

Greetings Colleagues,

On behalf of the IUB chapter of the AAUP, I write with an urgent request that all IU faculty take a moment to participate in the [10-day public review and comment period](#) for two extremely important University Policies: **BOT-11** and **BOT-15**. **All responses must be sent to policies@iu.edu by April 15, 2026.**

Recent review of the proposed policies by the IUB AAUP Executive Committee has raised serious concerns about BOT-11 and BOT-15's implications for faculty job security, academic freedom, and shared governance at IU. These proposed revisions should not be understood as merely technical or organizational edits. In both BOT-11 and BOT-15, the revisions alter where authority sits, how protections are defined, and how much discretion is left to administrators when making decisions that affect tenure, promotion, discipline, and future employment.

Below I provide a summary of these concerns for your review. At this critical stage, it is essential that faculty take part in this brief 10-day review and comment period. Please consider reviewing these proposals not only for wording changes, but for what protections are removed, narrowed, or made optional. This will be the only opportunity for faculty to document their concerns and participate in the policy revision process.

The following bullet points are provided only for your review and consideration. Feel free to copy/paste, modify, or ignore any of these points as you feel appropriate. But please, submit a response!

Respectfully submitted,

David McDonald, President

IUB AAUP

BOT-11 Faculty and Librarian Tenure and Promotion

While the proposed BOT-11 policy includes laudatory efforts to streamline language, align expectations across campuses, and include faculty and librarians within a unified framework, the way in which BOT-11 redefines and weakens tenure protections warrants faculty response.

- BOT-11 redefines tenure in ways that weaken its fundamental protections. The policy frames tenure as contingent on factors such as the availability of resources and the ongoing need for a position, rather than as a stable, long-term commitment that can be terminated only under extraordinary circumstances with due process and faculty representation. Tenure has long served as a cornerstone of academic life, protecting academic freedom and enabling institutions to attract and retain outstanding scholars

and teachers. When tenure is perceived as uncertain or conditional, it risks undermining both faculty security and the university's reputation.

- BOT-11 strips faculty governance organizations of any authority in establishing and implementing tenure. Tenure becomes reversible based on criteria that are implied and not explicitly defined. University administration is empowered with significant discretion in this policy, with faculty exercising only limited advisory roles.
- BOT-11 should provide a more forceful reaffirmation of tenure as a continuous appointment grounded in a mutual commitment: ongoing contributions from faculty and sustained institutional support in return. Any conditions under which tenure may be revoked or appointments altered should be explicitly defined, limited, and aligned with established policies governing financial exigency, program restructuring, and dismissal for cause.

To rebuild trust among faculty and administration, and to preserve IU's international reputation, BOT-11 should align with widely accepted academic standards on tenure and reinforce institutional responsibility in protections therein.

BOT-15 Academic Appointees Responsibilities and Conduct

The proposed BOT-15 policy on Academic Appointees Responsibilities and Conduct has generated widespread concern. While framed as a procedural update, the policy introduces significant risks to due process, shared governance, and academic freedom.

- The revised policy significantly weakens due process protections, allowing investigations and sanctions to proceed without clear evidentiary standards, meaningful opportunities for response, or full access to evidence. At the same time, it concentrates authority in upper administration while removing or minimizing the role of elected faculty bodies in reviewing cases or advising on sanctions.
- BOT-15 centralizes investigative and disciplinary authority in senior administrators, particularly the Chief Academic Affairs Officer (CAO), with minimal oversight. The absence of meaningful checks and balances creates conditions for unilateral decision-making and leaves faculty vulnerable to inconsistent or arbitrary enforcement.
- BOT-15 removes or weakens faculty participation in misconduct processes. Previous provisions allowing elected faculty committees to review cases or advise on severe sanctions have been eliminated or made optional.
- Equally troubling is the policy's reliance on vague and subjective definitions of misconduct, which risk arbitrary enforcement and may chill teaching, research, and open discussion in the classroom. Revisions affecting academic freedom and expressive activity further heighten concern about potential overreach into protected forms of speech.

- BOT-15 revisions lack good faith informal resolution processes, the overbroad use of emergency measures, and the lack of clarity regarding how findings may be used in future evaluations. Taken together, these policy revisions create a system that lacks adequate checks and balances and does not reflect long-standing norms of fairness or shared governance.
- BOT-15 does not clearly define how long findings remain in personal records or how they may be used in future evaluations. Concerns about repeated or prolonged consequences, including use in post tenure review, are not addressed, effectively creating the possibility for faculty to be subjected to double jeopardy in the sanction process.
- BOT-15 does not include parallel standards governing administrative conduct. The policy imposes extensive expectations on faculty without corresponding mechanisms to hold administrators equally accountable for misuse of authority.

Any policy governing faculty conduct must be grounded in transparent procedures, clear standards of evidence, meaningful faculty participation, and robust protections for academic freedom. BOT-15 in its current form does not meet these expectations.