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Trustees extend Whitten's contract with no advance notice

By ETHAN SANDWEISS Posted February 20, 2025



Indiana University President Pamela Whitten and IU Trustee Chair Quinn Buckner at the Feb. 20, 2025 board meeting. (Devan Ridgway / WTIU News)

The Indiana University Board of Trustees voted Thursday for a surprise renewal for President Pamela Whitten's contract, extending it until 2031. The trustees also increased her base salary from \$702,000 to \$900,000.

The vote passed 8-to-1 with only trustee Vivian Winston dissenting.

Winston said she would have supported the raise on its own, but not paired with the contract extension.

"There are still some significant issues that have not been addressed," she said. "The 93% vote of no confidence, the unprecedented 85% vote from eight individual schools, plus the South Bend campus for her to either resign or be terminated immediately, and the culture of fear, particularly, I see that on the Bloomington campus. Reappointment of a university president should be done with transparency and only after getting input from a variety of stakeholders."

Siding with the majority, Vice Chair Cindy Lucchese countered Winston.

"What you're talking about, really, was April and May, which is when all those issues were going on," she said. "I view that there's been a lot of changes, and they're all positive that have happened post that."



Indiana University trustee member Vivian Winston (center) spoke against amendments to Whitten's contract at the Feb. 20, 2025 board meeting. Also in the photo are Trustee Secretary Andrea Havill (left) and Vice Chair Cindy Lucchese. (Devan Ridgway/WTIU News)

When the board released its agenda Monday with an action item to amend Whitten's contract, it provided no details about what changes were being considered. WFIU/WTIU News reached out multiple times for clarification, but board representatives did not respond.

The contract amendments were created by the compensation committee, which consists of four members of the board.

Although Whitten has retained the support of the board of trustees and Indiana political leaders, she faced massive opposition on Bloomington and other campuses. Their criticism stems from a number of issues, including what they perceive as the administration's hostility to academic freedom and shared governance.

In particular, the university's handling of pro-Palestine protests last spring put her administration

in the hot seat and <u>national spotlight</u>. Read more: What Whitten and Hunter told faculty at listening sessions

Whitten's recent accomplishments have validated some supporters, however. Just last week, <u>IU</u> Indianapolis earned an R1 classification, putting it on par with Bloomington as a top-tier research campus. The university has expanded its bioscience, defense technology and artificial intelligence offerings, putting it on the way to meeting goals laid out in IU's strategic plan.

Read more: Whitten touts IU's strengths in annual address, critics say she missed some issues

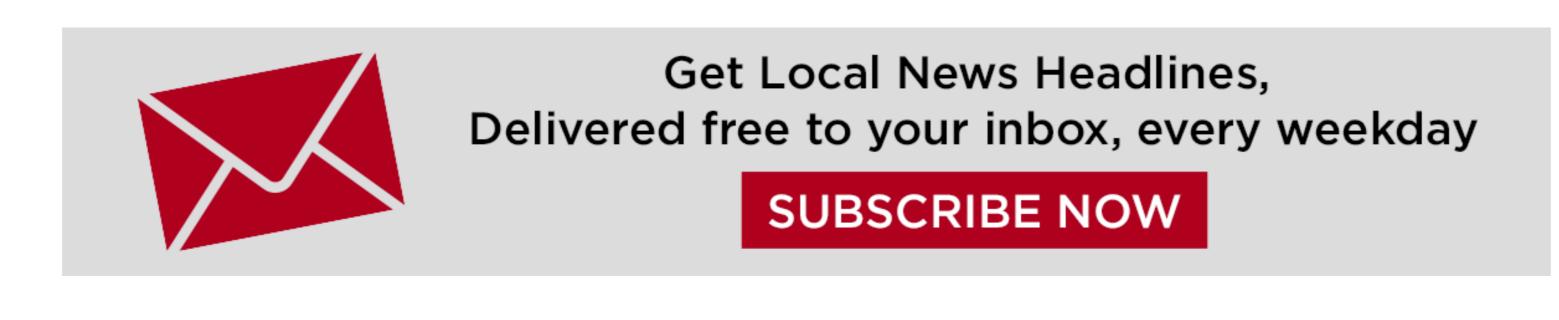
Originally, Whitten's contract was set to expire in summer 2026. If the president serves out her new full term, she'll be responsible for navigating IU's relationship with an unpredictable federal government and a state legislature that wants ever greater control over affairs on campus.

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