

Faculty Senate Discussion on Closure of IFD

I think the first response should be that we do not want a change! The IFD as it is has been operating is providing the supports needed, including adapting to faculty needs, since 2004, and before that for several years as the Institute for the Study of College Teaching. A safe space in which to develop, free of management interference and oversight that is **faculty led for faculty** - that is the model the faculty want and have had for over two decades. Ask our colleagues in the faculty assembly what they want and they will describe the IFD as it is now.

If people want to read something useful, look in the IFD under Newsletters and Reports and find the Self-Study done 5 years ago. That clearly delineates why the IFD model is the right one for Stockton

I am extremely concerned about IFD moving to the administration and out of faculty control. I have not read or heard of any rationale for this decision by the administration. Anecdotally of course, I have received great guidance and support from IFD. I felt comfortable seeking this assistance precisely because it was coming from my peers. I would be extremely hesitant to seek development counsel from administrators, might only tangentially understand our needs and concerns in this area. To use the vernacular, I see it as a "power grab" and am concerned about their motives.

I, too, am deeply concerned because Provost Vermeulen's email implied the demise of the IFD.

I've been trying to find the agreement about the IFD that was mentioned at the meeting. The only MOA that I could find mentioning the IFD is the Coordinators agreement: <https://stockton.edu/academic-affairs/agreements/documents/MOA-Coordinators-Other-Designated-Faculty.pdf>

Is there another MOA document missing from the Stockton website?

I ask because I know that there have been changes as to what they publish and what they are no longer making easily archivable, which is very concerning to a librarian! (For example, the new Annual Report format <https://stockton.edu/annualreport/2019/index.html> means that we have to archive every webpage linked off that report. Our Archivist was not happy about the new format.)

That aside, I know that there has been talk about further changes to the CLD and at one point, there was talk of it being integrated into the library, but... that Carra is no longer interested in combining the CLD with us.

...also heard that there was talk of dissolving one of the schools and putting the programs under different schools.

I agree that having an administrator in charge of something like the IFD would be a disaster and a complete disservice to all faculty, librarians included. As the Coordinators Agreement stands now, the Director of the IFD is intertwined with many different coordinators and unless they unravel the whole agreement or much of it anyhow.

I have heard nothing about the plan for whatever would replace the IFD, just the same vague ideas you have including the "umbrella" that would somehow intertwine CLD, Library and IFD functions. But again nothing more than an mention - no concrete plans in evidence.

The MOA you mention is the only one regarding the IFD Director - negotiated by the SFT to ensure the duties, scope and compensation of the position are inline with other directorships and faculty leadership positions. Interestingly the Fellows agreement (<https://www.sftunion.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/fellowship-agreement.pdf>) and the SIPET MOA (<https://www.sftunion.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Summer-tchg-observation-institute-MOA-3-5-12.pdf>) both refer to the IFD Director overseeing those Fellows and the SIPET, and both are still in full effect going forward (unless management chooses to renegotiate with the SFT on either the Fellows agreement before June 30th, 2022, or to renegotiate the Faculty Evaluation MOA). It is not clear how those agreements will work without the IFD in place.

I think the faculty clearly want the services the IFD has been faithfully providing to continue. Those are all spelled out in the MOA responsibilities of the director and on the IFD website but I'll spell them out here:

1. New faculty orientation planning and implementation
2. New faculty workshops weekly in fall semester (which requires a course release for those new tenure track faculty)
3. Seminars and workshops on relevant topics for teaching, research and service (sometimes done in collaboration with other offices) throughout the year
4. Teaching Circles (which are paid for separately by the Provost each year) - oversee the approval and support their running
5. IFD Faculty Fellows (also paid for each year by the Provost separately) - oversee the application, approval, and support of 5 faculty fellows - one is always for research help to faculty, and one is always for diversity, with three others determined by the faculty applicants)
6. Week of Teaching - opening of classrooms so faculty can share teaching methods, as well as guest speakers
7. Peer Observations - Director doing them as well as faculty trained by the Director via the SIPET summer institute
8. Mid-Semester evaluations - confidential support for voluntary gaining of mid-semester feedback from students
9. IDEA interpretation support - confidential consultations with faculty as well as collaboration with the IDEA liaison
10. File construction - provide workshops advising pre-tenure faculty on their promotion and tenure file construction, provide confidential consultation on file preparation as well as for rebuttal letter during the process. This is done by the Director in a consultation role - the Director has no authority nor role in the file review process - thus

the Director is a safe person to consult with for faculty. This service is also provided to post-tenure faculty seeking promotion

The way they want those delivered is **through continuing of the IFD**. There is no reason to end the IFD - if the administration simply wanted to bring the IFD Director position in line with the ending of the MOA, they could do that by renegotiating it with the SFT in the new MOA for Faculty Leaders.

If there has been a breach of shared governance, then the correct thing for the Provost to do is reverse her decision - the IFD continues through June 30, 2020 under the current expiring MOA, so there is no need to make this decision now . The correct thing for the Faculty Senate to do is to pressure the Provost to keep the IFD as is.

Here is the feedback I've received so far...de-identified/anonymized and organized into themes. None of this is from me, although my own experience certainly resonates with much of it. Will let you know if I hear from more folks.

First-year Orientation:

- I've benefitted from the IFD in so many ways. Our first class together introduced me to the whole university as we had a lot of guest speakers. Because IFD was led by (a faculty member), I felt like I was less on display and that I could ask "dumb" questions, because I didn't feel the need to impress. Also, because I knew the IFD Director was always in the classroom, it really helped him to be more practical. Also, I'll admit that I knew he as a faculty was a safer route because what he was teaching us was purely about the classroom, and not mixed in with convos about increasing our university's number of students for profit. Those conversations are not centered on students' development and learning, as you know, and I've lost quite a bit of trust in our admin around our "quality" of learning, so to think they would be running IFD, is pretty scary. I'm more scared for the younger faculty though, because I've already benefitted from it a great deal.
- I am in full support of IFD remaining faculty-led for a number of reasons. IFD provides a place where new faculty can share their new-faculty-ness: the adjustment to the local vernacular, the weird rules (written and unwritten), the student population and their quirks, and the administration itself and its own quirks. I would think that this learning curve would be harder if it was encumbered by administration and their own (slanted) viewpoints. I always found that there was a high level of honesty within the IFD workshops that I didn't find elsewhere – losing that would be a huge disadvantage to our new faculty. I, personally, would not have survived my first year without it.
- I think it's really valuable to have an orienting/acclimating space that isn't led by our programs. I've been fortunate to be paired with a fabulous mentor, and to be in a department with very clearly articulated expectations, but not everyone is in that situation. It's wonderful to be able to ask questions about what's required of us, about the culture at Stockton, etc. in a faculty-led setting that isn't led by our mentors or program coordinators. This isn't to say that I wouldn't like to see some changes to IFD - I'm not sure that 2 days a week is necessary, and I think that it would be worth reconsidering the curriculum (if that isn't too formal a word) to ensure that new faculty needs are being met - but regardless, I sincerely value having a fellow faculty member in

the role of IFD director. Acclimating to the university would be considerably more challenging if new faculty orientation and/or the weekly sessions were led by administrators or other staff.

- I am a second-year faculty. I have nothing but positive experience with IFD and very much like to see it continue. I appreciate the support I received from IFD, including the workshops, helps with mid-term evaluation, and particularly the new faculty development seminars during my first year.
- The New Faculty workshops were also very helpful in learning more about Stockton in my first year in a supportive and safe environment. This type of environment would be more difficult to maintain if the orientation is not hosted within the current structure of IFD.

Resources and enhanced quality of teaching:

- I've been to a ton of separate sessions IFD had that influenced my teaching ranging from smaller ones on how to involve community engagement in our class to the larger ones where they would bring in a speaker from another university.
- IFD has a great library created by those who are currently teaching.
- Generally speaking, I think that it has been tremendously helpful to have access to a faculty-led space, and to know that IFD in general is a faculty-led resource for us (particularly for support we might need around things like student evaluations, including mid-semester and end-of-term).
- I think having IFD makes Stockton special because none of my cohorts at other universities received the same level of support on growing as a teacher and a faculty. IFD also helps new faculty connect with each other, which also gives me peer support. I feel IFD is a safe place for faculty, particularly new faculty. I would highly support of keeping IFD the way it is.
- Another important aspect of the IFD that has been crucial in my professional development is the IFD fellowships and teaching circles hosted by IFD. I have consulted with various IFD fellows over the years and participated in teaching circles that helped me to improve my teaching and research. It is unclear what the future of these would be based on the communication that Provost Vermeulen sent on 10/4. It will be a huge loss to all faculty, staff, and students if IFD fellowships and teaching circles are discontinued.
- In addition, the IFD provides training for peer observations of teaching, which are essential in observing and evaluating fairly and systematically pre-tenure faculty. The IFD director has done an outstanding job leading and organizing the Stockton Institute for the Peer Evaluation of Teaching (SIPET).

Faculty development:

- Just having the director being a faculty member was really comforting me due to the fact that there was no other agenda.
- I'd meet with IFD Director to check in about my faculty plan etc and was glad that IFD Directors weren't admin but more of an intermediary.
- First, and foremost, IFD creates a safe, non-evaluative space for pre-tenure/pre-promotion faculty to seek advice. The first couple of years anywhere are never perfect, and we all run into road blocks regarding student evaluations and departmental quirkiness. I would never feel comfortable discussing either of those things with an administrator. Particularly if that administrator was associated with the Provost's Office, given that the Provost does have a pretty significant say in my tenure/promotion process. There are very few places in academia where advice can be sought in a non-evaluative environment – it makes no sense to get rid of the most obvious (unless that's exactly what the administration wants, but I digress).
- I just don't think that anyone in administration has the experience to accurately mentor faculty's professional development. I can totally see them trying to mold faculty into what they want, but I don't think that's actually mentoring or professional development. Plus, they have completely different experiences in the Stockton walls, and therefore, can't really relate to the faculty

experience and its successes and pitfalls. The best advice and guidance I've gotten has always been from someone who has gone through what I'm going through – that won't be present in IFD if it's administered by the administration.

- As a pre-tenure faculty member, I have extensively used the services of the Institute for Faculty Development. Every year, I attended sessions on constructing tenure files and I consulted confidentially with the IFD director on the various materials in my file. The IFD director provided me with invaluable feedback on my narrative and executive summary and suggested how to improve my file. I felt comfortable sharing information about my file and my evaluations with the IFD director because he was a faculty member and his main responsibility was to assist faculty in their goals for excellence in teaching, research, and service. I believe that the nature of IFD would change for the worse if it is no longer led by faculty and for faculty. I personally would not feel comfortable asking for feedback on tenure and promotion if the Institute for Faculty Development was restricted in a way that takes away its autonomy and confidentiality.
- Stockton's Institute for Faculty Development was established by dedicated faculty and has continued to be successful over the last 10 years due to the leadership of outstanding faculty as Sonia Gonsalves, Heather McGovern, Bill Reynolds (no longer at Stockton), and Doug Harvey. Having an Institute of Faculty Development that is run by a rotating full-time Stockton faculty member and supported by expert IFD fellows is essential in providing faculty with strong and qualified support in their teaching and scholarship. As a faculty member who has tremendously benefited from the IFD in its current structure, I feel disappointed that such a decision was made without seeking feedback from faculty first as we are the most important stakeholders in this process. These actions go against shared governance at Stockton and show little appreciation for faculty's needs and input.

I hate to be so simplistic about it, but I believe this is a classic case of a "if it ain't, don't fix it" situation. The administration is trying to change something that, as far as I am aware, no one in the faculty has requested change for. Further, the administration has not described what problems they have with the current IFD structure that motivates their desire for change. If they could provide such a description, it would be more helpful for us in formulating ideas as to how to help design a new IFD structure that could address their concerns while maintaining the valuable resources the IFD currently provides. In the Senate meeting, Doug speculated that the administration wants change specifically so that the IFD director does not receive the current level of course releases that position provides. If so, the administration should say that so that we could work towards a compromise. If there are other issues, they should say what they are. Perhaps Laura could request this type of information from the administration in advance of future Senate-meeting discussions on this topic.

During my pre-tenure period, I, like many others, found the IFD extremely helpful, if not, essential. The weekly workshops led by Bill Reynolds were immensely helpful with respect to many different areas of professional life here at Stockton. Further, the guidance they provided on file construction was very helpful in terms of helping me learn how to effectively organize files for tenure & promotion. I am not sure that the quality of my file would have been as high as it was if it weren't for the IFD's guidance. Further, Doug, in his role as IFD director, provided a very thorough and constructive peer observation of my class. This was perhaps the most detailed & informative of all the peer observations I received in my pre-tenure period. I would not want what the IFD currently offers to change. However, I would be interested in further hearing Doug's ideas on what he would be comfortable with having non-faculty be responsible for IFD work, if anything at all. I think Doug is best positioned to provide initial guidance and suggestions on how we should proceed that could be a useful starting point for detailed discussion.

In sum, I would prefer the IFD not to change at all. However, if it must and if we are to provide the suggestions as to how it should change, I think we need more information. Specifically, I would like to hear from the administration in terms of what their problems with the current IFD structure is and why they want it changed and I would also like to hear from Doug about what changes to the current IFD structure he would find useful and what work of the IFD he would feel comfortable offloading to non-faculty members.

I received some feedback from one of my “constituents” that I would like to share.

The emphasis from this constituent (and I agree with her) is that

- The IFD is a professional development hub for faculty, by faculty.
- The IFD should be about supporting faculty, and this best comes from people who are faculty themselves and live our lives and share our priorities.
- The IFD is a place where junior and senior faculty members can learn from other faculty about the techniques that they find most useful in the classroom.
- The IFD should be a place where we can go do help manage the struggles of teaching-scholarship balance.

This individual expressed concern about how every other initiative/committee taken over by administrators tends to run by similar patterns: Administrators tend to start to lecture faculty on their priorities, not what faculty see as a priority. Case in point: over the past 3 years, the program coordinator and even some of the school meetings have been transformed into outlets where administrators lecture faculty about enrollment numbers and coach faculty on our role in improving our enrollments. None of that helps us with delivering a quality product in the classroom, developing as scholars, etc. The IFD should remain faculty-led to make sure that faculty priorities are addressed.

It does not sound like the worst idea I ever heard, but at some point someone must manage all this. How will that be done? Will it be by faculty committee? I know I would hate to be on that committee (but would do it if no one else would). It sounds like when all is said and done, one person making the decision about what runs and what doesn't.

I think keeping the Faculty Orientation and Summer workshops would be really important. I attend many of the workshops and have learned a lot from them.

I don't know what is in the current IFD director MOU, but since he has been doing some of this stuff already, I would imagine that a starting point would be looking at the existing language.

I want to reiterate that *all* services (with the exception of administrative assistant work) having to do with whatever this new institute is going to be called should be faculty-run. What we are replacing is the Institute for FACULTY Development, an office run by faculty for faculty...to quote another senior...faculty member, having an administrator run an institute for faculty development makes as much sense as having an administrator serve as president of faculty senate.