Administrative Review of Dean Jackson: Executive Summary

The administrative review process supports campus leadership by identifying existing strengths and highlighting opportunities to further advance institutional goals. This review focuses on Dean Tambra Jackson and the School of Education at IU Indianapolis and examines both the School's accomplishments and areas where additional clarity or support may strengthen future efforts.

The committee, chaired by Kalea Benner, Dean of the School of Social Work, included membership from the unit's faculty (n=3), and staff (n=1), representation from IFC (n=2), and an outside administrator (n=1), ensuring a broad and balanced perspective on the School's strengths and opportunities.

Drawing on feedback from faculty, staff, students, cabinet members, and external partners, the committee noted that the School is navigating a period of significant transition—including the realignment from IUPUI to IU Indianapolis, ongoing budget pressures, and a shifting educational and political landscape. Stakeholders consistently described Dean Jackson's leadership as steady, values-aligned, and collaborative. She is recognized for her transparency, community engagement, and deep commitment to equity and student success. Many noted her ability to guide the School through complex institutional and fiscal transitions while maintaining a clear focus on mission, partnership building, and the wellbeing of faculty, staff, and students.

The committee's recommendations are intended to build on the School's existing strengths and support continued alignment with institutional priorities, helping position the School for long-term success.

Recommendation One: Broaden the Narrative of the School
The School is encouraged to present a more inclusive narrative highlighting the full breadth of its academic strengths, including graduate programs and emerging fields such as learning sciences. A broader and more balanced narrative would help all faculty feel seen within the School's strategic identity. This shift could also redefine marketing strategies, and bolster recruitment, enrollment, and visibility across multiple disciplinary areas.

Recommendation Two: Strengthen Advising, Communication, and Student Support
Across stakeholder groups, consistent advising processes and clear documentation emerged as key areas for attention. Updating materials, clarifying expectations, and ensuring faculty and staff have the necessary guidance will substantially improve students' experiences navigating their programs. Strengthening these systems will help reduce confusion, support student success, and contribute to a more cohesive academic environment.

Recommendation Three: Deepen Engagement with Constituents
Building on existing partnerships and continuing to strengthen relationships with both internal and external stakeholders will support enrollment growth, program relevance, and community impact. Staff also noted the importance of recognizing workload challenges and sustaining morale through meaningful forms of acknowledgment and support. These efforts can help foster a connected, mission-driven environment that benefits all members of the School.

Recommendation Four: Enhance Transparency in Fiscal Decision Making
Stakeholders expressed a desire for greater clarity regarding how budgetary decisions are made and how fund allocations align with the School's strategic priorities. More explicit communication about the rationale behind funding decisions could reduce misunderstandings and perceptions of inequity. This transparency will support shared understanding and help reinforce trust in fiscal planning processes.

Recommendation Five: Review Structure and Processes for Representation
The associate dean serves as chair for several graduate programs. This can unintentionally limit discipline-specific attention, representation, and advocacy. Adjusting this structure to provide dedicated, discipline-aligned leadership was identified as something to help graduate faculty in Urban Education Counseling, Leadership & Policy Studies feel more fully included in School-wide planning and decision-making. Additionally, continued monitoring to ensure consistent mechanisms for program representation and input, communication, and School-level planning and decision-making as the School continues to evolve is recommended.