AAUP PURDUE CHAPTER STATEMENT ON S-19

The American Association of University Professors Purdue chapter (AAUP-Purdue) notes with strong concern the release by the Purdue University administration of S-19 on October 15th. S-19 is a new standard governing Purdue’s Intellectual Property policy. It gives the University broad power to hold intellectual copyright and ownership over Courseware and Online Modules designed by Purdue faculty. Purdue AAUP is concerned that this standard does not represent the interests of Purdue faculty, who were not consulted in its formation.

S-19 was released with little fanfare and to the surprise of various faculty stakeholder groups, and yet shortly after the announcement of a partnership between Purdue and edX to offer low cost Master’s Degree programs through the Schools of Civil, Mechanical, and Electrical and Computer Engineering. The timing suggests the University wanted the Standard in place when edX began that favored the administration’s concerns over faculty governance.

Purdue last revised their Intellectual Property policy in 2007 in order to clarify what had been considered a confusing policy. From the press release:

“[Peter Dunn, associate vice president for research] says the revision process for the policy began in fall 2005, when President Martin Jischke appointed a task force of faculty and administrators to review the policy’s effectiveness. In March 2006, the task force presented its findings and recommendations.

“’We spent the next year reviewing the policy with stakeholders in the University, including deans, chancellors of regional campuses, and the Faculty Affairs Committee of [the] University Senate. It was broadly discussed to identify any issues that might be of concern to the University community,’ Dunn says.”

In 2007, then, the administration sought a broad consensus among faculty and other stakeholders when crafting this new policy. According to the chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee of the University Senate, the FAC was excluded from the process of producing S-19, and it appears no other committees were consulted in this Standard’s production.

Intellectual property rights are integral to the faculty’s teaching and research, and thus we believe the faculty should be centrally involved in any such decisions regarding policy revisions or standards articulation. The lack of faculty involvement in crafting S-19 is of central concern to the AAUP, given that defending and strengthening faculty governance is a core part of our mission. Accordingly, we are frustrated that the
Standard was written with no significant involvement of the Senate, let alone other faculty stakeholder groups such as Purdue’s numerous instructors and creators of online course offerings and materials.

We understand from our AAUP colleagues at IUPUI that [IU underwent a revision of their instructional intellectual policy in 2014](https://www.indiana.edu/~iu-aaup/policies.html), with significant faculty participation in the process. Their revised policy appears to provide much stronger guidance and structure to the protection of faculty rights than do our current standard and policy.

Given that revision to the previous IP policy went through the Faculty Affairs Committee of the University Senate, the AAUP Purdue chapter requests that the administration suspend implementation of S-19 until the University Senate has discussed it and had the opportunity to propose amendments.

We further call upon the University Senate to discuss and vote upon the changes to IP policy contained with S-19.

Finally, we urge all Purdue faculty members to withhold from signing Online Course Agreements until S-19 has been reviewed by the University Senate.

This chapter statement was signed Nov 6, 2019.

Chapter statements must be approved by 50% or more of the chapter members.

Respectfully submitted by Alice Pawley, chapter secretary/treasurer.