

October 21, 1999

The Honorable Frank L. O'Bannon
Governor of the State of Indiana
206 State House
200 W. Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Governor O'Bannon:

East central Indiana is privileged to have located within its region, a campus, programs, and degrees from two of the nation's distinguished universities and a campus of a statewide two-year technical college.

Ten years ago 1400 students were enrolled at IU East and 600 at Ivy Tech. Today more than 4000 students are receiving post secondary education at Indiana University East, Purdue University Programs and Ivy Tech State College. While numbers do not tell the entire story, they are indicative of growth and success.

Ivy Tech State College provides solid technical education and workforce development, Purdue University School of Technology offers specific professional programs, and IU East provides a full range of liberal arts and professional degree programs, at both the associate degree and baccalaureate degree levels as well as pre and post baccalaureate certificates. This combination of higher education provides the opportunity to acquire job related skills and the knowledge and tools needed to achieve professional career goals and enriched lives.

As we move into the 21st century we know that we are headed for a knowledge-based economy. As faculty of IU East we are confident that we are preparing our students not only to survive but also to prosper in this kind of economy. We help our students develop depth in a field of knowledge, enhance communications skills, think rationally, make informed opinions, and create new ideas. Furthermore, we expose them to arts, history, technology, democratic ideals and to people and cultures different from their own.

When IU East was established, about 27 years ago, a number of states had just begun to develop community colleges. While Indiana did not create a community college system at that time, many of the strengths seen in community colleges were incorporated into the vision of this campus. As IU East developed, we embraced the notion of being the “community’s college.” As we grew and expanded our curriculum, degree programs, services and physical facilities we did not lose sight of our early commitment to serve our community’s needs. That commitment continues today.

Courses, degrees and support services typically offered by community colleges are currently available at IU East, Ivy Tech and Purdue University Programs. A significant percentage of IU East students are enrolled in associate degree level programs and our tutorial labs for math, reading and writing are equipped with the latest technology.

Students typically thought of as those served by a community college, adult learners, workers needing additional skills, part time students, and individuals seeking personal enrichment, are currently served by the existing institutions. The average age of students at IU East is 27 years old, and fifty-four percent are part-time.

Our comprehensive mission requires us to provide these students, as well as our traditional students, with opportunities through the baccalaureate level. As one of eight campuses of Indiana University, we are part of a society of world scholars, with access to global resources that allow us to prepare our students for professional positions in business, education, nursing, the arts, the sciences, or for graduate school.

As members of the academic community, we support initiatives that improve the access to higher education for all Hoosiers. We believe that in the community of Richmond, the counties of Wayne, Fayette and Henry and all of east central Indiana, the resources of Indiana University, Purdue University and Ivy Tech State College are meeting the current, and are prepared to meet the future higher education needs of the region.

While we agree that the intent of the community college initiative to open up higher education to those areas of the state that are underserved is commendable, we believe that where adequate and appropriate educational opportunity already exists, it would be an ineffective use of state resources, our tax dollars, to duplicate existing programs and degrees.

We believe that we, along with Ivy Tech, are the community’s college – providing skilled workers and productive professionals for our region and at the same time educating creative doers and leaders for our state, our nation and beyond.

We, the faculty of IU East, by unanimous consent urge you, and our state legislators, to review the higher education opportunities currently available within our region. We are confident that having done so, you will conclude that Indiana University East, Purdue University School of Technology and Ivy Tech State College Region 9 have the resources, the energy and the commitment to meet current educational needs, while actively planning for the needs of the 21st century.

Sincerely,

K. Michael Foos, Faculty Senate President
for the Indiana University East Faculty

cc. Senator Allen Paul
Representative Dick Bodiker
Senator Beverly Gard
Senator Robert Jackman
Representative Thomas Saunders
Representative Robert Hoffman
Stan Jones, Commissioner of Higher Education