

2123 words/ 14.6 minutes

President's Report to the Board of Trustees  
Remarks of Michael A. McRobbie  
President, Indiana University  
Board of Trustees Business Meeting  
Via Zoom  
Friday, April 9, 2021  
10:45 a.m.

1. HONORING LAUREN ROBEL

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As you noted, my friend and colleague for over 20 years, Provost and Executive Vice President Lauren Robel, is stepping down from her administrative roles at the end of June to return to the Maurer School of Law faculty, where she has been a highly distinguished member of the faculty for over three decades

I want to say again, as I have in many other places, how immensely grateful to Lauren I am for her extraordinary efforts on behalf of the Bloomington campus and of IU, not just in her current positions but in all the positions she has held at IU since 1985. I am sure the whole university shares this gratitude. It has been a glittering record of sustained achievement and excellence. In my more than 40 years in academia, Lauren has been one of the finest colleagues I have ever known. Her intelligence, integrity, decency, prodigious work ethic, and creativity put her in a class of her own.

Provost Robel was intimately involved in the establishment and development of five new schools on the Bloomington campus: the School of Public Health-Bloomington; the Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Affairs; the Luddy School of Informatics, Computing, and Engineering; the Eskenazi School of Art, Architecture + Design; and The Media School. Each of these schools has opened up extensive new

opportunities for students and for faculty scholarship and research and will help profoundly change the face of this campus for years to come.

Provost Robel has also played a major role in the development of the health sciences at IU Bloomington—working in close conjunction with IU Health and the leadership of IU's clinical schools—to consolidate most of the academic health science programs on the Bloomington campus in the new Health Sciences Building. This will be collocated with the new IU Health Bloomington Hospital and will, in turn, create the largest academic health center outside of Indianapolis. It will allow these programs to grow substantially and produce many more graduates in these in-demand areas.

Provost Robel has also overseen the establishment of several visionary initiatives designed to focus IU Bloomington's vast expertise and resources on improving the quality of life in communities in southwest Indiana. These include the Center for Rural Engagement, which has quickly become a national model for how universities can support and help address the challenges facing rural residents and communities. IU Corps, a branch of the center, has brought together numerous faculty and staff from across the campus to work with community partners on many of the challenges of these rural communities. Since its formation, the center has mobilized more than 4,900 IU students to help Hoosier communities.

Provost Robel's leadership has also fostered many programs that have enhanced and strengthened the arts and humanities on the campus to which she has a deep commitment, including the creation of the Arts & Humanities Council, which, along with a number of other arts and humanities centers, now has a vibrant new home in the Gayle Karch Cook Center for the Public Arts and Humanities in a renovated Maxwell Hall, which we will celebrate at an event this afternoon.

We will have a number of opportunities to honor Provost Robel in the coming months, though sadly, they will be heavily curtailed by all of our pandemic restrictions. But I join Chairman Mirro today in expressing our most grateful thanks for her service to Indiana University and wishing her the best in her future endeavors.

## 2. MOURNING THE PASSING OF THREE GIANTS OF IU

I also want to take a moment this morning to pay tribute to three legendary members of the Indiana University community whose passing within the last few days all of us continue to mourn.

### 2.1 PATRICK O'MEARA

As the trustees are aware, IU Vice President Emeritus and Professor Emeritus Patrick O'Meara died last week in Bloomington.

For many decades, Patrick represented IU with extraordinary grace, intelligence, professionalism, and collegiality and helped elevate IU's global reputation to remarkable new heights.

He was one of the principal contributors to building and expanding IU's international engagement and presence through record-breaking study abroad programs and through partnerships he fostered with universities around the world.

Patrick was also an outstanding scholar in international development, comparative politics, and African politics. He taught and mentored hundreds of students, many of whom are now faculty members and administrators at top universities nationwide and worldwide.

In 2007, I appointed Patrick as IU's first-ever vice president for international affairs. Among his many other accomplishments in that role, he led the effort to establish one of the nation's first international strategic plans at any college or university.

Patrick received many IU awards, including the President's Medal for Excellence, which I had the pleasure of presenting to him in 2011 at the inaugural Patrick O'Meara

International Lecture. This lecture series is—and will continue to be—a fitting way to honor all Patrick gave to IU and his students, colleagues, and friends over the years.

Patrick was one of the kindest, wisest, and most genuine scholars our university has ever produced. On behalf of all of us at IU, I want to once again send our deepest condolences to his family, friends, former colleagues, and others whose lives he touched and enriched.

## 2.2. MIKE DUNN

We also mourn the passing of J. Michael Dunn, founding dean and professor emeritus of informatics and computer science at the Luddy School of Informatics, Computing, and Engineering.

Mike was a highly acclaimed researcher who, in 2010, was elected as a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, one of the country's oldest and most prestigious academic societies.

I had the privilege of meeting Mike in 1975 when I was a graduate student at the Australian National University, where he was a visiting professor. I had the great privilege of working closely with him throughout the year he was there, and we stayed in regular touch thereafter and became close friends. In 1996, he was instrumental in nominating me for the position of IU's first vice president for information technology. In a very real sense, I would not be here were it not for Mike.

Mike made enormous early contributions towards building IU's current standing as a leader in the pervasive use and application of information technology. In 1997, I appointed him as chair of IU's University Information Technology Committee, which produced IU's ground-breaking 1998 IT strategic plan that is now the gold standard for such plans in higher education.

Mike was the founding dean from 2000 to 2007 of the nation's first-ever school of informatics here at IU, which, within a few short years, developed into one of the nation's largest, broadest, and best schools of its kind.

IU will miss Mike dearly, and I will greatly miss his wisdom, mentorship, and friendship.

Our deepest sympathies go out to his wife, Sally; children, Jon and Jennifer; his grandchildren; other family, friends, and former colleagues; and the many individuals who had the privilege of knowing and working with this great scholar and even greater individual.

### 2.3 RUDY POZZATTI

And late last month, we also mourned the passing of IU Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Fine Arts Rudy Pozzatti. A prolific artist and master printmaker, Professor Pozzatti was an instrumental figure in the development of the American print as a serious art form in the 1950s and early 1960s, and he remained one of the nation's leading printmakers.

Professor Pozzatti's undergraduate studies in art were interrupted by his service in the U.S. Army during World War II. He was a member of the "Greatest Generation" and served in the 659th Field Artillery Battalion, which was part of General George Patton's Seventh Army, and he fought in the Battle of the Bulge.

He joined the IU faculty as an assistant professor of drawing and painting in 1956 and helped build what was already a strong printmaking program into a national powerhouse.

In 1979, Professor Pozzatti co-founded the legendary Echo Press in Bloomington, which published limited-edition fine art prints and books until it closed in 1995.

His work is displayed in many eminent permanent collections around the world including the White House, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the National Gallery of Art, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

I had the pleasure of presenting him with the IU President's Medal for Excellence in 2018.

Our deepest sympathies go out to his wife, Dorothy; their five children, including Mia Williams, who serves as University Landscape Architect in the Office of IU's Vice President for Capital Planning and Facilities; their grandchildren; other family members; friends and former colleagues; and the many people around the world who were touched by his art and his extraordinary life.

### 3. STANDING WITH IU'S ASIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Mr. Chairman, you and the trustees are aware that the horrific recent shooting in Atlanta, which claimed the lives of six Asian women, has spotlighted a deeply troubling surge in harassment, hostility, and discrimination across our nation toward Asian Americans.

Tragically, there have been a reported 3,800 hate incidents against Asian Americans over roughly the past year.

These numbers are abhorrent and simply unacceptable.

At IU, we stand firmly in solidarity with and support of our Asian American and Pacific Islander communities — and all of our international students, faculty, and staff. These include the more than 5,000 Asian and Pacific Islander students who attend IU and are vital members of their campuses and local communities. We vigorously condemn the rising level of racism, xenophobia, scapegoating, and anti-Asian sentiment across our

country. And we will continue to underscore that anti-Asian racism and racism toward any group of individuals have absolutely no place on IU's campuses.

IU's Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Multicultural Affairs, James Wimbush, Provost Robel, and the Asian Culture Center have spoken out against the spike in anti-Asian violence across Indiana and the nation and, with the assistance of other IU units, have provided valuable information about ways to stand and fight against racism all throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

The serious commitment and energy of the IU community toward countering these shameful trends gives me great confidence that we can have a major impact in stopping the scourge of racism in our society.

#### 4. COVID-19 VACCINE PODS AT SIMON SKJODT ASSEMBLY HALL AND IUPUI

Finally, increasing numbers of members of the IU community—and increasing numbers of Hoosiers—are receiving one of the highly effective COVID-19 vaccines, and overall, 20 percent of Americans have now been vaccinated. The massive impact of this on the pandemic means we are growing ever closer to the time when we can safely return to normal university operations—and, more generally speaking, something resembling normal life as we know it.

On March 29, the COVID-19 vaccine clinic site at the Monroe Convention Center moved to Simon Skjodt Assembly Hall on the Bloomington campus. IU is operating the site in coordination with the Monroe County Health Department and providing free COVID-19 vaccines to those eligible, which now includes anyone who lives in the state and is age 16 or older. The site is open to the public, not only those affiliated with IU. I toured this facility last night to see the dozens of dedicated IU staff and volunteers skillfully vaccinating hundreds and hundreds of IU students and others. We are all immensely grateful to them for these outstanding efforts.

As of last night, 5,975 vaccine shots had been administered at Simon Skjodt Assembly Hall, and of course, many more members of the IU community have received vaccines at other locations.

A COVID-19 vaccination POD, or point of dispensing, also opened in the IUPUI Campus Center on Tuesday of this week to vaccinate IUPUI faculty, staff, and students. As of last night, 623 vaccine shots have been administered there.

And IU's regional campuses are also stepping up to help the state's vaccination rollout in a number of ways, including through on-campus vaccination PODs, providing support to county health departments at off-campus sites, and partnering with regional healthcare organizations and FEMA.

The many individuals across the university involved in setting up and communicating about these efforts deserve our most grateful thanks. And I strongly encourage all who are eligible to sign up to receive one of the free, safe, and effective vaccines to protect yourself and all the people you love against the virus.

As optimistic as we are, I continue to stress that the battle is not yet won. For the remainder of the spring semester and into the summer, we must continue to strictly observe IU's policies—including masking, social distancing, avoiding crowds and groups, personal hygiene, and complying with regular mitigation testing—which have proved so effective.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I return the floor to you.