

To: College of Engineering Faculty Affairs Committee

From: Arvind Raman, Executive Associate Dean, College of Engineering  
Robert Frosch, Senior Associate Dean of Facilities and Operations, College of Engineering



Date: September 14, 2021

Subj: Proposal for new listserv

Robert Frosch and I have reviewed the proposal for a new listserv, which was submitted by the Faculty Affairs Committee to us on April 14, 2021 and have discussed it with the Provost's office and university counsel. Together, we felt the proposal does not adequately convey a "use case" for the new listserv. It is not clear, for example, what important information regarding "news, events and resources relevant to faculty" one is unable to adequately communicate via existing [College email channels](#). Furthermore, it appears the moderators desire full reign over the propriety of any messages sent to the listserv. Such an open forum is inconsistent with the purpose of university email services.

University email services "are considered an official means for communicating University business and may, in some cases, be the sole means of communication. Staff, faculty and students are required to activate their University Email Account and will be presumed to have received and read all official University email messages sent to their University Email Account." (*University Standard S-7, Electronic Mail*). Based on this standard, university listservs are not an appropriate means for transmitting informal, non-mandatory communications from which faculty and staff may "unsubscribe." Using listservs in this manner dilutes official communications and desensitizes recipients to the importance of official messages from the university or college.

The proposal posits that there is a "need for a forum where faculty can communicate with each other..." Assuming arguendo that this is a true need and recognizing the above standards for use of official university email services, we recommend the Faculty Affairs Committee host its informal forum on a social media channel of its choosing hosted outside Purdue. The College will assist the Committee in marketing the channel to interested faculty and staff. The moderators of the forum will make clear that it is not an official Purdue University or College of Engineering social media channel and will accept full legal and editorial responsibility for the content of the forum.

Of course, the Faculty Affairs Committee (and, any School, Department, Committee, faculty, or staff member in the College of Engineering) may request distribution of messages regarding important news, events and other resources relevant to members of the College community via the existing College process, found at:

<https://engineering.purdue.edu/Engr/AboutUs/Administration/AcademicAffairs/Policies/mass-email-distribution>.

Cc: Mung Chiang  
Peter Hollenbeck  
Trent Klingerman