure, and interim leaders from top to bottom. Most unit leaders, whether technically interim or not, have contracts that run out on May 15, even when their units are now guaranteed to last at least another year. This is a shoddy way to run a university.

Thus the main products of restructuring have been divisiveness, disorder, and dysfunction. This is why the FA has repeatedly called for the administration to implement schools that faculty support, integrate them quickly into a coherent college structure, and put an end to our self-imposed organizational chaos.

SIUC faces real challenges, above all the enrollment crisis. To address those challenges we need to reestablish a coherent organizational structure, and develop ideas for change that are based on evidence and argument, ideas that can gain the support of students, faculty, and staff. Shared governance, not as an empty slogan but a genuine partnership between staff, faculty, and students, is the way to identify and implement the changes we need to make if SIUC is to flourish.