



NEWS RELEASE

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Social Security reform forums

The University of Southern Indiana will host a free and public Town Hall meeting, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, March 30, in Mitchell Auditorium in USI's Health Professions Center. The first hour of this meeting will focus on the future of social security in the U.S.; local concerns will be the topic of the second hour of the meeting. Evansville mayoral candidates and state representatives will be invited to participate. Attorney Mark Miller will moderate and report the information from this forum to representatives in Washington, D.C.

Sponsored by the USI Honors Program, the O'Daniel Leadership Academy, the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence, and the local Social Security Administration, this meeting is designed to bring together the ideas generated by USI faculty and students during the past two months and offer local citizens a forum for communication concerning local issues.

A member of the local Social Security Administration Office approached USI about developing a three-part forum to inform the campus community about the current status of our nation's social security program and the possibilities for its reform. At the same time, the Honors Program at Texas A&M University invited college and University Honors Programs throughout the U.S. to participate in a grant they received from the Pew Charitable Trust to involve the public in a national discussion on social security reform, the results of which will be presented to our nation's legislators. The USI Honors Program accepted the Social Security Challenge, part of a larger project, "Americans Discuss Social Security," which is involving students in the most broad-based and far-reaching program the United States government runs and provides our new generation of voters a voice in a subject that will have a significant and direct impact on all Americans.

Together, the Honors Program, the O'Daniel Leadership Academy, and the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence held an informational session as the first part of the initiative on Tuesday, January 19, in Mitchell Auditorium. The Social Security Administration shared with select USI faculty and students some basic information about social security as well as the need and options for its reform.

Part two of this initiative took place in the classroom as faculty and students in various disciplines including health care, education, business, liberal arts, and social work examined and discussed the issue, reflected on its impact, and suggested possible approaches to reform. Over 300 students participated.

They will come together for part three at 10:30 a.m. on March 30, in an all-campus forum to explore areas of agreement and disagreement on this issue. Social Security Challenge has arranged for Evansville attorney Mark Miller to moderate both the student/faculty forum in the morning, and the public forum in the evening. He is certified in national issues forum format for deliberative discussion.

Local citizens are invited to participate in the evening program and offer suggestions on the Social Security topic as well as local issues.

For more information, contact Dr. Phyllis Toy, USI Honors Program coordinator, at 812/465-7144 or Mark Miller, Social Security Challenge moderator, at 812/424-5558.